

Doctors, Yvonne Taylor & Mary Rummage

Spend Their Free Time on The Open Road

By Dave Taylor

Lifelong friends Mary Rummage and Yvonne Taylor don't see getting older as a bad thing, but more like something that frees them up to spend their time how they wish, which is on the open road.

"We drive. People say, 'Why do you drive?'" said Rummage.

The retired teachers, who have known each other since Taylor was friends with Rummage's mother, love to travel to different places across the country, but only by car.

"I like meandering trips, I call them, and you just stop when you want to stop and go when you want to go," she said.

"It's a lot of blessings traveling as a senior," Taylor said. "We can go as far as we want to during the day. If we want to stop at three antique shops we can do it and just get halfway to where we thought we would have gotten."

Being retired means they don't have to be back for anything, or be anywhere other than where they choose to be when they choose to be.

It's very unlike their former lives of molding the minds of students, when things were much more rigid.

"I think in our profession we always had a schedule," Rummage said. "We were always scheduled with work and when you were off and everything was always so scheduled."

"So to say we have an absolute set time that we're going to do this here or there or when, it's kind of like, when an idea comes up, 'That's a good idea, let's go do that,' kind of thing," she said.

"So far it's worked out all right."

It's great for Rummage and Taylor, but they say it stresses out everybody else.

"It drives my kids crazy because they want to know, mom where are you staying tonight?" Taylor said.

They just tell their families that they'll decide where they're staying when they get tired of driving, and they'll let them know where that is when the time comes.

Together the pair has traveled the Lewis & Clark Trail and the Oregon Trail, and in July they drove to Washington state.

"I love driving out west," Taylor said. "The size of this country is just phenomenal."

"It is so different, to be still in the United States, it's so different," Rummage added.

The trip was four days each way, which is



"The problem with many seniors is people quit having projects, quit having something, whatever it might be, something else to do. No age is too old to try new things, or to get out and enjoy life." —Mary Rummage

a long time to be in a car in anyone's book.

"I'd do it again," Taylor said.

New Orleans is up next, as they plan to drive down to visit Taylor's grandson.

The point of driving isn't about reaching the destination, the women contend, but more about the experience of getting there and what might be between home and where they're going.

"I think a lot of it is just the curiosity of what you're going to see along the way," Rummage said.

Sometimes what they see on the way becomes a side trip on its own.

"We were coming back home and we got to Nauvoo, Illinois," Taylor said, "and we realized they were having their pageant that night, so we just added another night and day to our trip because we wanted to see that."

Even back home the women are often on the road, because they ride the Panther

Express, the bus that takes fans to follow Kentucky Wesleyan College's basketball team to away games, like one in Michigan coming up in November.

"We often go to the Wesleyan games and we have more people there than are there from the home school," Taylor said. "It's a lot of fun."

The women don't limit their travel to the U.S., but have individually gone to other countries like Taylor's trips to Guatemala and Israel and Rummage's trips to Italy, Greece, England and Scotland.

Taylor's first international trip was with her late husband, William, when they traveled to Puerto Rico, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and the Virgin Islands.

Having been there and then seeing Hurricane Maria ravage Puerto Rico gave her a different perspective than she might have had otherwise.

"That's been many years ago," she said, "but I can still see the beauty of that place and just cannot imagine what people are going through there now."

Taylor and Rummage both recall trips where they were shocked to see an overt military presence in the streets.

"Driving by areas in the Dominican Republic you'd see military people in front of the big fancy buildings standing with their machine guns guarding, and then right next door there might just be a hovel, people living under a bridge or something," Taylor said.

Rummage saw a similar thing on her trip to Italy and Greece.

"Every other block there was a soldier and they would all be standing there with a machine gun, and they didn't have it just hanging on their shoulder being relaxed...I noticed about the third soldier, with their finger on the trigger," she said.

"I wonder, will that need ever end up here? Will we end up with that kind of people standing around?" she said.

"I'll never forget those little teenage kids, I mean little kids (in Israel)," said Taylor. "I was teaching middle school and I had kids that looked almost as old as they did, with their guns. Of course they were in the military. It really pointed out the freedom that we take for granted here in America."

Countries might be different, they both said, but the people there are basically like everyone else.

"You think the world is so much different, Rummage said, "but other than language, we are so much alike, much more alike than people think we are different, at least I have found it that way."

Seeing new places and new cultures brings perspective and knowledge, but Rummage explained that having that information only demonstrates their need to get more of it.

"The odd thing is that the more you know you find out there's more you need to know," she said. "There's no end to what you need to learn."

Traveling keeps their bodies busy but the pair also keeps their minds busy with hobbies, which both agree are vital to staying sharp.

"Once I retired I started painting," Taylor said, "and it opened up a whole new area of life. I see color where color hasn't been before."

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