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Talents Need Not Retire After 65

RETIRED people find many ways to make their years of leisure a life of pleasure. Some go on perpetual vacation trips, others devote themselves to hobbies, a few launch new careers for the enjoyment of them and quite a number dedicate themselves to helping others.

For many years, the late Henry G. Bass, Enid contractor, published a letter containing observations and opinions, which he distributed to a continually growing list of friends and acquaintances.

From Bass, Dave R. McKown, retired Oklahoma City insurance man and civic worker, got the idea for what has become a challenging and stimulating project. He, too, publishes a letter for his friends.

It started as a travelogue after Dave and Florence, his wife, made an extended trip to Europe and Russia in 1975, so their daughter gave it the name, "This and That from Here and There."

Circulated at first mainly within his family, McKown's monthly letter now goes to a mailing list of more than 1,000, and probably is read by

considerably more than twice that number.

Because the McKowns have visited 65 countries in the past 25 years, several of the letters have been devoted to travel. Others have described McKown's early life as a farm boy in Illinois, pointing up advantages of learning to work early in life.

Dave has a degree in geology from the University of Oklahoma, so he has written about such topics as "the great rift" from Turkey to the Red Sea, the Grand Canyon and islands of the Pacific Ocean.

McKown taught a Bible class at Wesley United Methodist Church for 33 years, and he devotes some letters to religious themes. As an independent businessman, he is a firm believer in free enterprise and passes along his convictions about this "endangered freedom."

The significant thing about these well-written letters is that they fulfill a need for self-expression and relate experiences that may be useful or interesting to others.

Dave was 79 years old when he

started his "anti-rust letters." He is now nearly 84, and his project is gaining momentum.

This is not to suggest that other retired people ought to take up writing, but to point out what many of them have told us. Life offers many satisfactions to those who stay alive after 65.

We see frequent reminders that Americans are living longer and the proportion of people past 65 is increasing. Public and private pensions help most of them get by, but many may wish they had done more to provide for themselves while they were young.

There may be limitations on what might be done to correct problems of finances and health for retired people, but much can be done to expand their mental outlook and spiritual attitudes.

Numerous examples show that those with determination have done it, and others could do it, often in spite of lack of money and health. Our talents need not be retired just because our jobs expire.