

THE DROPOUT REPORT

8,000 young Tulsans are without a diploma. What's being done to fix the problem?

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pick their 119 favorites

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TRAVEL BY TAMMIE DOOLEY

Down a Spain memory lane

Jane Anne and Harvie Roe relive a European vacation from more than 30 years ago through a return visit to Valencia, Spain.



Left, Jane Anne and Harvie Roe visit Stonehenge on their 1974 European vacation. Right, the Roes in Valencia, Spain, in 2009.

Photos courtesy of Jane Anne and Harvie Roe.

IN 1974, to the vexation of their parents, Harvie and Jane Anne Roe took off for Europe. With University of Oklahoma bachelor's degrees in hand and Harvie's two-year stint with the Army behind them, they decided that their careers could wait. Instead, they began a 45-day journey through 10 countries.

Starting in Amsterdam, they purchased a Volkswagen Beetle that would serve as their transportation for the trip.

"Harvie's a planner, so in the two-plus years we were married, he figured out a way to make that trip a reality," Jane Anne says.

And about those careers?

"We were right about the career prediction," Harvie says, laughing. "Having worked full-time for the 35 years since, a similar block of carefree time has never presented itself."

Harvie is CEO of AmeriTrust Corp., and Tulsa has been home for more than 30 years. He and Jane Anne have three daughters, Mindy, Blair and Holly, and one grandchild, Sam.

In May 2009, Harvie and Jane Anne got the chance to revisit one of their favorite places from that youthful trip, Spain — this time with their youngest daughter, Holly, leading the way.

Their 1974 crossing into Spain from France created one of those travel moments

looked back upon with a certain degree of humility.

"We envisioned Spain to be Europe's Mexico and assumed similarities to a U.S.-to-Mexico crossing — the border towns on the U.S./Mexico border back then weren't exactly friendly," Harvie says. "We actually said to the other, 'We might cross over and never be seen again.'"

They chuckle at the thought and then resume the conversation to say the fact they spent only four days there was something of a regret.

"We loved Spain and have always wanted to return," Jane Anne says.

Holly's decision to study at The University of Valencia through OU's study abroad program created the perfect opportunity.

Valencia, on the eastern shore of the Iberian Peninsula, was founded in 137 B.C. Charged with history and burgeoning with a rich heritage of food and architecture, it's the third-largest city in Spain.

The Roes were intrigued by the extreme contrasts in Valencia.

"The city is very old," Jane Anne says. "Yet in the midst of centuries of history stands a very modern City of Arts and Sciences complex."

The complex contains numerous monuments, an opera house, museums, an IMAX theater, planetarium and Europe's larg-

est oceanographic aquarium. Since Harvie has been involved with the Oklahoma Aquarium Foundation for the past 25 years, they were particularly interested to see it.

"The aquarium was impressive," Harvie says. "They've combined the concept of a SeaWorld with a vast state-of-the-art aquarium."

"Then there's the really important stuff," Jane Anne continues, "such as the best paella and sangria in the world."

The Roes have enjoyed the American version of paella (pa-EYA) and sangria, but imparted, "paella originated in the Valencia region, so they've got it down" Jane Anne says. "And the sangria comes in a surprising number of varieties. It's not like the 'punch' we're familiar with in the states."

Their most vivid memory of the trip?

One evening, "Holly took us to a small restaurant popular with the students," Harvie says. "... Packed into a room were 30 to 40 musicians from all walks of life casually jamming on Spanish guitars."

Jane Anne continues, "Holly's a regular at this weekly gathering, so they knew her. Seeing her fluently interact with the locals and bantering with friends was a proud moment."

For this trip, there were no worries about border crossings and no struggles with the language barrier.

"It was a much easier trip than in 1974," Harvie says. "Holly took care of our every need." ■

Tammie Dooley is a Tulsa-based freelance writer. Find her online at www.SoloRoadTrip.com.

TulsaPeople.com

Visit the Life & Style section for more information on traveling to Spain and recipes for paella and sangria. To learn more about Holly Roe's stay in Valencia, visit <http://hollyroe.blogspot.com>.