



By Jan Rahn

Managing Editor

After school lets out for the summer next week, there won't be any going back this fall for four longtime instructors in the Perkins County District.

Elementary teachers Cindy Regier and Sandy Prante, along with high school instrumental music instructor, Sheila Johnson, have taken retirement. Also retiring is industrial technology instructor Marlin Terwilliger, who however, elected not to be featured in the story.

Mrs. Sheila Johnson

Last Thursday evening was the final concert for graduating seniors, as well as the last musical event at the high school for Sheila Johnson who began her career in the district in August 2002.

Back then, the schools had not yet consolidated, so the Wheatland students from Madrid joined the Grant High School students to form the Grant-Wheatland Band.



With a K-12 music education degree from South Dakota State University, Johnson's career with Perkins County Schools started with kindergarten and first grade music along with fifth band, sixth band, junior high band and high school band, plus Music Explore and base group. The following year, she added a music theory class and at one time had the fourth grade music class. For two years she also had the high school chorus.

Currently, Johnson instructs the fifth, sixth, junior high and senior high bands, junior high chorus, sixth grade chorus, and explore.

Johnson said she is not actually “retiring,” but is making a career change. She plans to serve as a securities licensed financial representative with Thrivent Financial. Her husband, Dale, has been with Thrivent Financial for 10 years.

“I just don’t feel like I am an effective teacher anymore,” said Johnson. “The kids need someone with a new attitude and new ideas.”

High on her list of priorities as the mother of six children is being a grandma—grandbaby number six is due this month. She loves playing any musical instrument and growing flowers. She plays in a symphony orchestra where she is the assistant conductor, and also plays in two community bands.

“So I will still get to use my music,” said Johnson.

“I have loved teaching at the Perkins County Schools, and the kids are very talented,” she said. “I will miss the kids, but plan to be back to visit!”

Mrs. Sandy Prante

In 2001, Sandy Prante, wife of elementary/middle school principal, Terry Prante, began teaching kindergarten at the elementary school in Elsie.

Her kindergarten teaching experience actually began back in 1974 upon receiving a Bachelor’s Degree in elementary education from the University of Northern Colorado.

“After 39 years in the classroom, I am ready for new and different adventures,” said Prante, indicating spending more time with her family as a priority.

She also enjoys reading, embroidery, boating and other outdoor activities.

The Prantes have been married almost 45 years and have three grown children and 10 grandchildren.

Mrs. Cindy Regier

Nineteen years ago, Cindy Regier began her career in the district at Grant Elementary School as a Title 1 teacher, serving grades K-8 for one year. She holds a Bachelor of Arts and Science degree from the University of Northern Colorado.

She then taught third grade, taught for a couple years in a combination third/fourth class, but the rest of her years have been spent in the third grade classroom.

“I have 19 years of wonderful memories from teaching in this school system and community,” said Regier.

In answering what led to her choice to retire, Regier said, “I think probably my eyes getting tired of having contacts in from 6 a.m. until 11 p.m.!”

She plans to spend time enjoying her seven grandchildren, her seven children, and create more time to visit her mother and do more volunteer work for her church.

Regier also enjoys cooking and baking, especially baking bread.

“I hope to have time to enjoy some new things, like watching birds at our farm, and raising herbs,” she said. Her husband, Phil, is owner/manager of Regier Truck and Equipment in Madrid and Madrid Shortstop.

In directly addressing the students who have been such an important part of her life for so many years, Regier said, “Just because I’m not teaching you anymore doesn’t mean I’m not interested in what and how you are doing!”