

## Three Sleepy Hollow Veteran Teachers Move On

By Andrea A. Firth

What do the numbers 34, 22, 26 have to do with three Sleep Hollow teachers? That is the number of years respectively that Charlotte Deck, Mary Welte and Pattiann Schepman have worked as teachers in the Orinda Union School District (OUSD). And this June, these three long-time colleagues and friends will pack up their crayons and pencils and move onto their next career—retirement.

“When you add the total number of years these three young ladies have served children in the Orinda Union School District, it is equal to 82 years of service,” says Sleepy Hollow Principal, Diane Kanegae. “Their positive contribution to the lives of children during the years when educators focused on educating the “whole child” to the present time of teaching to grade level standards can never be overestimated,” she adds.

Kay Aaker, another OUSD lifer who is in her 39th year teaching, was able to serve as local historian and provide some insight to the teaching longevity of these three women.

“Charlotte Deck engages children wherever she works,” says Aaker as she describes Deck’s flexible nature. Deck, who is a long-time Orinda resident, joined OUSD

in 1974 as a reading consultant and has spent her tenure working both directly with students and helping teachers, which according to Aaker makes her the master of everything. “She is always one of the first to arrive at each school day,” adds Aaker. “And such a Cal fan, you can’t believe it.”

Third grade teacher Mary Welte, also an Orinda resident, came to OUSD from the Hayward District in 1986. She was part of a Fulbright Teachers’ Exchange that sent her off to teach in London and brought a teacher from England to Orinda. “Mary really loves science,” states Aaker. “She composts, recycles, and grows a garden with her students. And each year she makes the fabulous witches from stuffed nylon socks,” adds Aaker as describes one of the many traditions that she will miss with Welte’s departure.

Pattiann Schepman started her career with OUSD at the Orinda Union School then took a break following the arrival of her twin daughters. She worked a first grade job share with Aaker for several years when her children were young and then moved into her current post as a fulltime first-grade



Sleepy Hollow retiring teachers (L to R) Pattiann Schepman, Mary Welte, and Charlotte Deck Photo provided

teacher. “Pattiann is very supportive of the Wagner Ranch Nature Area, and takes her class there for a learning experience each month,” notes Aaker. Now expecting the arrival of her fifth grandchild, it seems that Schepman will keep herself busy with a new brood of youngsters.

“All three of these outstanding teachers have remained focused daily on what is best for each child they serve and their students and families love them because they know it to be true,” adds Principal Kanegae. Current and former students, parents, and friends are invited to attend a reception for these teachers on Wednesday, May 21st from 5:00 to 6:00 pm on the Sleepy Hollow campus near Room 14. Contact Anna Tague with questions, 254-5084.