



Times photo by Paul Warner

And fine art it is

Barry and Carol Sherman of Hammond gaze at the sculptures by Leslie Scroggs on display at the Lansing Village Library. The display, titled Hyperbola, is named for the work viewed by the Shermans.

Library's boss resigns over salary

By JOAN CARREON
Times Correspondent

LANSING — Saying she will not tolerate being “the only person in the entire village” without a pay raise this year, Joanne Jensen resigned Thursday as director of the Lewis O. Flom Lansing Public Library.

Jensen said the pay raise issue was “sort of the last straw” that prompted her to resign. She claimed she has been subject to “every kind of insult and harassment” by a faction of the library board for nine years.

“I can no longer work with a group that has placed the library board on the same level as a high school sorority,” Jensen wrote in her resignation letter.

Her resignation is effective July 1. Jensen said she will begin taking five weeks unused vacation and 36 sick days starting May 1. Monday will be her last official day on the job.

Jensen has worked at the library for about 30 years — 24 as director and five as assistant director. She earns about \$30,000 annually plus benefits.

Jensen said the faction that harassed her was composed of board members Bonnie Garrison and Gwen Molenaar and former member Barbara Reich.

Molenaar and Garrison, along with the four remaining male members, deny the harassment.

“There’s been no harassment in this meeting ever,” Board President David Tanis said.

“I’ve never heard battles,” board member Terry McKenna said, and he was shocked by Jensen’s resignation. “I didn’t expect it.”

Board Treasurer William Lathrop said when he spoke to Jensen last week, she said she planned to retire in 18 months when she turns 62. But Jensen said she changed her mind after learning of the 4 percent pay increase for village employees.

The board recommended salary increases for all library employees except Jensen. A 3 percent raise was recommended for full-time, hourly library workers. Lathrop said the board felt that Jensen’s performance in the past year “was not deserving of a raise.”

Board members declined to elaborate. Molenaar said she’s been on the board 11 years and has gotten complaints from the public about Jensen.

“We didn’t ask her to leave. We didn’t fire her,” Garrison said.

Lathrop, however, did offer some kind words to Jensen.

“She’s worked for the village for 29 years. She’s done a tremendous job over those years,” he said. “It’s a shame for her to leave.”

The ultimate pay raise decision lies with the village board, which acts on such spending items when it adopts its budget and sets a tax levy. Village employees are expected to get a 4 percent raise for fiscal year 1990-91.

Jensen said she could have lived with other employees getting a 3 percent raise, but not with a 4 percent one.