

Not to be taken

Library board spots draw unusual interest

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LANSING — In an unusually competitive race for the Lansing Library Board, six candidates are running for two seats on the board.

The seventh candidate, Trustee Robert Reich, is the lone incumbent and is unopposed in his bid to be re-elected to a four-year term.

None of the six candidates running for the two, six-year-terms has held an elected office before. But several have experience working at libraries.

One of the six, Joanne C. Jensen, is the former director of the Lansing library who resigned in protest last April after 24 years on the job, charging that she had been harassed by library board members.

Jensen, 61, said she was running for a seat on the board because she was concerned that some veteran library staff members had not been treated fairly by librarian Jan Bojda, who was hired in September of last year.

Bojda has said she works well with all staff members and treats them equally.

"The important thing to me is that the staff are treated fairly," Jensen said.

Jensen said she was also concerned about maintenance at the library, citing leaking problems with the roof, which she said must be redesigned, as well as the parking lot, which Jensen said was "falling apart" and required repaving.

Unlike Jensen, candidate Jean Lefler McCall, 42, said, "I'm totally in support of the library direc-

tor. I feel good about her (Bojda)."

McCall, who teaches kindergarten at Oak Glen School in Lansing, said she would like to contribute to what Bojda had already done to improve the library, and hoped to "act as a liaison between the library and the schools."

Mary Kern, 53, offers her 10 years of experience as assistant librarian at Coolidge School in Lansing as she tries for a seat on the library board.

Bush said that she believed the library could be more accessible to young children, and said that an effort should be made to make children feel comfortable in all parts of the library, and not just in the children's section in the library's lower level.

Candidate Norreen M. Nelson, 64, said she hoped to bring her experience in managing the former

Ben Franklin store on Ridge Road in Lansing to the library board.

Nelson said that "you don't know a lot about how a library works until you get involved in one," but said, "I would like to see more books on the shelves. There seems to be an awful lot of empty shelves and unused space."

David Przybyl, 55, said he has seven children who have used the

Lansing library as they grew up, and that the library has served his family well.

"Basically I think it's a good, sound library," Przybyl. "The library has served me and my family well, and I want to keep it good for people who will be coming to it in the future."

Incumbent Reich, 48, has served on the board for one year,

after being appointed to fill the seat of a retiring trustee.

Reich applauded the work that Bojda had done at the library, and pointed to the library's new computerized book purchasing and filing program, which Bojda implemented.

He also said Bojda is committed to hiring more professional staff with advanced degrees.



Kern said, "I don't see any major things (problems) with the Lansing library," where she has been a patron for 40 years.

Kern, however, did suggest that the library set up a science resource center for students competing in annual school science fairs.

"I go to check out (science) books and they're all checked out," said Kern, referring to a period of time in the early spring when students typically prepare for the science fairs.

Another librarian running for the library board is Elizabeth Bush, who has been librarian at Our Lady of Knock School in Calumet City for the past four years, she said.

Bush, 38, said her decision to run for library board "is a matter of timing. With a change of director there, we have an opportunity to make a lot of progress at the library."