

Social event of '88



ADAM RIESNER, Free Press

WEDDING KISS: Mayor Bernard Sanders and Jane Driscoll kiss after their wedding vows. Driscoll's daughters, Heather, 16, left, and Carina, 13, look on at the North Beach ceremony.

Mayor weds at North Beach

Public witnesses marriage to Youth Officer Director Driscoll

By Enrique Corredera
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It wasn't quite like the royal wedding.

No horse-drawn carriage. The bride arrived in a Plymouth Voyager minivan.

The aisle looked nothing like the one at St. Paul's Cathedral with the spotless red rug. A gravel walkway at the northern tip of North Beach did the trick.

The people of the world were not able to watch via satellite. But television crews, photographers and reporters were there to witness the social event of the year in Burlington.

An when it was all over, the newlyweds did not go to Buckingham Palace and wave from a balcony to their subjects. A modest, private reception at the Millhouse Wine Cellar Restaurant at 1 Lawson Lane did just fine.

But then again, these were not Prince Charles and Lady Diana getting married Saturday under a beautiful sunny sky. They were Bernard Sanders, 46, the socialist mayor of Burlington, and Youth Officer Director Jane O'Meara Driscoll, 37, who tied the knot.

Sanders, who lately has been been getting those ties out of the closet more often, showed up eight minutes before the civil ceremony was to start.

The mayor displayed a new two-piece charcoal gray suit, white shirt with blue vertical stripes and a red, patterned tie. The bride stepped down the aisle wearing a full-length white dress shortly after 1 p.m., while Sanders — flanked by his son, Levi, 19, and City Clerk James Rader — waited at the end, smiling.

More than 300 friends and relatives — wearing everything from suits and dresses to T-shirts, shorts and Hawaiian shirts — had gathered within the fenced-off section of North Beach to see the couple exchange vows.

The public was invited to attend the social event, but no more than two sunbathers were willing to give up the sun to join the bride and groom.

Rader, who met Sanders in Chicago when the mayor was 19, performed the ceremony. Sanders claimed throughout the affair that he was not nervous. "No. I'm good, I'm good," he said. But only he knew whether the perspiration on his forehead was caused by the hot sun or stress.

"You've both been actively involved in the world, in working for social justice throughout your adult lives," Rader told the husband- and wife-to-be. "I'm confident that your new relationship will only add strength to your commitment; that by your very nature, you will continue to strive to make the world a better place."

Surrounded by Jane's children, Heather, Carina and David — and Sanders' only son, Levi — they exchanged vows. With the microphone too far away, the audience did not get to hear exactly what it was they promised to each other. But one thing was clear. Sanders told his bride, "You memorized (the vows) better than I did."

With a reserved kiss, the ceremony was over within 20 minutes.

"I'm feeling wonderful, it's a beautiful day, and it's a joy to be able to share the day with so many of our friends and family. It's really lovely," Sanders said when it was over.

Mrs. Sanders was a little more blunt. "I'm very happy. It's all I can say."