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very stressful being in politics. There's been no decision yet."

Driscoll and Sanders became personal companions at a victory party the night after a recount confirmed Sanders' election to mayor. "That's when I got to know him in a different capacity, on a social basis," Driscoll says.

Driscoll joined a task force on youth created by Sanders shortly after the election. She soon took control of the group and established a working relationship with Sanders.

Discoll, 34, credits her heroic nature to her healthy Irish-American upbringing. Like Sanders, Mary Jane O'Meara Driscoll was born in Brooklyn. From childhood, she wanted to work with children and this urge intensified after she gave birth to her first daughter.

She attended the University of Tennessee in 1958, but left school one and a half years later to marry her high school sweetheart, David Driscoll. After stints in Brooklyn and Virginia, where he worked for International Business Machines Corp., the couple came to Vermont in 1975.

"I heard about Vermont through Mother Earth News," Driscoll recalled on a recent afternoon while sitting in City Hall Park, her eyes as blue as turquoise, her hair cutting down to her shoulders. "I remember thinking it was a great place with town meetings where your decisions counted. As soon as a job opening (for my husband) came up, I was for it."

The Driscolls lived on a farm in Milton. They raised goats, built their own barn and a pool. They had three children: Heather, now 14, Corina, 10, and David, 9. They also cared for 13 foster children and Driscoll says she became a foster grandmother at age 29.

Driscoll's marriage broke up in 1978. She moved to Burlington and worked at a string of human services jobs, including time with the Burlington police juvenile division and as a community organizer for the King Street Area Youth Program. "... It seemed natural to get involved in politics," she says.

Driscoll now lives with her three children a few blocks from Sanders in Burlington's South End. For enjoyment, Sanders and Driscoll "go to dinner, shopping, movies or bow-



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Jane Driscoll

ling. Often they spend their time away from City Hall talking about work, Driscoll explains.

"He discusses everything with me," she says. "He thinks about young people in the city. You can't say that about all the aldermen. Bernie's always coming up with ideas. Sometimes too many. That's his bent of mind."

"Bernie's and my relationship is built on trust, respect and understanding," she says. "What more can you ask for?"

Through 1984, Driscoll served Burlington as a volunteer. In the next year, she received \$4,900 as a youth council coordinator. In 1983, Sanders requested that the position be fully salaried. The Youth Office coordinator's post was not advertised and no applicants were considered aside from Driscoll, according to Sanders.

"The office that existed was her creation," says Sanders. "She had done it on a volunteer basis. I was asking and received from the Board of Aldermen financial support for

the work she had done."

The Aldermen approved Driscoll's appointment, funding the Youth Office with \$30,000 in Community Block Development Grant funds. Driscoll now earns \$22,000 a year from a total office budget of \$55,050. Of that, \$40,000 comes from city coffers while \$15,050 is derived from outside sources such as ticket sales for the Battle of the Bands, advertising revenues from the Queen City Special newspaper, tuition to Summer City Campus classes and small donations.

Around the time Sanders requested a salary for Driscoll, he also proposed a salary for the director of the Mayor's Council on the Arts. In that case, aldermen demanded that the post be advertised. Doreen Kraft, a friend of Sanders who had previously volunteered as arts council director, was the only applicant for the \$15,500 position.

Sanders came into office saying he would eliminate the cronyism he felt typified his mayoral predecessor. Yet he says he doesn't see creating a special post for Driscoll in City Hall, without considering others for the position, as cronyism

because he believes Driscoll has proven her qualifications for the job. He cites the fact that she basically volunteered her time for two years and built the office from scratch before receiving an income from the city.

"What most people judge isn't whether somebody is a friend of the mayor — which I don't deny — but whether somebody is doing a good job or not," Sanders says. "If Jane wasn't successful at her job and she was hired because she was my friend, that charge (of cronyism) would have stuck. But it hasn't."

Driscoll asserts that skepticism about receiving special favors from the mayor has diminished as she has built a successful track record. She claims, in fact, that Sanders often scrutinizes her funding requests more than those from other departments, bending over backward to avoid the appearance of impropriety.

"He decides the budget. And when my office comes up I can't look at him as someone special," Driscoll says. "If anything, I get less than others. No, that's not true, but I feel that way."

Sanders adds, "I try to treat her requests as objectively as I can. Examinations of allocations toward her office indicate that we're as light with that office as any in the city. I might also add that she's been as successful gathering funding from the outside — from private funding sources — as through city funding. An objective look at what she's accomplished would indicate she's done an excellent job in her own way."

Sanders says Driscoll's income, which doesn't provide health and pension benefits, is in line with other city posts. But some directors of youth facilities around the city say that Driscoll's salary is high for the field. The Sara Holbrook Community Center runs preschool, after-school and summer programs for children. Sara Holbrook director Maggie Maggie earns \$15,080, according to the center's financial statement.

Yet Driscoll says she deserves her compensation. She points out that Ray Tangway, director of recreation for the city Parks and Recreation Department, earns \$29,953 for his youth-oriented job. "I don't come to work at 8 and leave at 4:30," she says. "I work almost all the time, except when I'm with the kids or alone with Bernie. I work a good 60 hours a week. Everybody in the office is that way."

"Working with the Youth Office isn't just the Youth Office," Driscoll says later. "I wouldn't have stayed on with no pay and a lot of frustration if I wasn't part of something bigger. If I wasn't participating in overall policy making."

On a recent morning a dozen teenagers gathered in Driscoll's office near City Hall's Church Street steps to make suggestions for the proposed youth center. The students at the meeting brought their skateboards and ghetto blasters. Some of the boys wore earnings and Mohawk haircuts. Some of the girls wore pasties and graffiti-covered T-shirts. One boy entered the City Hall office by climbing through a window over the steps. After the meeting, many of the kids performed dances for the public on the City Hall Park lawn.

The youth center meeting verged on anarchy. The kids spent as much time chewing gum and cracking jokes as