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**New Haven**

**Romantic husbands spring Valentine's surprise**

Randall Beach, Register Staff02/15/2005

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**NEW HAVEN — Myra King and Tanya Salters had no clue as to why their husbands were bringing them to the flagpole at the center of the New Haven Green Monday morning.**

They might have been able to figure it out if they had remembered it was Valentine's Day.

Instead, they found themselves walking in bewilderment toward a smiling couple. The man beaming at them had a flower on his lapel.

Moments later, they stood before that man, Justice of the Peace Jeffrey Kerekes and his wife, Pei Ye.

"They don't know why they're here!" laughed Timothy King.

The women gasped and smiled with embarrassment when Kerekes informed them he was going to officiate as they renewed their wedding vows.

Kerekes had publicly offered to marry at no charge any Connecticut couple with a valid marriage certificate during a two-hour period on the Green. He was also available to do renewals.

Kerekes said his usual fee to do a marriage ceremony is \$300.

The problem was that Kerekes had not successfully publicized his offer. The two couples who took him up on it were his only customers Monday.

King heard about Kerekes' service Monday morning when Kerekes was passing out leaflets outside a bank downtown.

After he read the leaflet, King hurried home and told his friend Adam Salters that he had a romantic notion. Then they told their wives it was time to take a drive to get a big surprise.

The Kings have been married since September; the Salters will celebrate their sixth anniversary in June.

Although the two couples were dressed casually, they stood respectfully and at full

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attention as Kerekes read the vows. Each answered solemnly, "I do."

At the conclusion of the short ceremony, Kerekes told the husbands, "You may kiss the brides," and they happily complied.

The women were on the verge of tears, wiping their eyes.

Tanya Salters said, "This is better than any gift that money could have bought."

"This was very nice," agreed Myra King. "Definitely different."

Kerekes, whose full-time job is being a psychotherapist, said earlier, "I see couples in therapy, having a hard time. I became a justice of the peace to see the happy times."

He said he was doing the Valentine's Day service "as a fun way to support the holiday and to celebrate relationships."

His bride, who had taken the day off from work to assist Kerekes, said, "Every day should be Valentine's Day."

When the two hours expired at 1 p.m., Kerekes said he wasn't disappointed by the low turn-out.

He noted it was cold and over-cast.

"Four people came and they're very happy," he said. "So it was a success."

He said he might do it again next year. But he'll work harder on the publicity.

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