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## Nanuet man accused of impersonating cantor

Couples he wed  
fear their marriages  
may be invalid

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The Journal News

Hundreds of people are posing as rabbis and priests to perform weddings across the tri-state area, but one man who tracks phony clergy said he has re-

ceived more complaints about a Nanuet man than anyone else.

"I've been following these guys for 30 years," said Rabbi A. Bruce Goldman, president of the Center for Creative Jewish Living in Manhattan. "We have a huge file on them, and it's increasing."

Goldman, the former chaplain for Columbia University, said people claim to be cantors, rabbis, priests and ministers in order to perform weddings. Officiants charge from \$500 to \$2,000 to

perform a marriage. Many will change their title depending on what a couple wants.

One man on whom Goldman has done extensive research is Jerry Heller, a Nanuet resident who has claimed to be a cantor and a rabbi. Goldman said he is neither.

"Heller is one of the worst, but he is only the tip of the iceberg," Goldman said. "There are 200 or 300 Hellers."

Heller did not return numerous messages left at his business,

Tri-State Weddings.

The Rockland County District Attorney's Office, while not confirming an investigation into Heller's practices, has set up a hotline for complaints against him.

Dan Solomon of New Jersey, who learned his marriage was in question, said he had never thought to question Heller's credentials when he and his then-fiancee, Wendy, got his name from their catering hall.

"You would never assume or

think that there would be a problem with whether the rabbi is legitimate," Solomon said, adding that Heller was convincing during the ceremony. "We're not Jewish scholars, but most of it was in English, and he was fine. The Hebrew was very limited."

Solomon's ceremony also included a priest, which makes him comfortable that the wedding was legal. But to make sure, he

Please see CANTOR, 2A