

June 30, 2005

## KKK cards showing up in Port Jervis

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Times Herald-Record

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Port Jervis – It's right there on the business card: a man garbed in a white robe, complete with the pointy hood and the blood-drop patch on his chest, with his finger pointing straight out.

Under the man's image, it reads, "I want you for the Ku Klux Klan."

The cards are turning up in Port Jervis and Deerpark, from businesses to a local post office to restrooms at local bars.

The Church of the National Knights of the Ku Klux Klan are on a recruiting mission, and you don't have to go far to sign up. On the business card is a Port Jervis P.O. box.

In response to a letter sent to the P.O. box, a man identifying himself as Joe Allison referred questions about the cards to the Rev. Ray Larsen, the imperial wizard of the National Knights.

Larsen, 66, heads up one of the smaller KKK groups in the country. His home base is a 5-acre homestead – complete with a shooting range – in Osceola, Ind.

"We're always recruiting," Larsen said when contacted by phone yesterday. "We want good, white folks; you got white people there? That's why we're there."

But who is the local leader?

"When he decides to rear his head, you'll all know who he is," Larsen said. "When he's ready, he'll let you know."

Neither the Southern Poverty Law Center nor the Anti-Defamation League have any record of recent Klan activity in Orange County. Both organizations track extremist activities across the country.

"It's most likely an isolated individual that's doing this," ADL Regional Director Joel Levy said.

Port Jervis Mayor Gary Lopriore said he hadn't heard of any recent Klan activity, and he used to be the police chief.

"It's certainly not something we want here," Lopriore said. "I don't even like to talk about it."

Port Jervis is the site of the only public lynching in New York state. Accounts vary whether the 1880s lynching happened in Orange Square or in front of the First Baptist Church on Main Street.

Then there are tales of crosses that burned on Point Peter in Port Jervis and across the Delaware River on Heaters Hill in Matamoras, Pa.

But it's been pretty quiet in this old rail city for decades: no hate crimes, no fliers, no racially charged brawls.

"Even in the South, people have rejected this," Levy said, referring to the recent case of a Mississippi jury convicting 80-year-old Edgar Ray Killen of manslaughter in the slayings of three civil rights workers 41 years earlier.

Even so, that doesn't stop Larsen and his henchmen from trying to spread their message of segregation.

Larsen has held rallies and parades in Osceola and other locations over the past few years. In August, Larsen sponsored a two-day "White Pride Fest." Two months ago, he held a Hitler/Ray Larsen Birthday Party event.

He wouldn't say how many members of the National Knights are in the Port Jervis area.

"We're just trying to wake white people up," Larsen said. "There's a great invasion in this country."

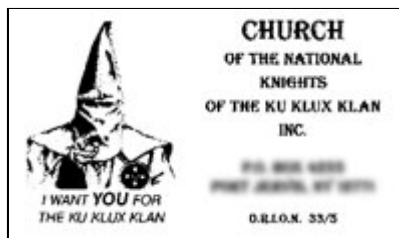


Photo Provided

This is an example of one of the business cards being left around Port Jervis recently.