

Dear Agenda:

The “witch-hunt” article in the January Agenda convinced me that some of the charges against anti-Klan protesters are trumped up. But I have no sympathy for members of NWROC and their consistently violent tactics.

I still believe if we who oppose the Klan would stay away from their rallies, they would have embarrassing spectacles of twenty Klowns from Indiana, ten or fifteen interested Ann Arbor racists, and a couple dozen photographers and film crews circling the mess. Just once, I’d like to see NWROC and everybody else leave them alone so the community could see in their newspapers and on the eleven o’clock news, how ridiculous and lonely those racist twerps are.

But every year NWROC and friends put out their “Smash The KKK” flyers, trying to convince us that we who stay home in droves are cowards, that we’re in denial about the powerful oratory skills of those Aryan Hoosiers who will supposedly turn our community into Nazi Germany if we don’t ACT NOW to stop them.

It’s not like the Klan is successfully recruiting anybody at these rallies. Even the 15 or 20 Klan supporters from Ann Arbor who show up every year aren’t converts. They’re racists who were already in our community and who will continue to be in our community with or without any help from the Klan or NWROC.

I think the Unity rally held in Wheeler Park was an awesome idea, and I love how Luke Massie described it as a diversionary tactic meant to “split” the forces of the anti-Klan activists. I picture one of those military maps with big, colorful arrows showing troop movements like you see on the History Channel, or like you unfortunately see in the Ann Arbor News every few years showing which streets the 200 protectors chased the two dozen Klowns down. The fact that Luke Massie uses terms of war to characterize a “Unity rally” shows us something of the mindset of NWROC.

Since the KKK and NWROC are both clearly organizations that seek violent confrontation, let’s set them up in the most violent expression still permitted by our “civilized” society: boxing. On one team, you have a scrawny, bespectacled, 45 year old Hoosier who takes racism as his hobby because he doesn’t live within 50 miles of a bowling alley. On the other side, I don’t want to characterize the members of NWROC because I don’t know any of them (and because they’ll call me a fascist for opposing them and use that as an excuse to beat me up). But if I could influence their vote for a slugging champion, I’d like to see a big, brawny woman of color put the beat down on a racist. We’re talking crowd-pleasing, ear biting Pay-per-view action.

Please stay home this year and laugh at the rally from the safety of your living room. Let’s be known as a town that yawns at the Klan and only gets jazzed up enough to riot after basketball championships.

--Rob Northrup

We haven’t thought it urgent to invite a special NWROC response to your letter since you allow the article’s main point. But thanks for raising the broader issues about NWROC and their approach to the Klan. We’d like sooner or later to print a community “multiple critical review” of NWROC (and overlapping groups such as BAMN and RWL), pooling stories and conclusions from over the years, with a response. We welcome contributions from anyone at any time. -- Eric & Patricia