

OPINION

Is a Nazi threat worth the coverage?

In light of recent stories about the possibility of another Nazi march through Skokie, the question arises about why such a group receives coverage.

The neo-Nazis again are threatening Skokie with plans to march on Easter Sunday — at least that is what we are told. The village hall has not received word from the Nazis either way — at least that is what officials tell us.

It has been pointed out to us that this may be a ploy on the Nazis' part to gain publicity, which is always a possibility.

If that is true, then it raises the question of whether we are playing their game by reporting on the “plans.” It is a difficult question, but it is the same question that confronted everyone here four years ago.

Should we ignore it? Or is the renewed threat of a march such an insult to Skokie residents that we cannot ignore it?

We feel compelled to report about something like this that might happen, whether or not it actually will, because it is such a deeply emotional issue to many Skokie residents.

During this replay of a Nazi rally attempt, a question also arises about the validity of what village officials are telling us. Are village officials telling us the truth? Naturally most people are suspicious when one party makes a statement and government officials flatly deny it.

But Mayor Albert Smith's record on the last rally attempt is strong and can stand on its own. His actions then lend a great deal of credibility to his statements now. He didn't back down and hide in a corner the last time, and there is no reason to think he would now.

He expresses concern about the Nazi claims now because he feels so strongly about its impact on Skokie.

It also is obvious that an organization such as the Nazi group thrives on publicity. If everyone ignored it, some argue, it would eventually fade away.

But for a newspaper that strives to report accurately what is going on in Skokie, ignoring something as sensitive and emotional as a Nazi march would be ignoring our responsibility to every Skokie resident.