

# OPINION

The Okanagan Sunday, February 8, 2006

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# Don't let facts get in the way

Re: Editorial, "Pesticide industry must stop denials" The Okanagan Sunday, Feb. 1.

The credibility of our industry is always questioned, as should almost any information presented on any subject. Media is given licence to write anything unrestricted as the voice of the public psyche. But with that licence there is the responsibility to be objective.

Had the reporter — or in this case the city editor — reviewed the facts presented to sway the public perception, they may have been a little more objective in their writing.

Just as in the cases of newspaper stories that present false medical reports as fact, or of individuals with delusions of adequacy that claimed to be medical doctors, this should not be equated to the lack of competence with in media as a whole.

Although the editor attributes the "verbal garbage" on this issue to us, it actually flows

from the annals of one side. Rat poison is what it is — a poison — and it is also a pesticide. There are no "natural" products to remove the evasive weeds and insects from our landscape. So, yes, some pesticides are poisons.

What is your point, other than an attempt to disparage the reputation of the lawn and tree care industry? Products used by the industry and in the hands of a professional are safe.

The lawn- and tree-care industry has four pillars in their use of products to provide their goods and services. One: the product has to be registered with Health Canada. Two: the product has to work. Three: the products and methods have to be cost effective. Four: use should not increase their carbon footprint.

Regardless of whether the product is natural or not, science — and not public opinion — will dictate what is used.

There is a danger of having public policy

based on a belief system that is unsupported by fact. The majority once believed that the world was flat, that women should not vote, and that the colour of your skin dictated your place in society. Had people not questioned these perceptions, the luddites would be in charge of the world.

Consider this: if unchecked, the municipal politicians will soon be dictating what you can and cannot buy in the supermarket.

Taking a little pride in our properties is a right of expression. Forcing the public to adopt a set of beliefs based on conjecture and hearsay is not right. We will defend our position on behalf of our industry and customers. Letting the facts get in the way of a good story is a right of the media. The credibility issue depends on the facts.

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