

## Letter to the Editor – Yorkton This Week - April 13, 2005

As a baseball fan, I support the efforts of the Yorkton Minor Baseball Association to promote the sport and Yorkton as a tournament destination. I am especially in favour of anything that will get more kids involved in baseball. However, as usually occurs when there is a pile of somebody else's money sitting there, the rush to spend it means little thought is put into a project until it is too late to do anything other than spend even more money correcting the oversights.

The simplest, least obtrusive solution might have been to move to Daylight Savings Time. The extra hour could mean that a lot of the evening ball games would not need this night lighting that is expensive to install, maintain and operate. Unfortunately, while pretty much everywhere else appears to have figured this out, here in Saskatchewan we're not so quick to fall for every new-fangled idea that comes along. So, instead we will pay the price of trying to artificially extend the day to the tune of \$240,000 dollars plus ongoing maintenance and operating costs. It's not like we currently have any other sports facility renovation in the City sucking up our tax dollars or anything.

Human efforts to duplicate Mother Nature seldom work as well as the original. Because stadium lighting is elevated far above rooftops, it's not just the residents of Second and Fifth Avenues who can look forward to having their windows and yards polluted with uncontrolled floodlighting late into summer evenings; the annoying light spill can reach properties a kilometer away. Have a look south toward the night-lit slow pitch diamonds at York Lake when there's a game on, and ask yourself if you'd like to live anywhere near that. I'm not saying this will necessarily occur; I'm just stating that if the recreational lighting in other parts of the city is any example, there's no reason to expect any thought will go into Jubilee Park either. I can't see where fifty thousand watts beaming into your bedroom windows will do much for property values, or for the psyche of your already neurotic pet.

The game is played within the confines of the ball diamond, and there is no reason to also irradiate surrounding yards and low-flying aircraft. It would be my hope that the City would consider only suppliers who can provide a plan using a minimum number of properly shielded lighting fixtures to minimize the light spilling on to adjacent private property. Many cities across the country are realizing huge savings by adopting proper lighting policies for their streets and facilities, but as usual, we remain a step behind. Switching to DST and/or installing properly shielded lighting can both get the job at hand done at less cost and with far less negative impact. It's a little ironic that we could be using dollars meant to celebrate our centennial to erect a prime example of how little we have learned.

Yes, I would like to see baseball and other sports grow in our city, but I would like to see it done responsibly. The City has an opportunity here to meet everyone's needs both environmentally and cost effectively, or to just do it the old way. All that is required is to make the decision to forget how it's always been done, and to do it right.

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