

# TRIBUNE- PHONOGRAPH

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We welcome letters from our readers on any subject of interest. We reserve the right to edit for length, grammar or libel. All submitted letters must be signed and include a telephone number for verification. Campaign accusations without chance of rebuttal will not be published the week before an election. Federal and state candidate endorsements will not be published.

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# Perspectives

## The best shot

Nobody likes quarantines. In fact, after almost two years of living through a pandemic, most of us have learned to hate them. People have come to dread the whole concept of being sent home from school or work, especially if they're not actively sick.

It is understandable, then, that Colby students and parents were deeply upset when yet another round of quarantines were unleashed last week due to the "close contact" rule. In these situations, just one or two cases of COVID can result in a few dozen kids and staff being sent home for 14 days.

This latest wave of quarantines was particularly upsetting for a couple of reasons. First, the school district created some confusion by sending an outdated message to parents in a fifth-grade class whose students had been identified as close contacts. It said they had been quarantined and needed to be picked up from school immediately. This flies in the face of a policy adopted just last month that says the health department will quarantine students and staff, not the district.

Instead, parents should have received a notice that their child had been identified as a close contact and a *recommendation* to start quarantining. The district is also sending out a four-page letter from the Clark County Health Department, which reminds parents that a self-quarantine is *required* for anyone who has been identified as a close contact. Talk about mixed messages.

From our view, the district has wanted to avoid being the "bad guy" when it comes to the quarantine issue. District officials are willing to do contact tracing and pass along that information to the health department, but they don't want to be the ones that pulls the trigger on quarantines. It's understandable, since that's not the role of a school district.

Still, the district should not allow any ambiguity to seep in when it comes to close contacts and quarantines. One will always logically follow the other. That was the case until last Friday, when the district convinced the health department to rescind the quarantines of four football players just a few hours before a big game against Edgar.

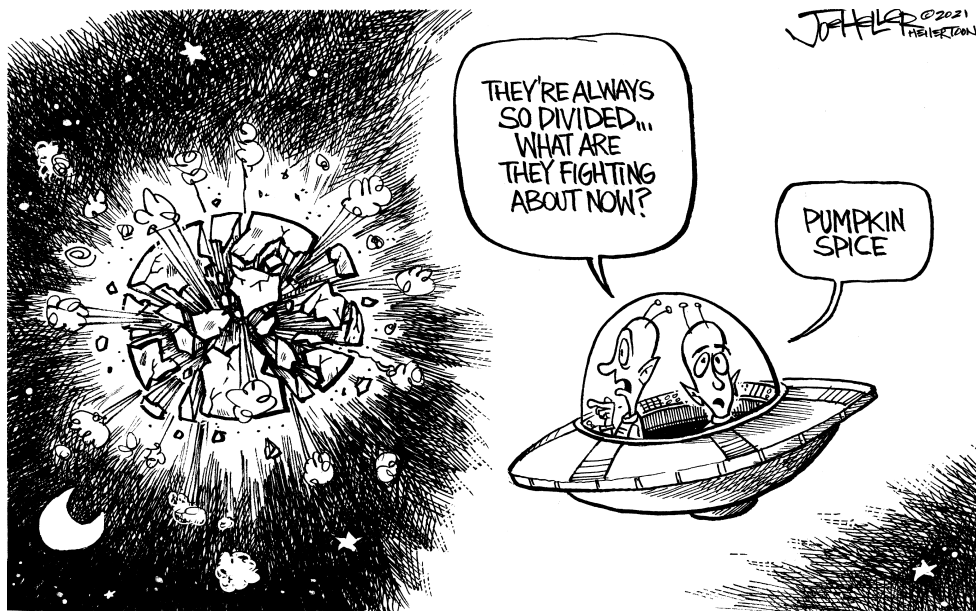
This was the second reason the latest wave of quarantines was so upsetting. Students had been waiting a year to take on the number-one ranked Wildcats, after a greatly anticipated match-up between the two teams was cancelled last season due to a COVID outbreak in Colby. Not only was every media outlet in the area at the Hornets home field, college recruiters were also watching. This was not a run-of-the-mill game; it had potential life-changing consequences for some players.

Nevertheless, the way in which school administrators agreed to "revisit" their contact tracing procedures makes us a little queasy. Either the staff did not do a good job of properly contact tracing in the first place or administrators found a dubious way to get their starting football players off the stay-at-home list. Given the stakes involved, it's hard to blame anyone too harshly for their actions.

We'd like to say that school districts shouldn't have to bother with contact tracing and quarantining, but that's not going to stop. The Clark and Marathon county health departments rightfully expect cooperation from the school districts within their jurisdictions. Like it or not, schools are still going to be in the COVID-19 game for the foreseeable future.

One thing that won't happen again is the county health nurse rescinding a quarantine decision. She made that clear after last Friday's last-minute decision to remove four names from a list of students who had been quarantined. In fact, she would like there to be no gap between when the district identifies a close contact and when the quarantine starts. At this point, there is only one way for students to guarantee they won't get caught in another quarantine trap: get vaccinated. That's not the most popular opinion around here, but it's the best safeguard against the dreaded quarantine.

The Tribune-Phonograph editorial board consists of publisher Kris O'Leary and editor Kevin O'Brien



## PAGING THROUGH HISTORY: A Treasury of Weekly Newspapers

ABBOTSFORD TRIBUNE  
PUBLISHED IN ABBOTSFORD  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1951

THE TRIBUNE-PHONOGRAPH  
PUBLISHED IN ABBOTSFORD  
WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 16, 1981

### Coast-to-Coast store holding laundry demonstration

Mrs. Margaret Danials, home economist, is at the Coast-to-Coast Store today, helping solve wash day problems. She will be there Friday during the day, but not in the evening, to answer any questions you may have in regard to your washing and ironing.

You will be to see the latest in automatic equipment to simplify home laundry work. There is no formal demonstration time, and your individual needs can be discussed.

There will be gifts for every lady who attends, Thursday and Friday.

### Two escape injury Tuesday in forced plane landing

Two Ohio men escaped injury Tuesday night, about 6:45, when they hit a 69,000 volt transmission line two and one-half miles south of Curtiss Corners, in a forced landing.

William Hall, 26, pilot, and his companion, Gus Borasio, 20, both of Kent, Ohio, were en route from a fishing trip to Kenora and were flying International Falls to Madison, with a scheduled stop to refuel in Marshfield. They ran out of gas and made a forced landing on a town road. The pilot retained control of the craft after it snapped a power line and landed safely in the H.D. Fredrickson farm yard, with a damaged wing and a broken windshield.

The mishap caused Thorp, Stanley and Cadott to be without lights for 16 minutes. Northern States Power servicemen from Abbotsford, Colby and Owen repaired the damage.

### Abby ball diamond project still favored

Some Abbotsford aldermen had second thoughts last week about constructing a softball diamond on the city's west side, but it appears the project will go ahead as proposed.

The proposal had been discussed for months before being approved recently. That approval, which included awards to three separate contractors, hinged on the city receiving a LAWCON grant to pay for part of the work. John Inverson of Owen-Ayres said he had heard from Congressman Dave Obey's office that Abbotsford had received the grant, which is expected to be about \$38,000.

However, there has been no formal notification of approval, and Inverson suggested the city wait to officially award contracts until that notification arrives.

Alderman Roger Thielman asked the council to take a second at pursuing the project, based on recent unexpected costs associated with abandonment of the city's landfill site. Abby had budgeted \$40,000 for its share of the ball park construction, and has spent just about that on legal fees and other costs in connection with the landfill.

The whole ball park project will cost about \$90,000, so the city's share at this point is estimated at \$52,000, with the expected grant paying the remainder.

"We've just been clobbered by some unplanned costs since we made up our minds to put in this ball diamond. Maybe we should take another look at it now," Thielman said.



CRAIG SCHELLING  
CROSSING GUARD AT  
ABBOTSFORD ELEMENTARY

1981