

VOICES

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QUOTED "Our current thinking is that to control influenza, we really have to vaccinate all children. Anything that makes it easier and more effective [to vaccinate] children is going to contribute a lot to the protection against influenza."

DR. ROBERT BELSHE, A VACCINE SPECIALIST AT ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY, WHO LED A NEW STUDY ON USING A NASAL SPRAY TO VACCINATE CHILDREN FROM CATCHING A FLU VIRUS



MY view

MIKE MENNONNO
letters@metro.us



BIKE OVER TRASH TO SAVE ON GAS

With T fares set to go up again, and not by a small increment, I'm more committed than ever to cycling as a viable alternative to cars and mass transit. Not only is it a greener way to get around, it's a great cardio workout, and it's cheaper and faster than the T. What more could you want? Since I started biking to work in the Back Bay from Dorchester, I've cut my morning commute time in half.

Sure, there are problems with cycling in Boston. The streets are not bicycle-friendly, for the most part, and neither are those using them. And not only are motorists a danger to cyclists, cyclists are a danger to each other. But part of the reason for this is the lack of dedicated bike lanes. Organizations like Livable Streets (www.livablestreets.info) are struggling to raise awareness of Boston's enormous potential as a greener, more livable city, but it is an uphill battle, for sure.

I've noticed a lot of things about Boston I didn't before I started cycling in the city every day. Something I've noticed anew, since my commute takes me through the South End, is the city's rubbish problem. It isn't just the South End, of course, but it's there that it seems most visible. Riding through these beautifully gentrified neighborhoods the night before or the day of rubbish collection is like a trip to Fresh Kills Landfill. Rubbish spilling out of torn plastic bags piled high and strewn all over the sidewalk.

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This is not a new problem, by any means, which is why the lack of a real, viable solution is so discouraging. Residents point to the ragpickers who make their way through the streets before the city's rubbish and recycling trucks do, tearing open the bags in search for recyclables, and leaving a mess behind that brings animals to forage after them. But blaming the ragpickers ignores the simple fact that if residents were really recycling, the ragpickers would have nothing to pick out of their garbage. It's a symbiotic relationship.

But the city's "rubbish rules" do nothing to discourage it. While the rubbish code states that "There must be sufficient metal or durable plastic barrels for storing of refuse generated in building," it contradicts this dictate on the very next line: "Disposable 2-ply [or heavier] plastic bags may be used instead of trash barrels for curbside trash collection." In short: you *must* use trash barrels, but you don't have to. And a stroll through the South End on rubbish days will attest to the fact that no one does.

A couple years ago I took the utterly futile step of writing Commissioner Casazza, pointing out the absurdity of the city's rubbish code, and got a rapid reply from an underling that read: "Please contact Code Enforcement. They will send an inspector out and possibly fine the responsible parties." The problem was, of course, precisely that no one was in violation of any code. Talk about rubbish.

→ **MIKE MENNONNO** is a freelance writer living in Dorchester.

LETTERS

Saying good-bye to Filene's 'peeps'

BETH IMPERIAL
• Lynn
Since 1875, the word Filene's has been synonymous with Boston. Unfortunately, that has come to an end. I worked at Filene's in Downtown Crossing and my last day — as well as the last day for several hundred others — was last Friday. I worked there 13 years, although there are plenty of people there that worked 20-plus years. I'd like to say good-bye to a few of my peeps in the following divisions: dresses and suits, intimate apparel and hosiery, accessories, advertising and properties.

I will also miss my bosses. I am one of those lucky people who liked her bosses. One lives one town over from me but the other is moving out of state. There are some people I will never see again and they will be sorely missed — especially Sully, our "token male" in the department. Some people have jobs already waiting for them. I am still jobless.

We all read Metro every day, and one woman read the horoscopes to us every day at lunch. Metro was a part of our lives here, and I won't get the paper for a while since I'll be jobless and won't be taking the T anymore.

Voting rates matter for driving teens

KURT SHOEMAKER
• Chelsea
Regarding "Raising driving age not viable solution" (April 27): Ms. Mulvey

makes many good points, but she misses one major cause for the new legislation: Kids don't vote. Even when they turn 18, they still don't vote. If they voted, politicians wouldn't touch this sacred cow. It isn't accident rates that matter, but voting rates. Like teenagers, the elderly look at driving as an important key to their independence. Their accident rates are similar to teens, but they always vote. That's why no one dares draft legislation against their driving rights. Ms. Mulvey, you seem like someone both intelligent and responsible. Don't just be responsible when you get your driving license; be responsible when you can vote.

Price hike result of supply and demand

KEVIN NEIJSTROM
• Cambridge
Regarding "Who's cashing in at the gas pumps?" (April 24): The reason for the recent increase in gasoline prices is supply and demand, not price-gouging. If there was enough oil supply to meet the rising demand, then that extra oil would make it to market somewhere and lower prices. Most Americans are simply too addicted to oil to refuse to pay the higher prices. Also, regarding oil companies' huge profits, note that they are publicly-owned companies, so almost anyone with a pension fund or stock index owns part of them, and therefore is benefiting from it.

TODAY'S debate

Should Red Sox fans boo Johnny Damon at Fenway?

MATTHEW LAVOIE
31
Software engineer
Hanover
It's a tough call. Boston fans take things to heart. I would boo him, but you can't fault him.

SARAH HECKLES
32
Art director
Boston
No. It's business. We all change jobs.

JOEL DENNIS
45
Travel business
Stoughton
No. I'd have done the same thing — take the money and play for one of the best teams in the history of baseball.



HOW TO CONTACT US

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How can the U.S. silence dissidents?

RICK DAVIS
• Whitman
Regarding the photo "Falun Gong protester silenced at ceremony for Chinese president" (April 21): In the picture, a Secret

Service agent is holding her hand over the mouth of a Falun Gong protester. How can we hold ourselves up to the world as the birthplace of freedom and the cradle of democracy when our own government acts to silence dissent with force?

THE METRO CARTOON: IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

TONY MURPHY



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