

Poor decision from Freedom zoning board

To the editor:
Four Blind Mice
Four blind mice, four blind mice,

See how they rule, see how they rule,

They all act the same,
No care for the town,
Did you ever see such a thing in your life,

As four blind mice?
They are all members of the Zoning Board of Adjustment in Freedom Town.

Remember their names: Craig Niiler, Neal Boyle, Karl Ogren and Ted Desmarais. Let us also not forget the influence of the selectmen and selectwoman (wife of a marina principal) which affected the board, who then made one of the worst decisions that I have ever seen and which will now have an impact on the town.

The marina is now allowed to do their thing and store their boats virtually wherever they wish without thought about fire, vehicle access, or neighborhood economic and environ-

mental impact, and in total disregard for the ruling of the Superior Court of New Hampshire.

But then again, how many really care what effect this unfounded decision will ultimately have? When the town again is faced with a possible suit to rectify this bad decision, we all will incur increased taxes. Are you prepared for that event?

As a former vice chairman of the ZBA and an active member during the 1997 marina request for a special exception, which was granted with specific conditions, I am appalled with the actions taken by the ZBA on Tuesday evening. Nobody ever said that being a member of the ZBA was an easy job. However, they must weather storms of influence, ascertain the facts and make decisions that are fair and reasonable to the entire town.

Donald E. Bossi
Freedom

English wreak havoc on all they try to 'fix'

To the editor:
Here is a ramble. Remember "Howard's End," the novel by Forster and then movie by Merchant and Ivory? In it, Henry Wilcox, the typical privileged, unaware, aristocratic Englishman, manages to screw up the lives of those he should care most about by essentially caring more about his ideology and wealth. Kind of like the English in America in the 1770s, in India and Africa in the 1800s and, more recently, in the Middle East. How is it the the eminently civilized Eng-

lish aristocracy manages to wreak havoc on and injure all it tries to "fix"? How can they be so cluelessly cruel? Many a psychoanalysis of Adolf Hitler, an ultimate "fixer," conclude that he wanted desperately to be just like the Proper English Gentleman (Hitler was Austrian, almost interchangeable with being English). And the British Empire was as fascist as it was colonial (simply redefine slightly terms used in history books). Need we remind everyone about the English

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William Marvel

Life in a Bubble

Early in January news came that a British boy had just beaten the world record for the youngest person to sail the Atlantic alone. Handling his own 28-foot sailboat, the 14-year-old lad made it from Gibraltar to Antigua in six weeks. My first thought, on reading the story, was that it was a good thing for his parents that they were British subjects. In the United States the Office of Child Idolatry Enforcement would have had them up on felony charges for endangering the welfare of a minor.

Streams of such sheltered progeny jam the roads and the schoolyards each morning, creeping through long valet delivery lines to the front door of their schools—where they will be taught to conserve energy and protect the environment by avoiding unnecessary trips, taking public transportation, or walking.

This boy's father followed him in another sailboat, but anything can happen on the open sea. Craft a lot bigger than those two boats have been separated in storms, many never to be seen again. Why, the child could have been hurt, or drowned. The very thought of it would send a young mother—a young American mother, at least—into convulsions. In those shrinking corners of the world where hardihood, independence, and self-reliance are still admired, other mothers might have been proud of sons who undertook such endeavors, but not here.

Here, where birth is an all-too-frequent occurrence as it is, the arrival of a child is greeted in the average household as an event equivalent to the second coming of Christ. It is the "miracle of birth," as though cows and pigs could not do the same thing—and with a lot less fuss. Each child is considered unique and special, and deserving of preferential treatment, or so most of them have been conditioned to believe.

Our society is expected to devote itself almost exclusively to the protection of children. If perpetual-safety advocates wish to impose restrictive laws on a permissive state, like mandatory seat belt or helmet use, they need only sneak the initial legislation in as a requirement for children, and gradually ease the age limit upward. If a school is in session (or if a staff member forgets to turn off the blinking lights), all traf-

fic must slow to a crawl. If a school bus stops to pick up a child or two, the whole world must come to a halt around it.

Then there are those kids for whom the school bus is just not good enough: they might have to rub elbows with the offspring of lesser mortals, who are somehow neither unique nor special. Special children ride in the comfort of Mummy's van, or her steel-reinforced SUV. Streams of such sheltered progeny jam the roads and the schoolyards each morning, creeping through long valet delivery lines to the front door of their schools—where they will be taught to conserve energy and protect the environment by avoiding unnecessary trips, taking public transportation, or walking.

One morning a mother with children aboard darted in front of me from the suburban ghetto at the foot of my hill, veering out so fast that her van with the special license plates threatened to tip over. It didn't (thus averting a national campaign to demand greater stability in vans), and she delivered her brood alive to Pine Tree School, a mile away. They just couldn't walk or bicycle with people driving so recklessly, even if Mummy came along. Too bad, for Mummy looked as though she could really use the exercise.

Neighborhood speed limits are often predicated on residents' arguments that their children are present. It's much easier for parents to make everyone else slow down than it is to teach their children to stay out of the roads—or, worse yet, to have to actually spend time monitoring what their precious babes are doing.

This indulgence lasts well into adolescence, by which time the most doting parents have grown heartily sick of their children. Then it's time to put the kids on wheels, so they can stop bothering Mummy and Daddy for rides to all the events that special children simply must attend. Even then the protective spirit intercedes, though, and the question arises which car would be safest for [insert special child's name here, misspelled in its own unique way]. One neurotic mother I know chose a Crown Victoria, thinking that such a gas guzzler would protect her boy during his inevitable accidents; others often choose Volvos, for the same reason.

Their aim, of course, is to assure the safety of the children they are inflicting on society. The safety of those their child motorists hit causes them little concern. Other people, after all, exist only to serve their unique and special children.

William Marvel lives in South Conway.

The Conway Daily Sun

Mt. Washington Valley's DAILY Newspaper

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"Seeking the truth and printing it"

THE CONWAY DAILY SUN is published

Monday through Saturday by Country News Club, Inc.

Dave Danforth, Mark Guerringue, Adam Hirshan Founders

Offices and Printing Plant: 64 Seavey St., North Conway, NH

Box 1940, North Conway, NH 03860 (603) 356-2999

Newsroom Fax: 356-8360, Advertising Fax 356-8774

Website: <http://www.mountwashingtonvalley.com>

E-mail: DailySun@mountwashingtonvalley.com

CIRCULATION: 16,100 distributed Monday through Saturday
FREE throughout Mount Washington Valley by C&M Delivery.

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in Ireland? The quiet, reserved, stiff-upper-lip Englishman who ever so politely orders you to bring him his slippers and tea, please. And to shut the door on your way out. No hooligans allowed. Everything in its place and the hierarchy preserved. Like in Iraq?

Iraq and the rest of the Middle East is, in a large part, a royal screw-up by the English hierarchy, by the Henry Wilcoxes of the world. The U.S. hierarchy is trying, in its bumbling, pseudo-English way, to clean things up. Maybe we should just let the natives clean things up,

as they have tried to in India and Africa. Oh, that's right. Oil.

In the final scene in the movie, Henry Wilcox, his eldest son in jail and a poor clerk dead indirectly because of Henry's decisions and indifference, pleadingly asks his wife, Margaret, if she thinks he has done wrong in having denied, against the will of his dying first wife, Howard's End to Margaret years ago. How clueless. How cruel. How English. Dare we say, how Bush/Cheney-ish?

J.S. Brockmeyer
Kearsarge