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## ROBIN CHASE

Defend yourself!  
By ALYSSA MARTINO

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Although Robin Chase—founder of Zipcar, GoLoco and Meadow Networks—thinks she ruined my life with her apocalyptic warnings, all is forgiven. I met up with the car-pooling and -sharing entrepreneur in downtown Boston to discuss climate concerns, historical fiascos and how even Boston's sports triumphs have an environmental impact.

### How did the initial concept for Zipcar

emerge?

My German co-founder was sitting in a café in Berlin, and saw one of those shared cars across the street. She came back to Boston, talked to me and said, "What do you think of this?" I thought it was brilliant. I have a one-car family. My husband used the car and sat on Route 128 all day long, so I never had access to it. The whole thing was incredibly appealing.

### So, I'm a little technology challenged. What's all this wireless technology nonsense about?

You make Zipcar reservations by Internet or cell phone, and those get sent to the car, so that the door will only open to the right person at the right time. You hold your zipcard on the windshield and that opens the door, enables the ignition and opens the billing records.

### Do you think machines will someday rule the world?

Machines will be everywhere, and we will continue to be controlling them. They'll be doing our bidding in many ways. They'll be our slaves. I do think we need to be careful in protecting our own personal privacy, because if we lose our privacy and our ability to control our own information, then we might be the slaves to the machines.

### GoLoco—that's very catchy.

That name was so hard to come up with! I'm very proud of it. It's three things: GoLoco—go wild and free-spirited with your friends; be independent. Go from location to location with local locomotion. And go low cost, low CO2. GoLoco as a way of life.

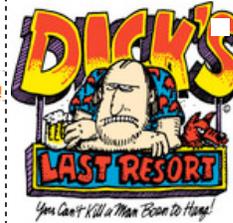
### But you don't think your actual customers are "loco" or crazy?

No, I think they're the smartest ones. They're the ones who figured out that it is 50 cents per mile to travel by yourself, that it's lonely and that we really need to think about reducing our carbon footprint. It's the smart, wise, happy, clever people who are choosing to GoLoco.

### Is GoLoco this century's version of hitchhiking?

I think it is! People don't want to share rides because they're afraid of riding with strangers. So, don't ride with strangers—ride with your friends, your colleagues and your neighbors, people you know something about through the social networking aspect of the site. GoLoco reduces all the bad stuff that comes with hitchhiking and

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## FEATURED BLOGS

### DOOMED PAPER'S SCOOP GETS SCOOPYER

By Media Farm on Thu, Jan 22, 2009 11:46 am

So, the newest shit show in the snowballing scandal of House Speaker **Sal DiMasi** and his bff/doppelganger/former accountant/unregistered lobbyist **Richard Vitale**

### MIKE BARNICLE IS SICK OF SELF-IMPORTANT PEOPLE LIKE HIM

By Media Farm on Wed, Jan 21, 2009 1:42 pm

Thank goodness for **Morning Joe**, the cable

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### What exactly is a "zipster?"

A person who's smart, urban, cool and gets around with cool cars whenever they want!

### Tell me about your new consulting group, Meadow Networks.

Devices like EZ Pass will soon be in every car in America. What I'm trying to get people to think about and accomplish, is to imagine if that device in your car could be a mobile Internet, and you can put any kind of application you want on it. One of those would be paying road tolls, but other would be sharing MP3s, surfing the internet or downloading movies. It is technologically possible, and I'm just working to help make that happen.

### What's your best advice to commuters in Boston?

Choose your apartment near the T. Get a great bike! Choose your job based on easy commutes. I want people to keep living car-independent lives, because that's where the future lies. Right now we associate cars with independence, but I think the reality is that cars make you a prisoner. People are spending 20 percent of their income on their car; they have to figure out blasted places to park it everywhere they go. The real freedom and independence comes from living in a place where you don't need a car.

### Do you lose sleep over global warming?

Yes, a lot. We have to get worldwide CO2 emissions down in order to avoid catastrophic effects of climate change. Everyone is focused on 2020 and 2050 goals when, in fact, we have two to three years to make some changes. If everyone in America shared one out of 20 rides, we would reduce 1 percent of CO2 emissions.

### A quote from your blog: "And what does this future hold? An environmental and urban disaster." It sounds like you're predicting the apocalypse!

When people get pushed to the corner on things that are basic to life—food, water, the ability to have income—they are going to fight resource wars or immigrate. People in North America like to think it won't affect them, but it will. Iraq is just a tiny little fraction of the pain and trouble that we will be seeing. We look back at other points in time, like the civil rights movement or Nazi Germany, and we think, "How could you just stand by?" I think this is a moment for heroism.

### In your blog, you rave about Vélib'—the new Parisian bike sharing program.

I do think bike-sharing would be a really wonderful thing for this city and many major cities. What was very fun about Paris is they have 16,000 bikes, and there's 10 to 20 every 200 feet. Each bike is used six to 12 times a day. A heck of a lot of people use them. It was transforming to see.

### Have you ever considered zipboats? Like zipcanoes or zipkayaks? I bet you could make a killing on the Charles.

Zipkids! Zip pets! You're bored and lonely? Take my pet for a walk in the park. Or your Mom's harassing you about not having any kids? Borrow a Zipkid. I used to never let anyone use the word share. You could call hotels Zipbeds. It's bed-sharing!

### How do Obama's and McCain's platforms on reducing gas prices and protecting the environment match up?

McCain is crazy. The idea that we want to drill more—drilling oil will produce something like three months more fuel in 10 years. It puts at risk things that are incredibly fragile. It's not a solution at all. I'm impressed that Obama hasn't been pressured to say things he shouldn't, like, "We're gonna lift gas taxes." I read yesterday that he was supporting ethanol, which, from a CO2 perspective, is just as bad as fossil fuel, or even worse. I don't think he's perfect, but he's a hundred times better than McCain.

### The Big Dig—thumbs up or thumbs down?

The Big Dig had such good ideals when it was started. It was going to improve the environment, produce jobs and get us more parkland. But as I walk down, it is so disappointing that the roads on either side of the park are so fast, you feel like the park is in the middle of the highway. That is very difficult to me. When you try to ride your bike along that route, it's dangerous and unpleasant.

### The Celtics seem to enjoy riding around on Duck Tour boats—down Boylston Street, around Fenway Park. I'm guessing these things aren't exactly fuel efficient.

I think Mayor Menino should create the "pedal-powered float" for Boston's incessant winning of sports championships. Those sports guys certainly have the muscles to

snow that asks questions that no one else asks (because, you know, they're so moronic they register below most people's legitimacy radar). Without humanitarians like **Joe Scarborough**, locally-grown blowhard and fired-for-lying former *Boston Globe* columnist **Mike Barnicle** wouldn't still have a job.

### YOUNG DEMS' INAUGURATION SHINDIG AT MANTRA

By Alexis Hauk on Wed, Jan 21, 2009 11:50 am

The **Young Democrats of Massachusetts** partied it up at Mantra inauguration night, to celebrate the inauguration of Barack Obama.



be pedaling themselves.

[[zipcar.com](http://zipcar.com), [goloco.org](http://goloco.org), [meadownetworks.com](http://meadownetworks.com)]

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**COMMENTS**

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