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VOTE.
RESIST.**

UTCC VOICE

**Drivers Beware!
Please Follow the
traffic laws to avoid
getting tickets
around O'Hare taxi
cab lot**

The Newsletter of Chicago Transportation Industry Since 2008

Ongoing O'Hare Traffic Mayhem

Traffic around O'Hare International Airport continues to be a mess, as Uber and Lyft cars jam the area, especially at peak hours. Rocky Orok's analysis and recommendations, starting on page 6. It looks like some at Aviation are listening. [Story on page 6](#)



Traffic on the Kennedy Express

Dorothy Brown Endorses UTCC Platform



Dorothy Brown with members of UTCC board at UTCC Office

Dorothy Brown, Clerk of the Cook County Circuit Court and candidate for Chicago mayor, visited our offices on Oct. 22nd to meet with our board and discuss the problems faced by cab drivers. She read every item of our 9 point Platform, and agreed to each one.. More about her visit in Common Sense Corner on page 2. We are inviting all candidates to join us and endorse our Platform. [More in Common Sense Corner, Page 2](#)

UTCC To Hold Elections January 15th

The UTCC will hold elections for stewards from Yellow, Flash, and others on Monday, January 15th. These stewards will serve on the UTCC Steering Committee. A General UTCC meeting will be held Monday, December 17th, at our office at 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., 2nd floor., to determine plans for the vote, All UTCC members are invited to join us and vote on the issues.

Holiday Events in Chicago

The top ten events for Chicagoans and Tourists, sure to attract crowds and spread the fun. Activities range from December to January. [List on Page 12](#)

Uber and Lyft Pick-ups to Move out of O'Hare

Is this a potential win for Chicago Taxi drivers?

[more on page 6](#)

**ALSO INSIDE
THIS ISSUE**

Common Sense Corner - UTCC's Platform - Driver of the Month - Vasudevan Meets with UTCC - Convention Schedule - Cab Drivers Group Drafts Proposal to 'Level the Playing Field'

COMMON SENSE CORNER

How UTCC Is improving The Transportation Industry!

Fayez Khozindar

It's been one year since UTCC started organizing the drivers at Yellow and Flash taxicab Companies in Chicago. We thank the leadership and management of these two companies for collecting membership dues from drivers (\$2.00 per week) and remit these funds to UTCC. UTCC team appreciates this partnership, and we hope that other transportation companies will do the same collaboration and allow us to organize the drivers in their facilities, so we may strengthen our resolve together to ensure better living wages for all drivers.

Talking to drivers and convince them to join UTCC is not an easy task. We could spend a long time explaining the reasons for a strong organization like UTCC to advocate for the rights of all drivers and enumerate a long list of benefits and answer the many questions the drivers have, after all this they would say; ok, let me think about it..., think about joining an organization defending your interest for \$2 per week?

One day, a driver told me: I will join you if you get rid of Uber and Lyft. The driver was not aware of UTCC campaigns to level the playing field for many years now.

On November 2017, and during a city of Chicago budget committee meeting, the city of Chicago approved what UTCC was advocating for many changes in the transportation industry to improve the life of the drivers and increase their income; such as the following changes:

- Reduce fines for medallion owners
- Have one inspection per year for vehicles five years or newer
- Provide more protections to owners in case of foreclosure
- Give more chance for lease drivers to win free medallions
- Increase penalties and fines to solicitors at both airports and authorize cease-and-desist orders to root them out
- Expand vehicle age limits to 10 years
- Allow single medallion owners to be independent without any affiliation and lease their taxis
- New vehicles in service must have no more than 125,000 miles

Currently, UTCC is working with the progressive caucus which consists of twelve aldermen at the City Council to adopt more of our demands to level the playing field more and more.

On Monday, October 22nd, 2018, Ms. Dorothy Brown, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County and a candidate for the Mayor of Chicago, paid a visit to UTCC office to familiarize herself with the problems facing the transportation industry. During that meeting, UTCC team presented to her our PLATFORM which is included in this issue of the UTCC Voice.

Dorothy Brown endorsed our platform. UTCC leadership is striving for justice for all, and we have extended our invitation to all the candidates for the Mayor of Chicago to meet with us and to commit themselves for the betterment of the citizens of the great City of Chicago.

Together, We Can Do IT!



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(LEFT) TO VISIT
GOUTCC.ORG!**

November - December Volume 11, Issue 6

UTCC

**UNITED TAXIDRIVERS
COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

Our Vision

To organize and unify all licensed chauffeurs in the Chicago area, so we can collectively overcome oppression and achieve economic and social justice.

Writers

Fayez Khozindar
Rocky Orok
Camille Erickson
Krishnan Vasudevan
Chris Chandler

Contributions

Taxi Workers Alliance
Choose Chicago

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***We welcome your contributions
feedback and letters!***

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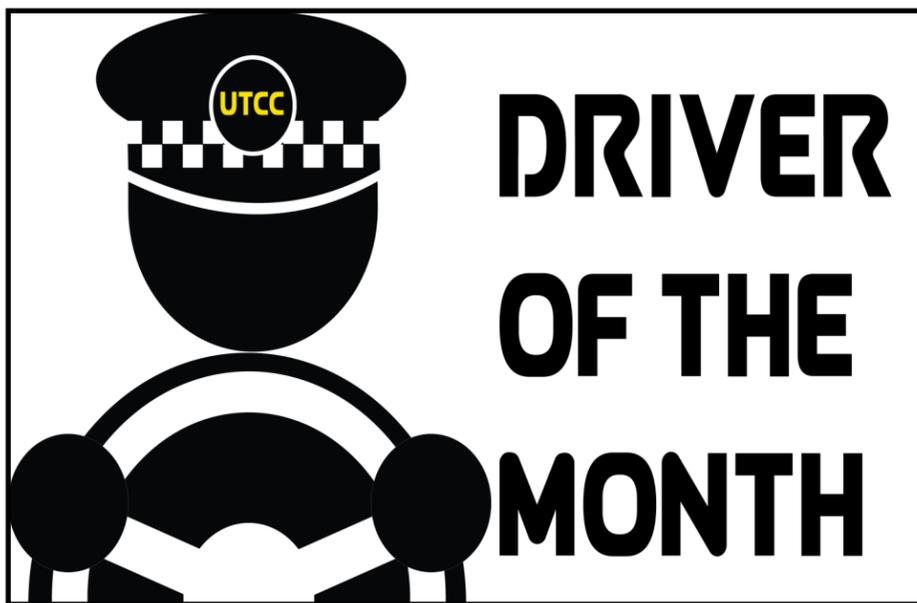
UTCC Platform: Leveling the Playing Field

Progressive Caucus Meeting in December The UTCC met with staff from the Progressive Caucus, and will be meeting with the full Caucus in December. Staff indicated immediate support for many items. We will let you know when we meet. There are now nine items in our Platform.

1. Impose a one-year cap on the number of rideshare vehicles such as Uber and Lyft.
2. Conduct an immediate audit of the city's rideshare and taxi businesses.
3. Require rideshare drivers be fully vetted, including fingerprinting, drug testing and medical exams.
4. Require rideshare drivers to have Illinois driver's licenses and Illinois plates.
5. Require rideshare drivers to pay the \$4 Airport Departure Tax.
6. Reduce all of the city's special fees for cabs to \$1 a year for three years.
7. Compensate medallion owners for the huge losses they have suffered over the past four years.
8. All cab drivers' traffic offenses should be assigned to Cook County Circuit Court unless the driver requests a municipal hearing.
9. Require that the city permit ads on cab vehicles promoting their services.

The Latest Addition to UTCC's Platform is Number 9.

The Purpose is to allow cabs to carry ads for their services on the sides of their Vehicles. This will provide convenience for both drivers and passengers and is already instated in suburban taxi companies. Drivers should be able to advertise on their owned medallions. The City Council should pass an ordinance authorizing such ads for taxis.



Sandra Videkic

The United Taxidriers Community Council (UTCC) met Sandra in January 2012 when she came to attend a rules and regulation hearing at the City Hall. At that time, Sandra was a somewhat new taxicab driver and had no idea that there was a “cap” on lease rates the taxicab companies were supposed to stay under.

Sandra had become a taxicab driver in 2011, and after working for other garages and medallion owners, she went to work for Dispatch Cab Affiliation for the next six months, where she was charged substantially more than what was legal. Dispatch charged Sandra \$924 per week, even though, the weekly lease at that time was \$535.

Along with six other drivers who were working with UTCC on the Lease Overcharge Campaign, Sandra filled out a written complain which was then submitted to the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer

Protection (BACP). A few weeks later, the department found the Dispatch cab company guilty and agreed to pay Sandra restitution of \$5390.

As a UTCC member, Sandra was active attending our meeting and volunteer her time through many of UTCC campaigns, and she was instrumental during the UTCC strike of July 2012 when she convinced the drivers to vacate the Commercial Vehicle Holding Area (CVHA) at O’Hare airport in the morning of July 2nd, 2012. After Sandra did her work and the parking lot at O’Hare became empty, I came in to take a picture for the vacant lot. Then the Chicago police came in and arrested me and towed my car.

Lately, while interacting with UTCC members at O’Hare airport, I was talking to Sandra and listening to her idea of what to do to improve the situation of all the drivers. She was sincere, frank, enthusiastic and wanted us to do something to help out; She tried to do some FOIA’s (freedom of information act) to know more about the transportation industry and the effect of rideshare on our jobs.

Sandra suggested that we should rent a billboard and advertise for the taxicab fares to educate the public and let people know that the fare from downtown to O’Hare is cheaper than Uber sometime.

After some research, we found out that the billboard will cost between \$10,000 to \$12,000 per month, a lot of money for the drivers to have their fares known. However, we can do this task for a much cheaper way if we advocate having the owners advertise their service on their own vehicles, then we will have about seven thousand moving billboards advertising our fares for free. That why, UTCC included this item among its current PLATFORM to level the playing field for all. ■

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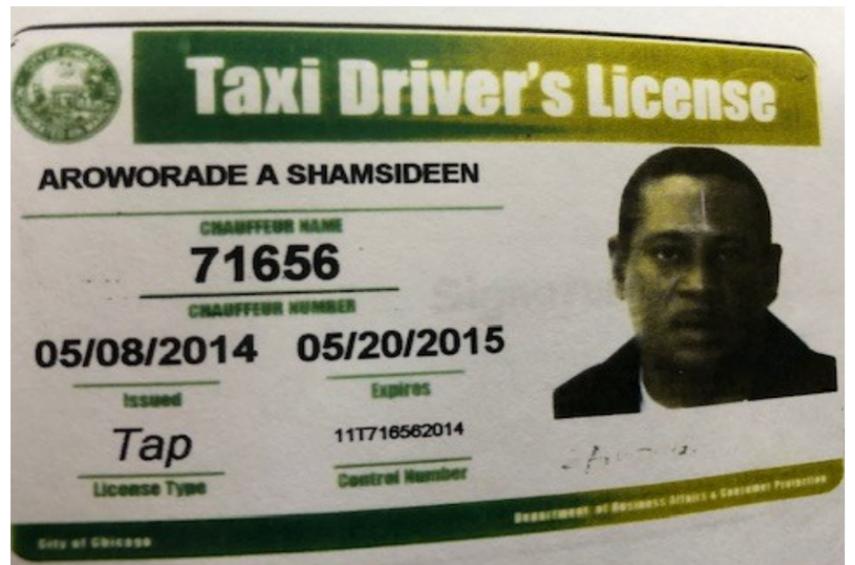
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Flash taxi cab company handed \$4,000 check to the widow of a passing driver.



Aroworade Shamsideen the Driver who died

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37-47	\$13.02-21.47	\$11.53-18.22
48-58	\$22.62-44.79	\$22.62-33.09
59-69	\$49.02-135.78	\$35.64-89.85
70-75	\$151.36-273.06	\$100.50-187.09
Tobacco Smokers		
20-25	\$24.02	\$19.18
26-36	\$24.11-25.87	\$19.45-23.41
37-47	\$27.19-51.13	\$24.64-43.91
48-58	\$55.09-121.88	\$46.90-96.54
59-69	\$131.12-304.13	\$103.84-215.42
70-75	\$335.57-563.55	\$230.47-328.06

Court Update



On Monday October 15th, 2018 Was the last court date for the perpetrator who killed Kamil Shamji two years ago the sister of Kamil was present was in court the perpetrator accepted a plea began of 43 years of jail with no possibility of parole. UTCC collected 4,000 dollars for the family giving the check to his daughter Jessica. ■

Marcos Fernandez Leaves Post

With heavy heart news from Marcos Fernandez general manager of landside operations at O'Hare airport telling us he is leaving his post as of October 1 Joe Burges will assume his responsibilities regarding transportation issues at O'Hare we wish Mr. Fernandez luck in his future endeavors. ■

Another New York Driver Commits Suicide

NYTW's Message to the public

to the public we ask that you open your hearts to the working men and women who have fallen into despair because of a business model of low pay, saturation and predatory lending spread across the globe by Uber and company leading to driver deaths by suicide in Australia, Taiwan, India, South Africa and NYC. Every city needs to take a deeper look at what happens when you let Wall Street backed corporations use billions of dollars in capital to lock workers into a prison of poverty."

If you are feeling depressed, please know that you are not alone. Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or contact the Crisis Text Line by texting TALK to 741-741.

UTCC Stands With NYTW

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Ride share Causes Traffic M

Shows Need fo

By Rock



151 more parking spot where added to the CVHA at O'Hare after the Aviation listened to UTCC's demand to remove the Limos and make more room for the taxicab at O'Hare.



This is the line of taxicabs going to the terminal at O'HARE airport, it's full and baking up all the way to the staging area. Is this the new strategy for the Standard Parking who control the movement of taxicabs at the airport? Instead of waiting outside at Bissey Coleman Dr. they wait outside the terminals?

Uber and Lyft Pickups To Be Moved Out Of O'Hare

Aviation Department staff are working on plans to move the pickup place for rideshares on the Upper Level at O'Hare to a nearby location, and provide shuttle service there. The Department's P.R. office said they knew nothing of such plans, but staff members confirmed the study was underway, now searching for the best location. They stressed there is no timetable. The move is necessary because of the traffic snarls caused by Uber and Lyft cars, especially at peak hours.

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In the past year, some traveling customers have had to miss their flights due to the heavy traffic congestion en-route in-to the O'Hare airport terminals. Previously, most traveling customers from Chicago downtown to O'Hare airport always set aside at least an hour for the commute due to normal traffic, however, that is no more the case. Depending on the day and time, you may need an extra 30 to 45mins to get to the terminals from I-190W, to board your flight.

In the past, the passenger bottleneck use to be inside the terminals, however, due to the technological innovation, resulting in extended traffic congestion at the airport, we now have overcrowding inside the airport and outside on the curbside. Too many cars heading to the airport at peak hours have worsened the problems for the commuters. We now have thousands of rideshare drivers heading to and out of the airport arrival terminals creating traffic bottlenecks on the inbound and outbound lanes of the airport in addition to blocking traffic access to the arrival terminals.

Most airports like O'Hare were initially built to handle a certain amount of passenger traffic with possible 50-80 percent projected increase in the future. However, Chicago O'Hare airport like most other big airports have seen between 300-500 percent increases in passenger traffic within the last 5 years. The recent increase of curbside passengers at O'Hare airport is mostly due to the number of passengers being dropped off and picked up at the terminals by the rideshare companies like Uber and Lyft. The arrangement by the City of Chicago and the Department of Aviation to allow the rideshare companies to pick up and drop off at the departure terminal in our opinion is a wrong decision that has resulted in traffic gridlock and passenger bottleneck at the terminal.

This decision has also defeated the idea of previously alleviating the traffic and passenger congestion in the past that resulted in the creation of the cell phone lot, the remote parking, the automated people mover and the rental car shuttles. It is like recreating the past problem in a new way.

Safety Concerns

The inexperience of the rideshare drivers has created more gridlock around the airport terminals as more people are choosing not to drive their cars to the airport parking lot or to use the public transit system.

Unlike the taxis, shuttles and bus drivers, most of the rideshare drivers are untrained and unprofessional in their driving habits thereby causing more confusion and commotion around the terminals. Some of them drop passengers off right in the middle of moving traffic lanes creating a safety hazard for the passengers, the drivers behind and the traffic control aide. Sometimes, passengers running late for their flight would suddenly open up the car door and drag their luggage across several lanes of traffic while avoiding being hit by other drivers trying to maneuver around them. This situation increases the anger and frustration between the pedestrians and the motorist

Mayhem at O'Hare Airport

for Chicago Cap

ky Orok

competing for the same space thereby compromising the safety of all. More often than not, sometimes the terminals are so congested that the traffic control aides are unable to perform their duties due to traffic gridlock. At anytime that you have pedestrians and drivers' competing for the same space, safety becomes a top concern that cannot be overlooked.

In addition, the consistent gridlock of vehicles moving slowly on the arrival level of the terminals is a concern for the sustainable durability and service life of the terminal infrastructures. The construction design and structure of the arrival level was to accommodate constantly moving vehicles with some vehicles intermittently stopping to drop off passengers at the entrances. The construction was not meant to hold that many stationary vehicles at the same time as this will ultimately affect the service life of the terminal.

Financial implication

It may take some time to find out the financial effect of rideshare on the economy of the airport. One thing is obvious, parking which is normally the number one revenue source for most airports is down and the fee from rideshare passenger would hardly offset the loss from parking revenue. Some airports are already reporting significant losses from parking revenue due to more people opting to take rideshare than drive themselves to the airport and pay for parking

Solving the Problem

It is now apparent that the introduction of rideshare pickup and drop-off at the departure terminal has culminated in the extensive traffic congestion around the airport. The same traffic congestion was experienced on Bessie Coleman drive when the rideshare lot was located there before they were moved to the new staging location.

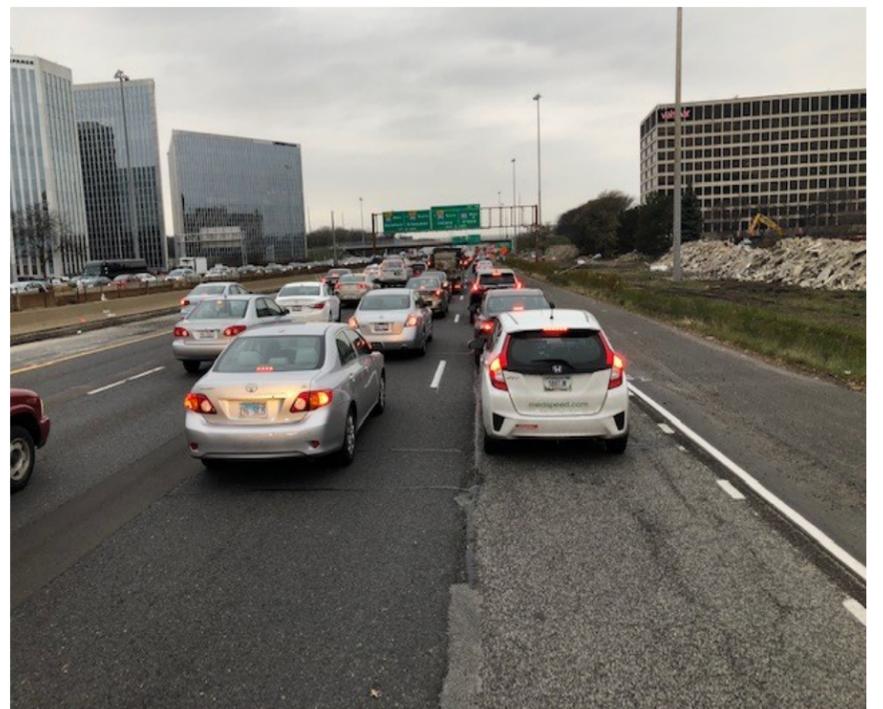
One way of reducing the traffic congestion would be to move the rideshare pickup or drop off away from the terminals to a remote location and have the passengers move via a shuttle, bus or train to that location as have been done in other airport locations with similar problems.

Another way is to cap number of ride share vehicles, as New York City has done so they can study the congestion problem. And in any case, the City should insist that rideshare drivers have Illinois licenses and their vehicles have Illinois license plates. A good percentage of the Uber and Lyft cars at O'Hare are from out of state.

The whole idea of most airports use of parking, shuttles, taxis, limousine and people movers was to decongest the airport for easy access of passengers Now the concern is will the city or the Mayor have the courage to do the right thing for the traveling public? ■



(Top and Bottom) increased vehicles on the roads causes more congestion entering and exiting O'Hare, Time drivers spend in traffic has increased



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Rahul Parikh 773-297-0100

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at Markham court house

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News From O'Hare Airport



After many years of protests and UTCC'S demands for more healthy food for the drivers at O'HARE airport, the only restaurant opened its doors after one month long renovation. ■

UTCC MEMBER NOTICE

UTCC members that joined through our affiliations program (\$2 Weekly) for Yellow & Flash Affiliations Please notify your respected affiliation or UTCC before taking a break, vacation, or retirement so we can suspend or pause your membership.



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Professor Vasudevan Meets with UTCC

My name is Krishnan Vasudevan and I am an assistant professor of visual communication at the Philip Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland, College Park. My research and films explore how marginalized social groups produce media in service of voice and equal citizenship. In June 2017, my friend Dave Passmore, then the president of the Taxi Drivers Association of Austin handed me the December 2014 edition of the UTCC Voice. At the time I had been producing a film about the ATX Coop Taxi, a driver-led cooperative that was created to take on TNPs and the traditional taxi industry. Dave wanted me to see how media production is crucial in taxi drivers' fight for survival, as a way to empower drivers and inform the wider public of their struggles. I was immediately struck by the high print quality and wanted to know more about the UTCC and the UTCC Voice. I downloaded all the available copies of the Voice from the UTCC website and conducted an initial analysis to understand the issues that the newsletter addressed and how it addressed them. Three major themes emerged from this exploratory analysis. First, the Voice presents the taxi drivers struggle as a human rights issue as exemplified by stories about violence against taxi drivers, the kangaroo court system and the struggle to make a living wage. Secondly, another emergent theme was that stories focused on the UTCC's organizing activities such as the lease overcharge campaign. Finally, the Voice presents as Fayeze Khozindar also explained to me in person, "the human side," of taxi drivers as evidenced in the touching obituaries, stories about drivers' personal concerns and essays about their lives outside the profession of taxi driving. While, this analysis revealed what is in the Voice, I wanted to know how the Voice was made and who produced the publication.



After being in contact with Fayeze for a few months, I flew to Chicago in mid-August 2018 and spent six days observing how the Voice is made. I interviewed the Voice's editorial staff, observed an editorial meeting and saw how and where the newsletter is distributed. During my time in the field, the four-man editorial staff was ramping up production for the September/October issue. This process occurred iteratively and constantly. During the editorial lunch meeting I attended on a hot Saturday afternoon, the main stories were New York City's crackdown on Uber along with a recent mayoral transportation task force meeting in Chicago. Over the next few days, as I tagged along with Fayeze on his membership drives, he was constantly on the phone discussing stories with other UTCC members, making updates to the initial list of articles as new contributions and breaking news emerged. As Fayeze explained to me, the Voice must be both relevant and timely as it only publishes once every two months. The painstaking which the UTCC Voice staff explained often goes down to the wire, was in service of making sure Chicago taxi drivers have the most up-to-date information about their profession and the activities of the UTCC.

Each of the four staff members I spent time with provide a critical function, which allow the Voice to nimbly run on modest resources. Chris's vast editorial experience, Rocky's understanding of strategy, Fayeze's organizing expertise and Michael's graphic design skills were essential to producing the newsletter. Furthermore, as I witnessed during the editorial meeting each member of the staff had voice within the conversation and the newsletter was the result of a truly a collaborative, democratic process.

Essential to the Voice's distribution strategy is ensuring the Voice is plentifully and reliably available at places frequented by drivers. These places included the O'hare staging area, restaurants such as Pakeeza BBQ & Grill and at the offices of taxi companies. Fayeze had stacks of the latest issue in his minivan ready to replenish any stands that had run out of UTCC Voice copies, an arduous task unto itself not to mention his other responsibilities. I visited six of the 38 locations the UTCC Voice is distributed to speak to the newsletter's core audience, taxi drivers. Although several drivers did not want to speak with me or had not heard of the newsletter, the drivers who I did speak with shared common sentiments. As Ali, a black car driver I spoke with at the O'hare staging area, explained, the UTCC Voice was important to his media digest as it offered him all the top stories relevant to his profession that were missing from more mainstream newspapers. Several drivers also mentioned that the Voice provided them important information about legislation



related to TNPs. It should be noted that a number of drivers I spoke to also read the Chicago Dispatcher for news about the taxi industry.

I am very grateful to the editorial staff for allowing me to see how the UTCC Voice is made. During a period of precarity for the taxi industry, the UTCC Voice has remained a constant and reliable source of information for taxi drivers. As studies of alternative and independent media have found, newsletters such as the Voice are crucial to the fabric of social movements. Perhaps more importantly, the people who dedicate their lives to producing this media are the beating heart of social change. ■

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Convention Schedule

Convention	Venues	Start Date	End Date	Attendance
AFP Annual Conference	McCormick Place West	11/4/2018	11/6/2018	6000
University of Washington - November 2018 CHS SCM *	Chicago Marriott O'Hare Hotel	11/5/2018	11/7/2018	33
AHA 2018 Scientific Sessions	Lakeside Center at McCormick Place, McCormick Place North, McCormick Place South	11/11/2018	11/14/2018	22000
IASB-IASA-IASBO 2018 Joint Annual Conference	Hyatt Regency Chicago	11/16/2018	11/18/2018	11340
RSNA 2018 Annual Meeting	Lakeside Center at McCormick Place, McCormick Place North, McCormick Place South	11/25/2018	11/30/2018	55000
98th NCSS Annual Conference	Hyatt Regency Chicago	11/30/2018	12/2/2018	4500
CIMUN 2018 MUNDO December	Hilton Chicago	12/4/2018	12/9/2018	1500
American Seed Trade Association 2018 CSS & Seed Expo	Hyatt Regency Chicago	12/5/2018	12/7/2018	2000
MAS 2018 Annual National Convention	McCormick Place North, McCormick Place South	12/27/2018	12/29/2018	12000
Winter Volleyball Championship 2019	Lakeside Center at McCormick Place	1/19/2019	1/21/2019	7500
2019 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism	Palmer House Hilton	2/2/2019	2/6/2019	600
ALPHA KAPPA PSI 2019	Palmer House Hilton	2/8/2019	2/9/2019	600
CDS Annual Midwinter Meeting 2019	McCormick Place West	2/21/2019	2/23/2019	30000
International Home + Housewares Show 2019	McCormick Place North, Lakeside Center at McCormick Place, McCormick Place South	3/2/2019	3/5/2019	63000
ABA Techshow 2019	Hyatt Regency Chicago	3/4/2019	3/10/2019	450
American College of Healthcare Executives 2019 Congress on Healthcare Leadership	Hilton Chicago	3/4/2019	3/7/2019	5000

Cab Drivers Group Drafts Proposal to ‘Level the Playing Field’ and Regulate Ride-shares in Chicago

Camille Erickson

Ritesh C. Roshan, 27, has been a taxi driver for two years, but he is already looking for other employment. Idling at a taxi stand in front of the Fairmont Hotel in downtown Chicago on Aug. 13, he watched multiple cars bearing Uber logos pick up passengers in front of him.

“We have to wait hours,” he said. “We never know if it takes one hour, two hours, or three hours to get a fare. The business is slow.”

Roshan is among the many Chicago cab drivers who have seen their compensation drop in recent years. “We’re working a lot of hours and getting less money,” he said.

The influx of ride-shares like Lyft and Uber is to blame for the taxi industry’s financial decline, according to Faye Khozindar, the executive director of The United Taxi Drivers Community Council (UTCC), an organization advocating for the rights of taxi drivers in Chicago.

The UTCC, determined to curb these companies’ seismic impact on the livelihood of taxi drivers, is calling on the city to level the playing field by increasing regulations on ride-shares.

They plan to present an eight-point proposal to Alderman Scott Waguespack, 32nd, who chairs the Progressive Reform Caucus of the Chicago City Council this fall.

As Khozindar sees it, since the boom in ride-shares, taxi



drivers have experienced widespread financial devastation and even death, from suicide or the physical toll of longer hours. “Whoever used to work 6 days a week, now works 7 days a week,” Khozindar said. “Whoever used to work 12 hours a day, now works 16 hours a day. They cannot see their families, they cannot have a social life. They have nothing.”

Crippling debt has driven at least five cab drivers to commit suicide over the course of five months in New York City. Khozindar sees the hardship hitting Chicago drivers too. The severe economic consequences have led to more strokes, heart attacks and other stress-related illness among the city’s taxi drivers, he said. “We have lost a lot of drivers here, but they pass away quietly,” said Khozindar.

At the top of the new proposal by the UTCC, organizers are calling for a limit on the number of ride-share drivers allowed in the city to mitigate the impact on taxi drivers’ business.

The number of active ride-share vehicles increased from 15,078 in March 2015 to 68,832 in December 2017, according to data obtained from the city’s Depart-

ment of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) by the Chicago Tribune this year.

Decreasing medallion value hits taxi drivers’ pockets

Like many major cities, Chicago requires taxi drivers to obtain medallions, or city-issued permits, in an effort to regulate the number of cabs on the roads. There are 6,999 medallions allowed in Chicago.

According to a 2017 report by Cab Drivers United, a taxi driver-led organization fighting for better working conditions, 61 percent of medallions are owned by cab companies and leased to drivers, while the remainder are owner-operated, or purchased by individual taxi drivers who operate their cabs like a small business.

The high demand for medallions coupled with their limited supply once made medallions valuable, until Uber and Lyft drivers entered the market

Ride-shares can operate without medallions. The unchecked rise of ride-share drivers the past eight years in Chicago effectively disrupted the transportation industry and caused the value of the once-coveted medallion to plummet, said Khozindar.

In 2014, multiple medallions sold at auction for \$375,000. But last month, a medallion sold for as low as \$30,000, according to the city’s BACP.

“The medallion used to be a luxury thing to have, it was like a retirement ticket for the driver,” said Khozindar.

Drivers dedicated significant savings or acquired loans to purchase medallions to operate their own cabs, typically planning to later sell the medallions at a profit. Medallion owners now shoulder the debt from the purchase of the medallion and have little hope of reselling it at a profit.

Drivers or companies unable to keep up on loan payments risk having their medallion foreclosed upon. Out of 6,999 medallions in Chicago, 1,284 medallions are in foreclosure, according to BACP data from the city of Chicago data portal.

Increased competition from ride-shares also makes it harder for drivers leasing taxi cabs to make enough income to afford regular payments to medallion owners.

“It’s terrible. There are a lot of people who have had to quit the business,” said Chris Chandler, a long-time spokesperson for UTCC and a taxi driver for 9 years. “It’s been a disaster and people are desperate.”

Michaelrush Nwanah, 20, is a community organizer at UTCC. His father is a retired taxi driver who sold his last medallion at a significant loss in 2015. ■

Read More At sjnnchicago.medill.northwestern.edu

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TOP 10 CHICAGO HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

MILLENNIUM PARK

Millennium Park is the epicenter of holiday fun in Chicago. See the lighting of the city's sparkling Christmas tree, skate at **McCormick Tribune Ice Rink**, join in caroling at Cloud Gate or the *Do-It-Yourself Messiah* at the **Harris Theater for Music and Dance**, and check out **Lurie Garden** in winter-time.

Admission Free | Available all Year

WREATHING OF THE LIONS

The **Wreathing of the Lions** has been a tradition at the **Art Institute of Chicago** for more than 25 years. Watch as cheery holiday wreaths are placed on the regal lion statues on the museum steps (where they're up all season), then head inside for art-making activities.

Admission Free | November 23, 2018 | 10:00–10:30

MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

This massive museum, one of the first and best in the country, features more than 2,000 hands-on exhibits about everything from outer space to robots. During the holidays, locals and visitors are treated to the annual Christmas Around the World and Holidays of Light extravaganza.

Admission Starts at \$10.95 | Available all Year | Daily 9:30am-4pm

CHRISTKINDLMARKET

Christkindl market Chicago is an authentic German holiday market, complete with charming wooden stalls, set in the midst of Daley Plaza. Stroll the market with a cup of warm, spiced wine as you shop for unique holiday gifts and ornaments.

Admission Starts at \$15 | open daily November 18th- December 24th, from 11am until 8pm

SKATING RIBBON

Glide along the winding **Skating Ribbon** at **Maggie Daley Park**, where on special days you can have breakfast and ice skate with an impressively agile Santa, plus catch carolers serenading the crowds on Sunday afternoons.

Admission Free Rental starts at \$13 | open daily November 16 - January 1st 10:00am – 10:00pm

MACY'S ON STATE STREET

Take a walk along historic **State Street** to see the whimsical holiday windows unveiled for the past 50 years by **Macy's on State Street**. Then duck into the department store and have lunch in **The Walnut Room** under the magnificently decorated Great Tree, which celebrates its 111th-anniversary lighting in 2018.

Admission Free | Open Daily all Year

ZOOLIGHTS

Ooh and ahh at the dazzling animated light displays during **Zoo Lights** at **Lincoln Park Zoo**, where you'll also find free crafts for kids, frosty beers for the grown-ups, live ice sculpture carving and visits with Santa Claus.

Admission Free | November 23 - January 6 4:30-9pm

THE NUTCRACKER

The **Joffrey Ballet's** glorious performance of **The Nutcracker** at the historic **Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University** is an enchanting production that boasts lavish costumes, beautiful choreography and a mesmerizing musical score played by a live orchestra.

Admission Varies | open December 1-30 Various Showings

WINTER WONDERFEST

The whole family will be delighted by **Winter WonderFest** at **Navy Pier**. A sprawling indoor winter wonderland is festively decked out for the holidays and features carnival rides, an ice skating rink, and selfies with Santa.

Admission Starts at \$10 | Open Friday, November 30, 2018 - Sunday, January 6, 2019

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Celebrate **New Year's Eve** in style in Chicago, where parties are held everywhere from glamorous downtown hotel ballrooms to hip restaurants and nightclubs. Don't miss the fireworks at Navy Pier that glitter above the skyline.

Admission Varies | Varies Per Location

