

# UTCC VOICE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Volume I

August-September 2008

Issue 4

## Drivers demand Equitable Olympics

### Cabdrivers join community-based coalition calling for City of Chicago to sign "Community Benefits Agreement"

Cabdrivers with the United Taxidriver Community Council (UTCC) have joined forces with a dozen other community groups under the banner of Communities for an Equitable Olympics 2016

(CEO 2016).

On August 16, 2008, CEO 2016 released a list of demands to the city calling for the community to be included in the city's bid process for the 2016 Olympic Summer

Games at a press conference and march that attracted over 500 community leaders.

The newly formed coalition calls upon the City of Chicago and the Chicago 2016 Committee to include the community in the planning process for the 2016 games, and to include a "benefits agreement" with the city's Olympic bid detailing strategies to improve transportation infrastructure and ensure living-wage jobs in Chicago.

Cabdrivers with the UTCC, through their partnering organization American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) now have a seat at the table with some of the most influential community organizations, including the citywide Grassroots Collaborative. Their demands, includ-

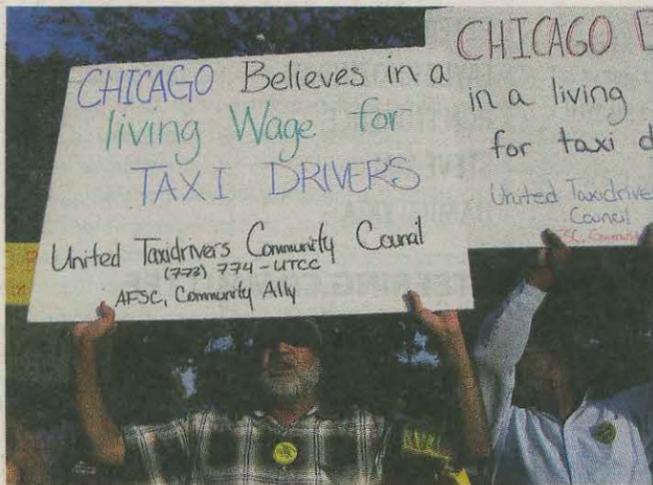
ing centralized dispatching and a guaranteed living wage through reviews of rates of fare every two years for Chicago cabdrivers, are included in the coalition's demands.

UTCC Chair Faye Z Khozindar addressed the hundreds gathered at the rally: "Cabdriver in Chicago deserve a decent living wage... and we need a centralized dispatching system, so that better taxi services can be brought to the west side, the south side, the north side and the east side!" The crowd roared with applause and chants as he outlined the proposals.

CEO 2016 made clear that it does not oppose a Chicago Olympics. However, the coalition believes that only a seat at the planning table can prevent a negative impact to the community in the lead-up

## DEMANDS ON THE "EQUITABLE OLYMPICS" PLATFORM

- ◆ Taxi drivers shall earn a living wage via biennial (every two years) review of economic factors and fares impacting their earnings.
- ◆ Create a centralized dispatch system to facilitate taxi operations in underserved areas so that there is better service and more opportunities for cabdrivers to get fares.



UTCC Steering Committee members Raja Khan and Ron Florence hold signs and chant calling for a living wage for drivers at a rally which attracted over 500 Chicagoans

CONT. ON PAGE 4

## Letter to our passengers

Excuse me. We need to talk. We hope this letter can be an opening to a fruitful dialogue we Chicago cabdrivers need to have with you, our passengers, with which we have a mutually beneficial and rewarding relationship.

After all, you need to go places quickly and efficiently, on time and safely. We can do that for you. And we need to earn a living, feed our families, go to school, pay our mortgages, pay taxes to support the public weal, and

be productive members of our society. And you can, and do, help us do those things. Believe me, we are grateful.

We in the United Taxidriver Community Council, a new organization dedicated to improving our working conditions and improving our human rights to respect, dignity, safe working conditions and a living wage are of the firm opinion that a person who does not have an abiding interest and a heart which finds sustenance in

CONT. ON PAGE 6

## UTCC calls for unification of cabdrivers' movement



By Peter Ali Enger, UTCC Secretary

The United Taxidriver Community Council called for a Unity Forum of Chicago cabdrivers on Sat. Aug. 9th. It was held at Baba Palace, at Orleans and Chicago Avenues in Chicago, where the idea for the UTCC itself was born back in January of this year, 2008.

The UTCC decided to call this Forum three weeks ago in order to try to bring together the many perceived 'groups' of cabdriver orga-

nizations that we had been hearing about, and some selected leaders in their communities that we had come into contact with in our organizing efforts.

We had heard from many sources in our cabdriver community that we should reach out and try to come to some kind of consensus and unity around some core issues concerning Chicago cabdrivers, so that we could all work together to achieve them. We thought it would be a good idea.

So we invited the following organizations and community leaders:

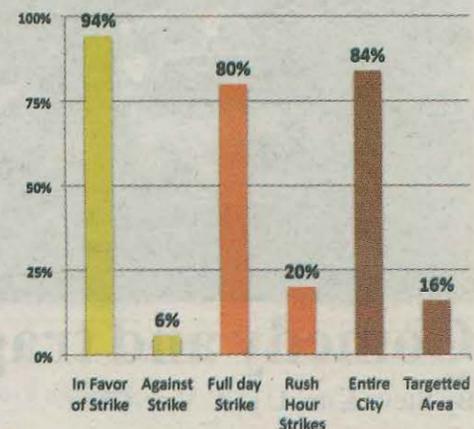
- John Henry Assabill, President, Ghanaian

CONT. ON PAGE 5



More than a dozen community leaders and allies gather at UTCC's Unity Forum at Baba Palace restaurant

## Strike Survey 94% in favor of a strike



CONT. ON PAGE 5

## ¿Discriminación con los taxistas?

By Hamimi Yata



Hemos sido y seguimos siendo los taxistas víctimas de la discriminación.

En repetidas ocasiones varios compañeros hemos sido objetos de las quejas de los clientes, sido informadas de dichas queja através de cartas enviadas la ciudad de Chicago mucho tiempo después de haber sido formulada la queja, aproximadamente entre seis meses.

Los taxistas somos obligados a presentarnos en la corte situada en la calle Superior, no sucediendo lo mismo con el cliente quien

CONT. ON PAGE 7

### INSIDE...

COMMON SENSE CORNER.....	2
COMEDY AND TRAGEDY IN THE LIFE OF A CABDRIVER.....	2
REPORT: UPDATE FROM MEETING WITH DCS.....	3
INCIDENT REPORT FORM.....	3
BUYER BEWARE.....	5
PARKING WHILE PRAYING: A REMINDER.....	5
STRIKE UPDATE.....	5
EDITORIAL: LETTER TO SUBURBAN CABDRIVERS.....	6
CONVENTIONS AND EVENTS.....	7
ISLAMIC PRAYER TIMES.....	8
GAME TIMES.....	8
A LETTER TO CHICAGO DISPATCHER'S GEORGE LUTFALLAH.....	8
UTCC MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT.....	8

# Common Sense Corner

*What to do, and what not to do on the roads...*

By "Common Sense Man"

I know that not everybody drives the same way I do, meaning that people are different and they drive different ways. Here are some common sense tips from a veteran cabdriver to keep you and those around you safe on the roads. Remember if someone is in a hurry, let him go! It takes 2 impatient drivers to create an accident...

- Be careful on the highway- don't pass from right lane, remember drive right, pass left and notice the merging areas where the exit and entrance is of the highway. Be careful not to crowd the people coming into the highway by merging into their area- this is a no no! Stay away from the entrance of the highway- just keep going at a steady speed with the flow of the traffic.
- On the highway don't be combative and you don't have to race because you are going with the flow of traffic no matter how many times you change lanes and no matter how many violations you commit you will not be gaining time, because the flow of traffic will prevent you from being in the front. And when you do change lanes, use your signal! Be careful of driving in bridges in the winter time because they get frozen.
- Now you are on the highway and in front of you is a slow moving vehicle in the passing lane- what do you do? You give them a signal? Put on the brights? Honk? Flip him off? Insult him? All these will not help you pass that slow car... The best solution is to let it be and to go around with care.
- Don't race on the highway or Lake Shore Drive. I notice a lot of people are going to the airport and they all race each other for no reason! They've all got to go the same place- the terminal- so what is the use?
- Something else to remember- since we have the seat belt we have to use it; Its the law- or you will get a ticket!
- When you come to the intersection use one lane, if there is enough space for the right lane to pass, don't block the whole intersection. Let the traffic go... some people like to turn right on red, if its available, if its permissible. So don't get insulted, again let them go! Pay attention and only take only one lane at a time at the top of the intersection, so you will not get insulted.
- Most intersection in the suburbs have sensors, so please don't pass the line by the sensor otherwise you stay there for a long time and the light wont turn green.
- When you pick up and load luggage, come to the curb don't block the street! That is a ticket! And don't pick up anybody or load luggage while you have a passenger- this is disrespectful, and it is a ticket- The passenger with you could complain!
- When the passengers on the sidewalk want a cab, he's not going to stop them, if they are racing- he's going to hail the slow moving cab, who seems to be a careful driver!
- Don't reject anybody, any passenger, because that black man on the sidewalk may be a city inspector and take you to the office and let his boss know you did not stop for him.
- If you eat in your car, clean inside and out. If you go to the airport with a dirty & dusty cab you could get a ticket about 65 dollars or more- so clean your cab- its not worth it!
- Don't lose your temper- one driver got in an argument with a doorman at the Hyatt and it got loud and very rowdy, and the end, the driver dropped his pants and exposed himself! Unfortunately for this driver, it was all video-taped and that driver lost his medallion! Don't lose your cool- most intersections are under surveillance these days!
- When you come in to the area in front of hotels with your passenger, please don't block other cabs because other cabs are leaving! Stay in line and let your passenger get out behind the other cabs. They were first, they unloaded already, and want to leave. If you come to the left of them, you prevent them from leaving! So, don't do that!



## Comedy and tragedy in the life of a cabdriver

By Steve Kim, UTCC Vice-Chair

There was a cabdriver who picked up a fare at 4:30 in the morning at the Red No Five bar on Halsted and Hubbard Street. You should know that this is a very expensive bar, with a large cover charge and very overpriced drinks and very pretty people who have money who go there. His fare was a young white American male, dressed very nice. He was going right up Halsted St. to Webster, at 2200 North.

When the cabdriver pulled up to the intersection at North Avenue (1600 North), he stopped at the stop light. Then all of a sudden he heard a 'chunk!', and he looked around and saw his passenger get out and closed the back door and was walking away very fast! He was beating the fare!!

Now this cabdriver was not normally an angry person, and it was only a \$6.35 fare so far. He had people beat his fare before, and he forgave them. Sometimes they are poor, or drunk and stupid, and it's only money after all. He had a good night that night, and he can still go back to Red No Five before they close at 5 AM.

But then he thought again. This passenger was dressed nice. He was not so drunk. He was young and had money. This cabdriver was not crazy to chase him, but he was a little upset, and annoyed, and decided that he would have a little fun. He should not get away with it for nothing! So he turned left onto North Ave. and pulled into the train station, to follow the passenger. The passenger then turned the other way and started to run a little. The cabdriver turned again onto Clybourn and then back onto Halsted, to chase the passenger. Now the passenger was running back the other way again! He looked nervous!

The next thing you know, a police car came west on North Avenue, and saw that something was happening, so they turned on their siren (R-r-r-r-r-o-o-u-u-h!!) and lights and stopped the running passenger! The cabdriver pulled over his cab and went over to the police to explain what was happening. The police officers were amused. They told the young man he had to pay. But first they asked the cabdriver, "You know, if you want to press charges, we can take him to jail for the night. It is theft of services, you know..."

The cabdriver thought about it for a minute. It WAS only \$6.35 on the meter, but for once, this time, he thought the passenger should learn a lesson. After all, he had money, and he was treating a hardworking cabdriver like he didn't care at all! So he told the police officer, "Ok, I will press charges this time." And so the police took the passenger to jail!! For a \$6.35 theft of services charge!

I bet he will never do that again!



## UTCC VOICE

### 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.

#### EDITOR

PETER ALI ENGER

#### WRITERS

PETER ALI ENGER  
FAYEZ KHOZINDAR  
RON FLORENCE  
STEVE KIM  
HAMIMI YATA

#### STEERING COMMITTEE

AHMED DAHIR  
PETER ALI ENGER  
RON FLORENCE  
EHSAN GHOREISHI  
RAJA KHAN  
FAYEZ KHOZINDAR  
STEVE KIM  
MARC NELSON  
BOB ROSE  
DIANE SANTUCCI  
VAIT MIFTARI  
NAIMET RAZA  
STANLEY SHEN

#### SOLIDARITY MEMBERS

PRATEEK SAMPAT, PROGRAM DIRECTOR  
AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE  
TRACY LUEDKE, PROFESSOR  
NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

#### LAYOUT

EHSAN GHOREISHI  
PRATEEK SAMPAT

INFO@GOUTCC.ORG/773-774-UTCC

UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL  
6124 N MILWAUKEE, STE 12, CHICAGO, IL 60646

**WE WELCOME YOUR  
CONTRIBUTIONS,  
FEEDBACK, AND LETTERS!**

# REPORT:

MONTHLY MEETING WITH  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER SERVICES

The United Taxidrivers Community Council is happy to report on our latest meeting with Deputy Commissioner Shelley Riedle, of the Dept. of Consumer Services. We have been holding monthly meetings for the last four or five months. The UTCC sifts through the many issues that cabdrivers bring to our attention, and we try to pick the three or four topics for discussion very carefully.

Our criteria for bringing a topic to the table for discussion has to do with: one, a specific issue whose resolution could positively affect a significant number of drivers in a positive way; two, an issue that we feel the DCS could easily work with us to resolve; and/or three, clarification of DCS rules that would assist the UTCC in helping the drivers negotiate or challenge any violations of them they may encounter.

In our latest meeting on August 18, we discussed the following topics. The first was a complaint filed by one of our members against the Belmont/Western garage of American United Taxi Affiliation. This had to do with their ads, which stated "Pay for five days, get two days free". According to the DCS, this constituted false advertising.

The complaint filed was specifically to do with the policy at this garage of not following the DCS rules pertaining to either providing a replacement vehicle or a reimbursement for time lost on a weekly lease due to vehicle breakdown, regularly scheduled maintenance, or safety inspections. Their policy had been to claim that any lost time was "that's your free day".

We are happy to report that the advertising has been changed, which means that the garage cannot claim this anymore, and will have to comply with the rules. We in the UTCC would be happy to hear from any American United drivers at the Belmont/Western garage who are not being given replacement vehicles or being reimbursed for any lost time. The DCS has assured us that any complaints filed will be investigated.

We also expressed concern that we had not been able to meet with Norma Reyes as of yet. When we meet with the Aldermen on the Transportation Committee they have all told us we need to meet with the Commissioner. Sadly, we have not been able to tell them she will meet with us yet.

Deputy Commissioner Riedle informed us that the Commissioner had a very busy schedule and could not make the meeting times we had set. We told her that as cabdrivers have flexible schedules, we would be willing to meet with Ms. Reyes at any time she found most convenient, even if it were to be 6 AM in the morning or 10 pm at night. Ms. Riedle said she would convey this message to the Commissioner.

We raised the issue of the Driver Safety Placards again, stressing that we were not happy that we had to take on the burden of manufacturing and issuing them ourselves. We would prefer that the City officially issue them, as separate from the rate sheet for emphasis. We also pointed out that there is a State Law that states that municipalities must post such notices in public conveyance vehicles. Ms. Riedle stated that she hadn't realized the importance of this issue to drivers before, and that she would take personal responsibility to follow up on this issue again.

The UTCC had proposed two inserts to be added to the curriculum for Public Chauffeur classes at Harold Washington College. One of them was concerning the new law making it a felony to commit battery on a cabdriver. We were informed that this insert had already been added. The second concerned a sample standard lease, with explanations of all charges and additions, for drivers to be able to compare when they are shopping for a cab to lease. The DCS proposed that we do this work ourselves, and then bring it to them for study and collaboration. We agreed that we would do this.

One last issue that many drivers have been bringing to us is the issue of limo drivers and what rules they are bound to follow. Ms. Riedle assured us that the DCS has been randomly investigating complaints concerning limo drivers at the hotels, and that limos are only allowed to pick up pre-arranged rides in the City of Chicago. We proposed that we work on some kind of system for drivers to be able to collect evidence and complain if they notice specific instances of abuse. Ms. Riedle said she would get back to us about what drivers could do to assist the City in collecting evidence of these abuses of DCS rules and regulations.

All in all, we felt we finally had a productive meeting, and look forward to more meetings to nurture a collaborative relationship of mutual respect and working together to address the many issues facing cabdrivers here in Chicago.

# Incident Report form: What it is and how to use it!

We members of the UTCC have been working hard to address the many serious issues facing our Chicago cabdriver/worker community here in Chicago.

To be a cabdriver in the City of Chicago means to be exposed to many kinds of indignities, injustices and even illegal acts on a daily basis from many sources. These can come from various City of Chicago employees (such as safety inspection officials or DCS officers), hotel doormen, airport starters, or even random traffic aides or passengers. They can come in many different types of "incidents," and it is sometimes hard to lump them under one category.

We decided that we should create this "Incident Report Form" in order to collect the many examples of interactions between cabdrivers and City authorities (and various other persons) that we felt were unfair, unjust, or illegal.

Once we collect the many hundreds of reports that we expect we will, we can initiate a process to file collective complaints with the City on a weekly basis. We feel this will be a much more effective type of collec-

tive action than each individual driver taking her or his valuable time to complain on their own.

How it works: when you are working in your job as a cabdriver, and something happens that you feel violates your rights or your dignity as a human being, such as an unjust order, or rude speech, or perhaps a possible bribery of a hotel doorman by another driver (whether taxi, limo or Airport Express), take the time to fill out this "Incident Report Form" with all the information, and turn it in to our organization, the UTCC. Once we start to collect these forms, we can analyze them, categorize them into types, and it will better inform us as to how to take collective action to address the issues to make our jobs a better place to work.

Please take these Incident Report Forms seriously, tell all your friends, and make the effort to fill them out when you are the victim of incidents you believe to be unfair or unjust. The form is very comprehensive, asking you to document everything from unfair tickets, to 'hate speech' or comments made to insult your ethnicity, religion or skin color.

## UTCC

6124 N MILWAUKEE, STE. 12, CHICAGO, IL 60646  
E-MAIL: INFO@GOUTCC.ORG  
PHONE: (773) 774 UTCC  
WWW.GOUTCC.ORG

### UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

INCIDENT REPORT FORM		
PUBLIC CHAUFFEUR INFORMATION		
First Name:	Middle Name:	Last Name:
Current address:		
City:	State:	ZIP Code:
Male    Female    (Please circle)	e-mail:	Home Phone:
Chauffeur No:		Cell Phone:
PERSON(S) INVOLVED IN THE INCIDENT		
<input type="checkbox"/> Passenger <input type="checkbox"/> Department of Consumer Services Official <input type="checkbox"/> Chicago Police Department <input type="checkbox"/> Department of Aviation <input type="checkbox"/> Affiliation Employee <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanic <input type="checkbox"/> Hotel Doorman <input type="checkbox"/> Limo Driver <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify: _____)		
PERPETRATOR NAME & INFORMATION		
Please Specify Name, Position and Employer of Suspected Perpetrator:		
DESCRIPTION FOR INCIDENT		
Date of Incident:	Time of Retaliation:                      am pm	
Place:		
Were any of the following contacted:		Police Report No (If applicable):
Police:    Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Lawyer (Contact: _____): Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
UTCC or AFSC or Other Cab Driver: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Please describe briefly with detailed information what happened including site where the incident occurred, nature of incident, and details of how and precisely where the incident took place.		
SIGNATURES		
I authorize the verification of the information provided on this form and I hereby declare the foregoing information to be true.		
Signature of applicant:		Date:



**American Friends Service Committee, Community Ally**

# Cabdrivers participate in "Communities for Equitable Olympics" Coalition

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to the 2016 games, and that all impacted communities, whether low-income or not, have the right to protection from displacement.

"Today, we are asking Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley and Chicago 2016 Olympic Committee chairman and CEO Patrick Ryan to bring the community to the Olympic planning table," said Deshun Bray of the Kenwood-

Oakland Community Organization. "We believe that embracing the community's input is the surest way to strengthen Chicago's bid for the 2016 summer games."

## KEY ELEMENTS TO A BENEFITS AGREEMENT TO PROTECT HOMES AND JOBS

In order to protect Chicago's

low-income communities of color, the CEO 2016 coalition is seeking a signed legal benefits agreement with the city. Such an agreement would specify minimum levels of affordable housing and employment opportunities that must remain in areas adjacent to planned Olympic facilities. In the minds of many community leaders, only a legal

agreement can ensure that South Side jobs and residents will be able to stay where they are in the lead-up to 2016.

At today's press conference, community leaders detailed the elements that need to be included in a benefits agreement to adequately prevent community displacement. Improvements are sought in eight key areas including: economic sustainability, employment and workers' rights, housing, public safety, education, public space, financial accountability, and transportation.

"These are the core areas that affect the quality of life in any neighborhood," said Erma Davis Williams, director of senior services at the Centers for New Horizons. "These areas all could stand significant improvement on the South Side of Chicago."

Among the improvements sought:

- Transportation improvements including integrated Metra and CTA service with trains every 10 minute or better, and a centralized dispatch system for taxi service in underserved areas.
- Taxi drivers shall earn a living wage via biennial review of economic factors and fares impacting their earnings.
- An assessment of the types of businesses needed in the community including grocery stores, and a plan for retaining revenue and employment generators after the Olympics end.
- Creating partnerships with financial institutions to offer small business Individual Development Accounts (IDAs).
- All jobs created by the Olympic process should be living-wage jobs that are indexed with increases in cost of living and should offer the potential for management positions, and no background checks should be required as a condition of employment.
- Eighty percent of development-project jobs should go to local candidates, and local, Women-Owned, and Minority-Owned businesses should be given priority on construction contracts.
- Protection from no-cause and forced residential evictions, including through eminent domain, and the creation of environmentally sustainable affordable housing for families with annual incomes below \$30,000 and seniors.
- Relocation benefits for residents and homeless shelters displaced by the Olympic process, including those displaced by owner-foreclosure, comparable to federally established levels of compensation.
- Establishment of a Public Safety Consortium to decide local spending, programming, and police engagement, with a significant youth-participation component.

- Establishment of a fund from Olympic revenue to achieve equitable per-pupil spending in the Chicago Public Schools, and requiring all school policy changes or closings to be vetted through a community engagement process.

- Increased investment in parks utilized as Olympic venues, including the construction of community centers, with the cost to operate them written into the Olympics budget.

- Full and publicly accessible documentation of all public subsidies involved in the Olympic process, and a process for accountability to community residents.

- Equitable distribution of city resources and services.

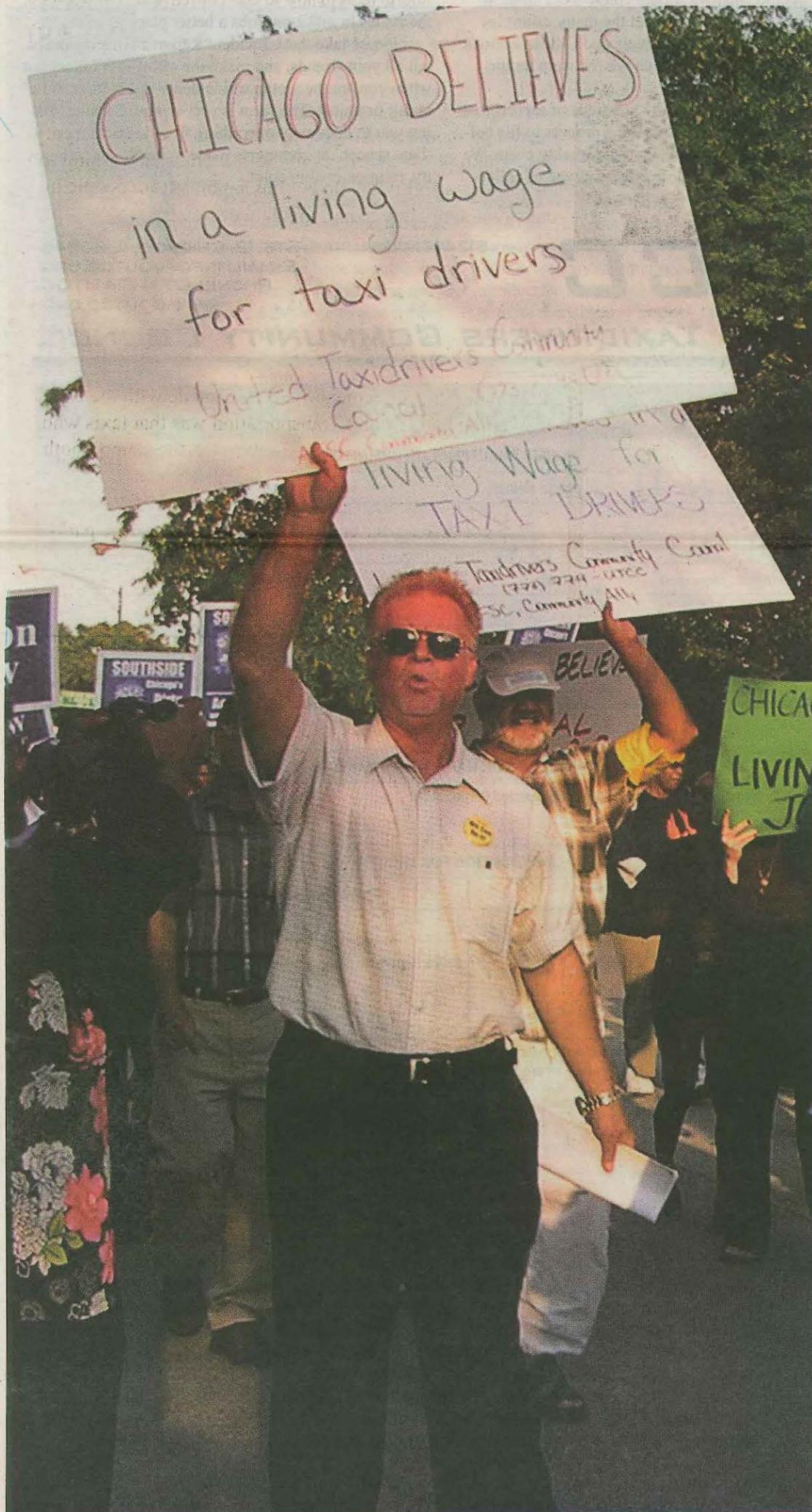
"These demands are not new, the community has been asking for many of them for a long time," said Denise Dixon, executive director of Action Now. "With the Olympics potentially coming to town, however, we can no longer wait to roll out strategies to protect affordable housing and living-wage jobs in low-income South Side communities of color."

Mayor Daley and the Chicago 2016 Olympic Committee tout the potential for hosting the Olympic Games as a catalyst for widespread urban revitalization. Yet research shows that when North American cities have hosted the Olympic Games, low-income residents and low-wage jobs are displaced in significant numbers. For example, according to a 2007 Chicago Urban League study:

"We are unfortunately accustomed in these communities to getting the short end of the stick when it comes to development decisions," said Reverend Booker Vance of the Metropolitan Alliance of Congregations. "But we have no intention of giving up our homes and our jobs so that others can play games on the graveyards of our neighborhoods."

CEO 2016 also sent letters to Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley and Chicago 2016 Committee Chairman Patrick G. Ryan requesting to meet for a discussion of a potential benefits agreement. Community leaders plan to continue the campaign throughout the lead-up to the 2016 Olympic Summer Games until their demands for official protection of South Side jobs and business are met by the City of Chicago.

"We know we're fighting an uphill battle to get our needs met in our communities," said Faye Khozindar of the United Taxidriers Community Council. "And you know what? That's a wonderful thing. Because right now, we've got nowhere to go but up."

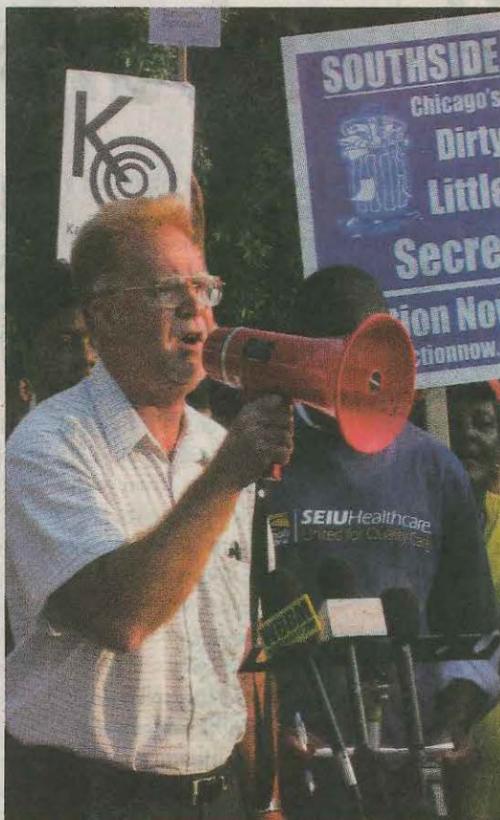


ABOVE: UTCC Chair Faye Khozindar and Steering Committee member Raja Khan join hundreds of others in a march down King Drive Ave demanding Equitable Olympics through a legally binding Community Benefits Agreement

# Equitable Olympics

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Communities for an Equitable Olympics 2016 (CEO 2016) is a coalition of community organizations seeking to protect Chicago homes and jobs from displacement due to the 2016 Olympic Summer Games. Members include Action Now, American Friends Service Committee, The Kenwood-Oakland Community Organization, Brighton Park Neighborhood Council, Centers for New Horizons, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, The Grassroots Collaborative, Illinois Hunger Coalition, Metropolitan Alliance of Congregations/SOUL, Metropolitan Area Group for Igniting Civilization (MAGIC), Metropolitan Tenants Organization, and SEIU Healthcare Illinois/Indiana.



RIGHT: UTCC Chair Fayez Khozindar addresses over 500 community leaders at a rally/press conference  
LEFT: Steve Kim, Peter Enger, Ron Florence and Raja Khan at the CEO 2016 rally

**SELF EMPLOYED??**  
VERY AFFORDABLE INSURANCE & FINANCIAL SERVICES THAT WILL GIVE YOUR FUTURE, A SECURITY BOOST

In case of an accident or illness we have selected insurance policies that will pay cash benefit's directly to you regardless of any other insurance you may have.

Make the secured choice today...for tomorrow's peace of mind. Call Your Independent Agent Ebonie Caldwell today @ 888-272-8136

- \*Health\*
- \*Accident\*
- \*Cancer\*
- \*Dental\*
- \*Life\*
- \*Annuities\*
- \*401k's\*

## Buyer beware!

FAKE LAPTOP SELLERS PREYING ON CHICAGO CABDRIVERS!

We have heard recently that there are a couple of con men working on selling fake laptops to Chicago cabdrivers. We heard that there are two people in a black Ford truck trying to sell laptops to cabdrivers for \$500. This is a warning to all Chicago cabdrivers: do not buy laptops from people in the street. Only buy from reputable dealers.

## Parking While Praying: A Reminder

A reminder: the agreement the UTCC made with the Dept. of Aviation and Ground Transportation was that taxis who needed to park after having gone through the stamp booth would need to park beyond the pole with the yellow ribbon tied around it. We have noticed lately that some cabdrivers are not driving far enough down the lane before parking. We remind you once again that you may be liable to be ticketed if you do not drive far enough down the access road past the pole with the yellow ribbon.

### OUR STRIKE VOTING SURVEY: AN UPDATE

We in the UTCC have been carrying out our strike voting survey for the past 5-6 weeks. So far our strike surveys indicate **94% support for a strike, with 80% in support of a Full Day strike and 84% in favor of a strike in the entire city of Chicago.** We need to collect a lot more if we are ever going to carry out a successful strike.

Chicago cabdrivers! We need a LOT more participation by YOU if we are going to be successful! YOU can find out how to get involved by coming to our STRIKE TEAM MEETINGS to be held by our steering committee members.

**Please come join the work- We cannot do it alone, but together WE CAN DO IT!**  
Call 773-772-UTCC to get involved!

# UTCC's Unity Forum

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

- Cabdrivers Association
- George Lutfallah, publisher of the Dispatcher
- Melissa Callahan, Association of Unified Professional Drivers
- Mike Foulks, Chicago Cabdrivers Organization
- Durran Liban, Chicago Cab Drivers Action Committee
- Atmos Obazee, Chicago Cab Drivers Action Committee
- Johnny Holmes, Taxi Brotherhood
- Wolf Weiss, Chicago Professional Taxi Drivers Association
- Yi Tang, Chicago Professional Taxi Drivers Association
- Thadani Ajeet, Community Leader
- Anil Sahay, Community Leader
- Wali Budhul, Community Leader
- Saieed Sarvinehbagh, Community Leader
- Tracy Luedke, Professor, Northeastern Illinois University, Community Ally

We posted this invitation in prominent places for cabdrivers to see in order to illustrate our intentions to unify Chicago cabdrivers.

This was an open meeting for any drivers who may have been interested in the same goals, and we also invited many more drivers as we met them in our organizing.

The invitees who came to the Forum were: Thadani Ajeet, Anil Sahay, Yi Tang and Tracy Luedke, Donald Nathan, Pankaj Kapoor, and Gregory McGee. Also attending were members of the UTCC's Steering Committee: Fayez Khozindar, Ron Florence, Peter Enger, Raja Khan, Diane Santucci, and Prateek Sampat of the American Friends Service Committee, a Solidarity Ally of the UTCC.

We cannot in all honesty call it an unqualified success, but we do feel we made some headway in reaching a consensus to join our efforts to unify Chicago cabdrivers in building an organization to fight for our human rights to safer working conditions, a living wage, and respect and dignity in our work environment.

We in the UTCC remain committed to extending an open invitation to any and all Chicago cabdriver organizations and leaders in their communities who may want to join us in the future in these endeavors.

### OUR INVITATION:

YOU ARE RESPECTFULLY INVITED TO THE UNITY FORUM

We all agree that that tasks ahead are challenging and we have no doubt that through unity they will be achieved. The UTCC represents a viable organization for cabdrivers based on the principles of inclusion, a democratic decision-making process, a working relationship with regulators, and a proven track record of success.

We have a policy of searching for solutions to systemic problems rather than individual solutions. We have an emphasis on fighting for our human rights, in addition to our workers rights- we are fighting to achieve justice, dignity and respect for all cabdrivers!

The United Taxidriver Community Council has identified community leaders and activists in the cabdriver's struggle for justice, and is calling a Unity Forum to bring these diverse forces together. So come to the UNITY FORUM and take a seat- this is for everyone!

CONT. ON PAGE 8



TOP: Peter Enger, Ron Florence, and Fayez Khozindar address those assembled at the Unity Forum

BELOW: Fayez Khozindar rallies those attending the Unity Forum with an impassioned speech



## EDITORIAL:



By Peter  
Ali Enger,  
UTCC  
Voice  
Editor

# Reaching out to our passengers and suburban drivers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

a public service to the people, does not last long in our industry. We believe it is part of the job, to have this desire. Sure—we get paid, but so many of us do so much more. I'm sure many of you can attest to this, if you search your memories.

Enough about us. Now we are going to ask you to do a hard thing. We are currently involved in a serious struggle to obtain a position of collective bargaining with the City of Chicago to address our many grievances.

They are too many and too complicated to go into here in this document, but we hope to achieve some positive press and news articles that will address some of our deeper issues in the near future. Please keep your

eyes peeled for them. The Reader may be publishing an article soon that will illuminate some of what we are hinting at here.

Call them and ask them when they will publish it. You can also ask your cabdriver for a copy of our own newsletter, the UTCC Voice, which contains some news about our working conditions and our issues.

The hard thing we are asking you to do, is to not get too mad at us when you come out to go to work one day, and you find that we have gone on STRIKE. In order for us to carry out an effective strike, we may find it more productive NOT to give you, or the City, any notice of our proposed action.

you, the most important people to us; our own workforce, which loses money; and our relationship with the City, which has so much control over our lives.

We would rather sit down and bargain in good faith. Please ask your City officials to sit down with us. We would appreciate it. That way we can continue to serve you without any interruption, which we would prefer.

**Call the Alderman and tell them "I believe the City of Chicago should provide for a living wage for cabdrivers through a 16% fare increase and reviews of rates of fare every two years"**

## LETTER TO SUBURBAN CABDRIVERS

Fellow Cabdrivers! Brothers behind the steering wheel! The United Taxidriers Community Council would like to extend our hand in solidarity to our fellow taxi workers in the Chicagoland area. We are currently involved in organizing an activist, membership-based, grassroots organization to fight for our rights as workers and human beings. It is called the United Taxidriers Community Council, and we publish a new newsletter called the "UTCC Voice", meant to

to the policy of inclusion of all of our cabdriver-brothers, whether suburban drivers in the Chicago area, to cabdrivers in cities all across the USA, and even to the cabdrivers in Serbia, Kuwait, and China!

We in the UTCC are well aware of the globalization of our workforce, and news reports from all over the world illustrate to us that cabdrivers everywhere suffer under the same kinds of oppressive work conditions and denial of basic human and workers' rights by the governments and companies involved in controlling us.

We are reaching out to you, brother cabdrivers, because we are soon to be involved in some actions in the City of Chicago that will have far-reaching consequences for all of us! We are making a bid for power, for a voice, for a seat at the table when the City makes decisions that affect our lives, our income and our working conditions!

We believe it is our basic human right to have an opinion when such decisions are made, and to have our opinion heard and taken seriously. EVERY worker on the planet deserves such rights! This includes YOU, suburban cabdrivers!

We may soon be going on a STRIKE to get our rights. We are calling on you suburban cabdrivers to support us in this action. How? By not working on that day, whatever day we decide to STRIKE.

We know that the City will offer you the opportunity to make lots of money on that day, to take passengers from the airports, maybe even to pick up in the City with no punishment.

We ask you as fellow workers to show WORKER SOLIDARITY with our action, and to go home and take a day off on that day.

We in the UTCC believe it will be in your best future interest to support our action, and in the future we can join together to support you in whatever actions you may wish to take to throw off your oppressive working conditions.

**SOLIDARITY FOREVER!**

---

**"We do not want to go on strike if we can help it! We would rather bargain and sit down in good faith..."**

---

We apologize in advance for any inconvenience this may cause you, but we are rather desperate to get the City to the table to bargain and negotiate in good faith with us about our many issues.

The one way you could help us BEFORE we find we have to take this action is to call your City aldermen, Mayor Daley's office, and the Dept. of Consumer Services, and ask them to begin negotiating with us beforehand.

Believe me, we DO NOT WANT TO GO ON STRIKE IF WE CAN HELP IT! It's a lot of work, it hurts everyone—

CALL ALDERMAN  
THOMAS R. ALLEN,  
CHAIR OF THE  
TRANSPORTATION  
COMMITTEE  
312-744-4096  
Fax: 773-283-3343

Ald. Suarez:  
312-774-6102

Ald. Reboyras:  
773-794-3095

Ald. Doherty:  
773-792-1991

Ald. Cochran:  
312-744-6840

Ald. Corothers:  
773-261-4646

Ald. Balcer:  
773-254-6677

Ald. Rugai:  
773-238-9049

Ald. Levar:  
773-545-2545

Ald. Schulter  
773-348-8400

Ald. Flores:  
773-278-0101

Ald. Dowell:  
773-373-9273

Ald. Beale:  
773-785-1100

be an independent voice for all cabdrivers and our issues. You may have seen it at the airports.

As you may be aware, one of our founding members, Ilyas Sayed, was instrumental in taking on the Skokie parking ban on cabdrivers last winter. We had a great victory in this struggle, and it brought the Chicago and suburban cabdrivers together in solidarity around this issue.

We in the UTCC wish to continue to be open to solidarity with the suburban cabdrivers.

We are currently involved in an historic organizing effort to unite all the Chicago cabdrivers under one umbrella to struggle for human rights, respect and dignity.

We know it is an uphill battle, not only among ourselves and our diverse community from so many different nations and cultures, but we also understand we are going up against the governmental and corporate interests that do not want to see us unite.

We are committed to this struggle, brother cabdrivers! And, more importantly, we are committed

CONVENTION CALENDAR (JUNE-JULY)

9/6/08-9/10/08	19th International Forging Congress	Sheraton Chgo Hotel & Towers	Delegates: 500
9/8/08-9/13/08	IMTS 08 - International Manufacturing Tech Show	McCormick Place	Delegates: 91985
9/8/08-9/11/08	OGMP Pastor's Conference	Sheraton Chgo Northwest & Hyatt Regency Chgo	Delegates: 300
5009/9/08-9/10/08	Annual Conference	Westin Michigan Avenue	Delegates: 300
9/9/08-9/11/08	National Cancer Institute's NanoTech Alliance Investigators Mtg	Navy Pier	Delegates: 1000
9/9/08-9/11/08	Healthcare Facilities Symposium & Expo	Grant Park	
9/13/08-9/14/08	12th Annual Celtic Fest Chgo	Hyatt Regency O'Hare	Delegates: 450
9/14/08-9/20/08	BIE Special Education Academy	Sheraton Chgo Hotel & Towers	Delegates: 500
9/14/08-9/17/08	SCCE's 8th Annual Compliance & Ethics Institute	Merchandise Mart (MMPI)	Delegates: 7000
9/15/08-9/18/08	International Casual Furniture & Accessories Market™	Hyatt Regency Chgo	Delegates: 400
9/15/08-9/18/08	Tire Recycling Business Summit & Roundtable Forum	Navy Pier	Delegates: 2000
9/15/08-9/17/08	BusCon	InterContinental Chgo	Delegates: 160
9/16/08-9/17/08	Dean' Seminar	Westin Michigan Avenue Chgo	Delegates: 600
9/16/08-9/19/08	IABSE Annual Meetings and IABSE Symposium	Millennium Knickerbocker Hotel	Delegates: 200
9/17/08-9/19/08	Advances in Contrast Ultrasound, NFP	Hyatt Regency Chgo	Delegates: 2500
9/17/08-9/21/08	Annual Meeting of the American Society for Surgery of the Hand	Blackstone- A Renaissance Hotel	Delegates: 150
9/17/08-9/20/08	Heart Valve Summit	Navy Pier	Delegates: 4000
9/18/08-9/20/08	Traditional Building Exhibition and Conference	Westin Michigan Avenue	Delegates: 125
9/20/08-9/25/08	American Nurses Association - UAN Labor Institute Training	Lakeside Center at McCormick Place	Delegates: 8800
9/21/08-9/24/08	AAO-HNSF 112th Annual Meeting & OTO Expo	Hilton Chgo	Delegates: 7500
9/21/08-9/25/08	Global Railway Tech 08	Doubletree Hotel Chgo Oak Brook	Delegates: 650
9/22/08-9/25/08	Bishop's Annual Conference	Palmer House Hilton	Delegates: 500
9/22/08-9/23/08	International Fellowship of Christians and Jews-25th Anniversary	Hilton Chgo Northbrook	Delegates: 300
9/23/08-9/24/08	Private Brand Meeting	McCormick Place South	Delegates: 15000
9/23/08-9/25/08	The Motivation Show	Palmer House Hilton	Delegates: 300
9/24/08-9/28/08	Grand Prioral Council	W Chgo Lakeshore	Delegates: 150
9/24/08-9/26/08	MSP Alliance Meeting	Hyatt Regency McCormick Place	Delegates: 300
9/25/08-9/28/08	National Patient and Family Confernce	Drake Hotel, The	Delegates: 200
9/25/08-9/27/08	DRI Becoming a Preeminent Trial Lawyer Seminar	Hilton Chgo	Delegates: 2200
9/25/08-9/28/08	Illinois Municipal League - Annual Conference	Navy Pier	Delegates: 2800
9/25/08-9/26/08	Illinois Library Association Annual Conference	Millennium Knickerbocker Hotel	Delegates: 125
9/25/08-9/27/08	ALI-ABA Creative Tax Planning for Real Estate Transactions	Sheraton Chgo Hotel & Towers	Delegates: 365
9/26/08-9/27/08	Annual Retreat	Sheraton Chgo Hotel & Towers	Delegates: 280
9/27/08-9/27/08	Patterson Medical National Sales Meeting	Hyatt Regency Chgo	Delegates: 600
9/27/08-9/29/08	American Nephrology Nurses Association Fall Meeting	Double Tree Downers Grove	Delegates: 150
9/28/08-10/3/08	Region Three Training Conference	McCormick Place West	Delegates: 8500
9/30/08-10/2/08	WiMAX World Americas 08		

Ebonie A. Caldwell  
Agent  
An Independent Associate Representing Aflac



412 S. Wells, 2nd Floor  
Chicago, Illinois 60607  
888.272.8136 business  
312.440.4067 fax  
Ebonie\_Caldwell@us.aflac.com  
aflac.com

## ¿Discriminación?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

si tiene derecho a no perder su tiempo y su dinero; que además es quien ha manifestado su descontento con el servicio brindado.

Nosotros compañeros quedamos sin la mas minima posibilidad de defensa ante nuestro acusador fantasma, transformandonos de esa manera en victimas del sistema burocrático y abusivo del personal de la corte de la Ciudad del Chicago, quienes nos ponen como en el mercado de frutas, para abaratar el pago de la multa sin ser juzgados.

Los taxistas son también discriminado por la policia a quien ellos llaman en ocasiones donde el cliente o un robo un ataque a la

persona tal vez bajo la influencia no quiere hacer el pago del servicio y los llamados quedan en nada la policia no se presenta generalmente.

Por supuesto el chofer queda sin la debida proteccion y a disposicion tal vez de una persona potencialmente peligrosa. Que sucede son acaso los taxistas ciudadanos menos valiosos?

Consideremos unir nuestras voces, para dejar de ser menos, y evitar tanto atropello, que se valore nuestro tiempo, nuestro dinero y por supuesto nuestra dignidad y vidas.

Hamimi Yata,  
Padre de familia y al servicio de esta comunidad

### ISLAMIC PRAYER TIMINGS (September 2008)

Date	Day	Fajr	Sunrise	Dhuhr	Asr	Maghrib	Isha
10	Wed	5:09	6:25	12:48	4:22	7:08	8:27
11	Thu	5:10	6:26	12:47	4:21	7:07	8:25
12	Fri	5:11	6:28	12:47	4:20	7:05	8:23
13	Sat	5:11	6:28	12:47	4:20	7:05	8:23
14	Sun	5:13	6:29	12:47	4:18	7:03	8:21
15	Mon	5:15	6:31	12:46	4:16	7:00	8:17
16	Tue	5:16	6:32	12:46	4:15	6:58	8:15
17	Wed	5:17	6:33	12:45	4:14	6:56	8:13
18	Thu	5:18	6:34	12:45	4:13	6:54	8:11
19	Fri	5:19	6:35	12:45	4:11	6:53	8:10
20	Sat	5:21	6:36	12:44	4:10	6:51	8:08
21	Sun	5:21	6:36	12:44	4:10	6:51	8:08
22	Mon	5:23	6:38	12:43	4:08	6:47	8:04
23	Tue	5:24	6:39	12:43	4:07	6:46	8:02
24	Wed	5:25	6:40	12:43	4:05	6:44	8:00
25	Thu	5:26	6:41	12:42	4:04	6:42	7:59
26	Fri	5:27	6:42	12:42	4:03	6:40	7:57
27	Sat	5:29	6:43	12:42	4:02	6:39	7:55
28	Sun	5:29	6:43	12:42	4:02	6:39	7:55
29	Mon	5:30	6:44	12:41	4:00	6:37	7:53
30	Tue	5:32	6:46	12:41	3:58	6:34	7:50

## ILIR INSTITUTE OF LABOR & INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

### Participate in a Focus Group & Speak about cabdriver issues...

For the months of July, August, and September the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) will be partnering with the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a human rights organization, to conduct a survey, convene a Focus Group and produce a research report about cabdrivers.

This focus group will study:

- Working conditions of cabdrivers
- Declining income of cabdrivers
- Ticketing practices by the City of Chicago
- Interactions with law enforcement & city officials
- Violence, racism and abuse cabdrivers face from public

Additionally the Focus Group will gather cabdrivers' ideas about how to make a positive change in the taxi industry. **For successful completion of the Focus Group, each driver will receive \$25 in compensation for their time.**

The outcome of this survey & Focus Group will be a report issued by the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign that will be used by advocates to work for cabdrivers' rights, respect and dignity. **The focus group will take place from 11AM-Noon on Saturday, September 20<sup>th</sup>.**

Want to participate? Please contact Nancy at University of Illinois at 312-966-2623 to find out if you are eligible for the focus group!



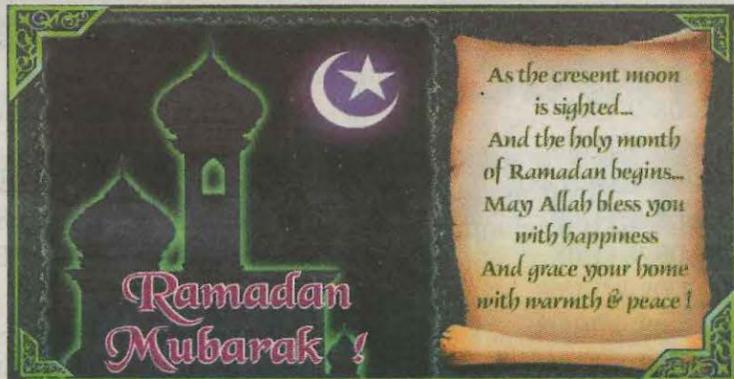
Dr. Robert A. Bruno, Director  
Chicago Labor Education Program



Prateek Sampat, Program Director  
Taxi Worker Organizing Project

## GAME TIMINGS (CUBS AND WHITE SOX)

Cubs Home Games (Wrigley Field)				White Sox Home Games (US Cellular Field)			
Date	Start Time	Teams Playing	End Time	Date	Start	Teams Playing	End Time
9/16/08	7:05 PM	Brewers at Cubs	10:05 PM	9/9/08	7:11 PM	Blue Jays at White Sox	10:11 PM
9/17/08	7:05 PM	Brewers at Cubs	10:05 PM	9/10/08	7:11 PM	Blue Jays at White Sox	10:11 PM
9/18/08	1:20 PM	Brewers at Cubs	4:20 PM	9/11/08	7:11 PM	Blue Jays at White Sox	10:11 PM
9/19/08	1:20 PM	Cardinals at Cubs	4:20 PM	9/12/08	7:11 PM	Tigers at White Sox	10:11 PM
9/20/08	12:05 PM	Cardinals at Cubs	3:05 PM	9/13/08	3:33 AM	Tigers at White Sox	3:33 AM
9/21/08	3:33 AM	Cardinals at Cubs	3:33 AM	9/14/08	3:33 AM	Tigers at White Sox	3:33 AM
				9/26/08	7:11 PM	Indians at White Sox	10:11 PM
				9/27/08	3:33 AM	Indians at White Sox	3:33 AM
				9/28/08	3:33 AM	Indians at White Sox	3:33 AM



## YOUR ADVERTISEMENT HERE!

Support our cause and promote your business... Competitive rates available! Call 773-774-UTCC!

## Unity Forum: A Letter to George Lutfallah

UTCC Chair Fayeze Khozindar addresses George Lutfallah, owner/publisher of the Chicago Dispatcher newspaper

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Dear Mr. Lutfallah,

I want to extend my invitation to you so you can attend this Unity Forum this weekend, at 2 pm Sat. Aug. 9 at Baba Palace. When I talked to you over the phone I heard you were agitated and upset because you claimed that we failed you and we did not come to your event last week.

I apologize and I told you I have been very busy with so many events lately. However, you insisted on throwing the blame on Prateek and the AFSC because they sent you the invitation to our event. I tried to clarify the issue and told

you that the whole idea was my initiative and it was on the books for the last 2 or 3 weeks. I wanted to send this invitation by mail, but because of the shortness of time we thought we would send it by email because we didn't know all the attendants' residence addresses.

And you further insisted that you'll not deal with anything related to Prateek Sampat unless he apologizes to you. Now, I am not aware of the history between you and Prateek and why he should apologize to you. Regardless, I would like to clarify this point, which is this: Prateek Sampat was brought into the work of organizing with the Taxi Worker Organizing Project

by two great organizations in the Chicago area: the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago and the American Friends Service Committee.

So you should look at the greater picture. You should look at the great challenges we are facing, such as the kangaroo court at 400 W. Superior, the tripling of fines, the maltreatment by law enforcement, the stolen fares by limo drivers, the harsh treatment by the inspections facility, and so on and so forth. The people who are doing the organizing don't matter as much as the organization itself.

We have been working for over seven months to create a viable organization to defend the human rights and dignity of the drivers. We should all be united in this task. If you believe in this message, in this path of defending the drivers, then individuals such as you, or me, or Prateek Sampat, should not stand in the way of unity with these principles; to join forces with us away from selfishness and wasting of time and destruction.

Mr. Lutfallah, we are going through a period of oppression and I believe that if you stay neutral in this situation you will be siding with the oppressor. So please come off the fence and join the other organizations who are coming to this meeting to explore whatever ideas or ways to unite our efforts towards building a democratic and viable organization to carry out the monumental task before us. As you know, we have been succeeding in defending the drivers in all aspects of their lives; defending them and rallying with them in the courts, at O'Hare Airport, and insisting that the City address the driver's safety issue.

We extended our invitation to all interested individuals who share our vision, whether members of organizations or respected community leaders. Instead of wasting our time shopping for labor attorneys to support the creation of a new organization which we don't need, we should join together to strengthen the umbrella organization that has been growing in numbers and esteem in the driver's community for the last seven months.

We extend our invitation to you once more. And please use whatever influence you have to invite [other drivers]. We have extended our invitations to them also, but have not received a reply, and do not have the phone numbers to reach them.

Sincerely,  
Fayeze Khozindar, Chairman, UTCC

**UTCC**6124 N MILWAUKEE, STE. 12, CHICAGO, IL 60646  
E-MAIL: INFO@GOUTCC.ORG  
PHONE: (773) 774 UTCC  
WWW.GOUTCC.ORG**UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL****UTCC GENERAL MEETING  
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2 - 4 PM****637 S. DEARBORN  
OPEN TO ALL DRIVERS****LEARN ABOUT UTCC'S GOALS:**

- BUILD OUR ORGANIZATION**
- REFORM THE TAXI INDUSTRY**
- FIGHT FOR CABDRIVERS' RIGHTS,  
RESPECT AND HUMAN DIGNITY!**

**LET'S TALK ABOUT HOW WE CAN ACHIEVE THESE  
GOALS TOGETHER!****CALL US AT 773-774-UTCC**