

UTCC VOICE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

All Chicago Taxi Workers are ONE with the PUBLIC and OCCUPY CHICAGO



PHOTO BY JASON REBLANDO

UNITED TAXI DRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL congratulates everyone on the front lines of **OCCUPY CHICAGO** for your endurance and perseverance to expose the **CORRUPTION** of **MILLIONAIRES AND BILLIONAIRES**.

The *Chicago Sun-Times* and *Chicago Tribune* Report on the City Council Meeting to Hike Leases and Increase Fares

THE *CHICAGO SUN-TIMES* AND *CHICAGO TRIBUNE* NEWSPAPERS REPORTED on the City Council meeting that took place on Monday, October 24th. Rosemary Krimbel, commissioner of the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection testified to City Council Budget Committee members about hiking leases and raising fares.

The *Sun-Times* reports Chicago has the nation's second-lowest big city taxicab fares and the highest gas prices. The *Sun-Times* reports Rosemary Krimbel said she is working to update taxi regula-

tion for the first time in nearly 20 years with an eye toward improving safety, "greening" the fleet and stabilizing the economics of an industry in turmoil. Rosemary Krimbel said possibilities range from raising lease rates to increasing the cost of entering a cab and altering a meter rate for movement that rewards bad behavior.

"Meters click faster when you're moving than when you're standing, which means it's much more profitable for a cab driver to change lanes constantly, rather than to sit there at the light or wait for the light. We need to change that incentive," Rosemary Krimbel said while testifying at City Council budget hearings.

The *Chicago Sun-Times* also reports to improve driver behavior, Rosemary Krimbel plans to slap a bumper sticker on all 6,900 Chicago cabs encouraging people to call 311 to report good and bad cab drivers.

Won't that inundate 311 call takers?

Rosemary Krimbel replied "I hope they're inundated with calls because I track every single call that comes in on a cab and this is one of the ways that we discipline and we track our cab drivers and our medallion owners, so I'm OK with that."

The *Chicago Tribune* reports Alderman Ed Burke said a \$1-a-ride fare hike could pump tens of millions of dollars into city coffers and head off some of

the spending cuts proposed by Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "I do know a \$1 surcharge on the flag pull could generate about \$70 million," Ed Burke said. "So that's a considerable amount of money that hopefully would not negatively impact the industry."

The *Sun-Times* reports Ed Burke made a joke about cab drivers in response to Rosemary Krimbel's statement about drivers going fast and making constant lane changes. "I just thought it was in their DNA that they had to drive like that," joked Ed Burke.

The *Chicago Tribune* reports Rosemary Krimbel said a group of city officials and unpaid consultants is looking at the city's entire set of cab regulations, including fares. Rosemary Krimbel told Ed Burke "Currently, the economics of the taxicab regulation are out of whack. The economics are not there to support a clean and efficient taxicab fleet."

The *Chicago Tribune* also reports Rosemary Krimbel said "Driver lease rates also are low, encouraging cab companies to buy the lowest-common-denominator cars."

The *Chicago Tribune* reports Rosemary Krimbel later said the administration's evaluation would not be done until late this year at the earliest. That's well after the November 16 deadline for approving the budget, although Aldermen could force the issue by trying to amend the mayor's budget proposal. ■

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AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE, COMMUNITY ALLY

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

TAXI DRIVERS REFUSE TO BE TAX COLLECTORS FOR THE CITY

TWO INFLUENTIAL ALDERMEN ON THE CITY COUNCIL, ALDERMAN Burke and Alderman Austin, have proposed a \$1 tax on all rides in the City of Chicago. This tax will be collected by cab drivers in an effort to balance the City's bloated budget. Chicago cab drivers will then be required to turn this tax revenue over to the city somehow, on a regular basis.

Chicago taxi drivers have been asking for a fare increase for the past 6 years and so far no adjustments to the taxi fare have been authorized. A study by the United Taxidrivers Community Council (UTCC) has shown that drivers make between \$4.38 and \$6.79 per hour, working 12 to 16 hours per day. This is below the minimum wage, and does not account for any overtime or any other benefits. Drivers are outraged the City refuses to implement a fare increase that would provide economic relief to the

cab driving community. In addition to a proposed increase in the lease cap, the City is attempting to use cab drivers as tax collectors by adding a \$1 tax that serves **no economic benefits** to drivers.

Alderman Burke claims Chicagoans don't use taxicabs and this \$1 tax will mostly have an impact on people visiting from out of town. He says, "These (taxis) are mainly used by visitors to Chicago, the business people who are on expense accounts, and it isn't a big amount. A \$1 surcharge isn't going to hurt anybody in my opinion, and it doesn't impact Chicago citizens." Taxi drivers reject Alderman Burke's claim that taxis are solely used by passengers from out of town. Drivers and members of the public view the Alderman's statement as outrageous and a way to garner support for the tax without any real evidence to back up his claim. ■

TAKE ACTION

UTCC has an extensive campaign in place providing contact information of all 50 City Council members who will be voting on this issue soon. We urge everyone to help us in our campaign to block this proposal by contacting Alderman Burke and Alderman Austin and voicing your opinion. Tell them you can't afford to be squeezed for any more of your hard-earned cash.

Alderman Burke's Ward Office: (773) 471-1414, City Hall Office: (312) 744-3380. Alderman Austin's Office: (773) 928-6961 and her City Hall Office: (312) 744-6820.

UTCC Rank and File Members Speak Out In This Issue Of *The Voice*

A GREAT MANY UTCC MEMBERS AND Associate UTCC Members have been complaining about all the disincentives, exploitation, and misguided public policy thinking that will shape the Taxi Industry for years to come with respect to the proposed LEASE HIKE and METER INCREASE.

The LETTERS TO THE EDITOR in this issue are written by various individuals and an assortment of Taxi Driver Community Groups within the UTCC organization.

The opinions contained in the following articles belong to the individuals and driver groups who submitted them. The opinions, positions, and recommendations are very much their own.

However, all of us at UTCC agree recommendations in the following LETTERS TO THE EDITOR argue for positive public policy changes in the interest of every man, woman, and child in Chicago and all have merit. Furthermore, Drivers' and Taxi Workers' observations and recommendations should be considered in the public debate. ■

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.

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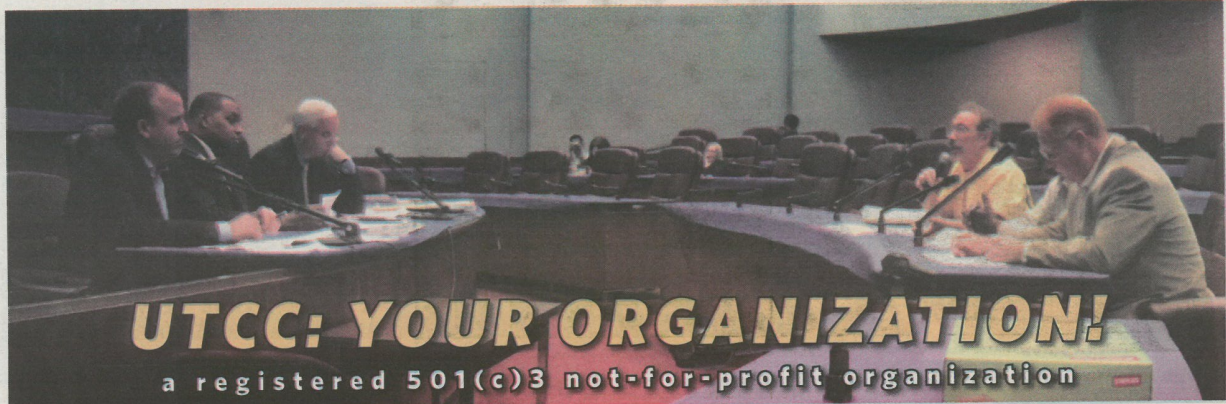
Rachel K. Dooley

We welcome your contributions, feedback and letters!

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What Do We Need as Taxi Drivers?

THE PURPOSE OF THE "LETTERS TO THE EDITOR" you see in this issue of the *UTCC VOICE* is to have a conversation among all taxi drivers. UNITED TAXI DRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL wants to know your thoughts and feelings on various issues.

In the *VOICE*, UTCC says what we would like to see happen. But as an organization WE REPRESENT YOU. WE NEED TO KNOW VERY MUCH WHAT YOU THINK. The "Letters to the Editor" in the *VOICE* cover these areas:

1. FAIR WAGE COMPENSATION (How can we get what we deserve?)
2. 400 W. SUPERIOR (End the abuse)
3. PARKING (We need places to park)
4. LEASE HIKE
5. VIOLENCE AGAINST TAXI DRIVERS
6. AIRPORT ISSUES

ARE THERE OTHER ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE DISCUSSED?

It is very important that we all lay out our positions on various issues because we are trying to build effective relationships with various people

and institutions. UTCC as an organization has had meetings with:

- Ms. Bapat who is Deputy Commissioner of the Public Vehicle Operations Division. Rupal handles enforcement of the rules and regulations that taxi drivers are expected to follow.
- Alderman Beale is head of the City Council Transportation Committee. Ald. Beale brings forth all legislation that affects us as drivers and makes recommendations to the City Council of Chicago as to what his Committee would like to see pass. In short, his committee decides if there is to be a meter increase, etc.
- Chicago Taxi Operators Association (This organization is made up of medium size and smaller Taxi Owners and Affiliations). They desire to get a fair shake from the City on their issues and perhaps we as taxi drivers can work with them on some issues?
- UTCC meets from time to time with various City politicians. It is how we were able to get parking for drivers along Devon & Western streets in the 50th Ward. You can find out who your Alderman is and work with UTCC to let him or her know what you think. ■

UTCC WANTS VERY MUCH TO KNOW WHAT YOU AS DRIVERS THINK AND FEEL. PLEASE FILL OUT THE SURVEY IN THIS ISSUE OF THE VOICE. WE WILL BE REGULARLY OFFERING SURVEYS, FORUMS AND MEETINGS TO RESEARCH AND DISCUSS WHAT REFORMS THE CAB DRIVERS IN CHICAGO DESIRE TO IMPROVE THEIR WORKING LIVES.

—RUNNING RED LIGHT—

MCHUMOR.com by T. McCracken



"Look, honey. It's one of those red light running cameras."

PEOPLE TO KNOW

HOW MANY OF YOU GUYS have heard the ad campaign for Dos Equis beer—"the most interesting man in the world." A handsome gray-haired man is surrounded by beautiful women. The commercial tells funny but unbelievable stories about him like "his blood smells like cologne." One of my favorites is "the police often question him just because they find him interesting." I wish every time the cops stopped me in my taxi it was because they found me interesting.

You and I are interesting people. We have stories to tell about our lives, and where we come from. We see many things while we drive our taxis. In many ways, cab drivers are the most interesting people in the world.

It is our hope at UTCC that you are willing to tell your story. **We would like all the Chicago cab drivers to share their stories with the rest of our community. It is a way to share our common humanity, wherever we come from. Did you know? Chicago cab drivers come from more than 80 nations on the planet Earth! We are truly a United Nations of cab driver workers!** Sometimes, drivers cannot talk about their pasts either because of the pain they suffered, or because telling their story will bring danger to them or their families. But if you can, please tell your story. Some guys do not feel like writing their story. If this is so, then I will be glad to write up your words after I talk to you.

HERE ARE SOME THINGS I MAY ASK YOU:

- YOUR NAME, IF YOU WISH TO GIVE IT?
- WHAT COUNTRY ARE YOU FROM?
- WHAT IS YOUR EDUCATION?
- WHAT KIND OF WORK DID YOU DO BEFORE YOU CAME HERE?
- WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO BE A NEW IMMIGRANT IN THIS COUNTRY?
- DID YOU KNOW ANYONE BEFORE YOU CAME?
- WHAT ARE SOME OF THE PROBLEMS THAT YOU HAVE HAD?
- WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THAT YOU LIKE ABOUT THIS COUNTRY?
- WHAT ARE SOME OF THE EXPERIENCES THAT YOU HAVE HAD WITH PASSENGERS GOOD AND BAD?
- WHAT DO YOU MISS ABOUT YOUR HOMETLAND?
- DO YOU HAVE FAMILY BACK HOME? IF SO, WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE SEPARATED BY THOUSANDS OF MILES?
- DO YOU HAVE FAMILY IN THIS COUNTRY?
- WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES AND DREAMS FOR YOUR FAMILY AND YOURSELF?
- WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK ME?
- EACH OF THESE QUESTIONS IS A WINDOW INTO A CONVERSATION. WE TALK. YOU EXPRESS YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS. I EXPRESS MINE. THE READER LEARNS AND UNDERSTANDS OUR WORLD!
- I DRIVE CAB # 129 BLUE RIBBON. LET'S TALK AND TELL OUR STORIES?
- YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO APPROVE ANYTHING THAT IS WRITTEN ABOUT YOU AND YOUR LIFE STORY. SEE YOU ON THE STREET.

THE VOICE IS YOUR VOICE. LET YOURSELF BE HEARD AND WE WILL BUILD A TAXI DRIVERS MOVEMENT!

LET US HEAR FROM YOU BY CALLING UTCC: (773) 342-UTCC

Upcoming Convention Schedule

CONVENTIONS	VENUE	START DATE	END DATE	ATTENDEES
RSNA 2011 ANNUAL MEETING	McCormick Place	11/27/2011	12/2/2011	55,000
CABS 11TH INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON CANCER INDUCED BONE DISEASE	Westin Michigan Avenue Chicago	11/30/2011	12/3/2011	250
AAOMS 2011 DENTAL IMPLANT CONFERENCE	Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers	12/1/2011	12/4/2011	1,500
ONE-OF-A-KIND SHOW & SALE® CHICAGO	Merchandise Mart (MMP)	12/1/2011	12/4/2011	1,000
ILLINOIS AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION - ANNUAL CONVENTION	Palmer House Hilton	12/3/2011	12/6/2011	1,800
AMERICAN SEED TRADE ASSOCIATION - CORN & SORGHUM AND SOYBEAN SEED RESEARCH CONFERENCE 2011	Hyatt Regency Chicago	12/6/2011	12/9/2011	2,000
NATIONAL BLACK CAUCUS OF STATE LEGISLATORS NATIONAL CONFERENCE	Renaissance Chicago Downtown Hotel	12/7/2011	12/11/2011	400
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE BOARDS OF NURSING EDUCATION CONFERENCE	Hyatt Regency Chicago	12/8/2011	12/9/2011	200
THE MIDWEST CLINIC - AN INTERNATIONAL BAND AND ORCHESTRA CONFERENCE	McCormick Place West	12/14/2011	12/17/2011	15,000
MUSLIM AMERICAN SOCIETY - MAS/ICNA ANNUAL CONVENTION	Hyatt Regency O'Hare	12/21/2011	12/27/2011	1,200
ALLIED SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS ANNUAL MEETING	Hyatt Regency Chicago	1/5/2012	1/8/2012	10,000
AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION - 126TH ANNUAL MEETING	Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile, Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers	1/5/2012	1/8/2012	4,977



City of Chicago
Department of Business Affairs and
Consumer Protection

TAXICAB INDUSTRY NOTICE

December 5, 2011

Notice No. 11-056

Proposed Rule 2.19
of the Taxicab Medallion License Holder Rules and Regulations

City of Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection seeks comments on its proposed amendment to the

RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR TAXICAB MEDALLION LICENSE HOLDERS

Rule 2.19 Public Safety Sticker

Every licensed taxicab vehicle must display a printed sticker as directed by the commissioner. The sticker must be affixed to and displayed on the rear of the taxicab vehicle. All taxicab medallion holders are strictly liable for ensuring that the printed sticker is affixed in the proper place and visible at all times on the vehicle.

The fee for the replacement of the public safety sticker is \$1.00 per sticker.

Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection
121 N. LaSalle, Suite 805 - City Hall Chicago, IL 60602
2350 West Ogden, First Floor Chicago, IL 60608

COMMENT DEADLINE: Monday, December 19, 2011 at 5:00 pm CST

Written comments must be submitted to the following address:
ATTN: Rule 2.19 Comments, BACP Public Vehicle Operations Division
2350 W. Ogden, First Floor, Chicago, IL 60608

RAHM EMANUEL
MAYOR

ROSEMARY KRIMBEL
COMMISSIONER

For questions or to join the BACP mailing list to receive taxicab industry notices and other department news, send an email to BACPP@cityofchicago.org. Rules and Regulations governing City of Chicago licensed public vehicles and public chauffeurs are available at www.cityofchicago.org/bacp. The Municipal Code of Chicago is available at www.amalegal.com.

Public Vehicle Operations Division • 2350 W. Ogden, First Floor, Chicago, IL 60608
BACPP@cityofchicago.org • 312-746-4300
www.cityofchicago.org/bacp



City of Chicago
Department of Business Affairs and
Consumer Protection

TAXICAB INDUSTRY NOTICE

December 1, 2011

Notice No. 11-055

GREEN TAXI PROGRAM DEADLINE IS DECEMBER 31, 2011

Reminder: the Green Taxi Incremental Cost Allowance Program ("Green Taxi Program") ends December 31, 2011. As of December 1, 2011, funding remains for eligible participants.

The program helps the taxi industry purchase cost-effective hybrid and alternative fuel vehicles; helps the City of Chicago to move closer to reaching carbon emission goals as set out in the Chicago Climate Action Plan; and provides passengers with trips in modern and environmentally sustainable vehicles.

The City, through the Department of Environment, received a Clean Cities grant through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds. The Green Taxi Program uses funding from this grant to reimburse up to a set amount of the cost of certain hybrid and alternative fuel vehicles. This is a first-come, first-served selection process for funding, so please be aware that once funding runs out, the department will stop rewarding reimbursements.

To participate in the program, the vehicle **MUST** be purchased by December 31, 2011. If you purchased an approved vehicle this year already it **WILL** qualify. Vehicles must be on the Department's Approved Vehicle List. Please be sure to check with the Department before purchasing any vehicle.

Hybrids can be reimbursed for \$2,000. That is the maximum allowed by the federal government under this program. CNG or propane powered vehicles can be reimbursed for up to 100% of the implemental cost, which is typically between \$9,000 and \$14,000. Electric vehicles are not qualified under this program.

NOTE: This program was expanded to include other City of Chicago public vehicle passenger licensees including livery and medicar licensees.

To find out more about the program or to download application forms visit the Public Vehicle page at www.cityofchicago.org/bacp or pick them up at 2350 W. Ogden.

Public Vehicle Operations Division • 2350 W. Ogden, First Floor, Chicago, IL 60608
BACPP@cityofchicago.org • 312-746-4300
www.cityofchicago.org/bacp

— COMMON SENSE CORNER —

BY FAYEZ KHOZINDAR

THE CITY OF CHICAGO SEEMS determined on giving the owners of the cab companies what they want - A LEASE HIKE- while TAXI DRIVERS - WHO PAY THE LEASES - have asked for a fair fare increase for the last four years with no success. If you do not call this an insult to cab drivers as workers who bring the money the owners and city collects from us, we do not know what is!!!!

If the city of Chicago is planning to satisfy the demand of the OWNERS by raising the lease cap and giving the drivers a small fare increase, then the city must stop right there. Drivers will resist because it is not fair, nor equitable.

We think the city of Chicago will justify this by throwing the drivers a small bone in the dirt as drivers struggle in a terrible economic and financial era with families to support. We believe all these issues— leases, fares, and safety are interrelated and must work in perfect harmony for the public, all taxi workers, and owners before these new laws of the land are enforced as rules and regulations in the streets.

On Friday September 23, 2011 at 1:30 PM (which is bad timing because Muslims go to their Mosques at that particular time for FRIDAY PRAYER) the city of Chicago held its first public meeting to update and streamline MCC 9-112 as well as the Rules and Regulations for Taxicab Medallion Licenses to "promote safer roads for the public and public chauffeurs." I attended that meeting along with 20 to 24 participants.

Consider the issue of "SAFETY." When a driver feels safe doing his or her job the public in turn feels safe and will be provided with outstanding service. Let's create a system that does not require drivers to race

in the streets because they did not make their leases and gas money. Most drivers work hard the first eight hours just to come up with gas and lease money. After eight hours, they think about food on the table for their families and have no choice except to take short cuts doing not-so-funny things because they are on a deadline and they want to meet that deadline no matter the risk.... it could be a U-TURN, ILLEGAL LANE

THE SAFETY OF CAB DRIVERS IS THE MAIN PILLAR FOR THE TAXI INDUSTRY TO FLOURISH AND SUCCEED IN THE CITY OF CHICAGO.

CHANGE, RUNNING A RED LIGHT, and any number of other things. What is the answer to this problem?

Consider the following situation: a businessman must go to O'Hare Airport from the southeast side of the city. To make sure he gets a cab he calls three cab companies. One cab picks him up, and the other two cabs go there resulting in a NO SHOW. Put yourself in the other two drivers' shoes. Where are they going from there? How quickly do they want to be back in the city to make up for the lost time and begin making their meager day's wage again?

The city of Chicago could have a centralized dispatch system. It would be paid for by pooling the expenses of all dispatch services of the different companies in the city. If we had this system in place, the dispatcher would send only one cab to that businessman. The driver who just dropped off a passenger in that area would service that businessman in a time efficient manner. This way, drivers have no lost time and all cab drivers can make

a living wage in the underserved areas.

The safety of cab drivers is the main pillar for the taxi industry to flourish and succeed in the city of Chicago. We tried the safety shield which oftentimes is not shielding anything. Forget about the camera because most crimes and attacks take place outside of the cabs. The UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL (UTCC) campaigned for two long years to install the SAFETY PLACARD into all the cabs. The city of Chicago finally agreed to incorporate this important notice in the rate sheet which is found on the back seat of every cab for the public to see, however, this is not enough to have reliable safety for drivers.

My survey within UTCC strongly suggests passengers must insert their ID into the door of the cab for the door to open, that way the passenger knows ahead of time that his identity is known to the centralized dispatch system and the attacker will think twice before they attempt to attack the driver.

This is a tested system. Bank cards are currently used by banks to open their doors when you want to use the ATM after hours. More to the point, a state ID or driver's license is swiped into the register at Walgreens to instantaneously verify a potentially underage young person's age and identity who wants to buy cigarettes.

Therefore, only a small amount of research and development is necessary to implement this system when one considers all the money that has been spent so far on safety shields, cameras, and company dispatch systems. This is one solution among many going forward for all of us in society to win, and for drivers to earn a fair wage and be safe on the job.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

UTCC Meets with the Lobbyist for the Big Cab Companies and Consultant working closely with the Public Vehicles Division of Consumer Services

UTCC had a three hour meeting on Tuesday October 11th with Baxter Swilly, Lobbyist for the newly formed Chicago Taxicab Operators Association (website: chicagocabs.org), and David Champion, a consultant in a two man environmental consulting firm named Environmental Impact Initiative (website: eiigreen.org). Baxter, David, and UTCC members had a very good and productive meeting. UTCC looks forward to having an ongoing dialogue with these two gentlemen. These two rather young and greenhorn men are trying their best to learn about the deep complexities and decades of initiatives of the taxi industry.

Unfortunately, they are faced with the impossible task of learning about 100,000 different details that drive the overall taxi market in a matter of weeks. UTCC applauds Baxter and David for their valiant effort as they scramble to fact find and educate themselves on the most basic surface issues on how the industry works. They are trying very hard. Good on them for that. However, their lack of knowledge about this industry is the size of the Grand Canyon. They are in way over their heads. It's not their fault.

The Big Cab Companies have not shared their financial records with these young men, and they indicated to us the Big Operators probably never will. Baxter and David have met with the city several times and have managed to learn a little bit from the Public Vehicles Division of Consumer Services. The young people running Public Vehicles know regulations and rules and what they have read out of a book about what the cab industry is, however they have very little knowledge about what minute by minute, hour by hour, day to day life is like for all Taxi Workers (mechanics, dispatchers, office staff, etc.), Drivers, Cab Company Operators, and Rich Medallion Investors (Brokers, sales commissions and incentives for Brokers, Broker licensing and training, high pressure boiler room sales techniques, investment regulation, State and Federal oversight, cab drivers TRICKED into sales contracts with excessive interest rates that in the end get a driver to pay \$350,000 for an over-inflated medallion payable over 7 years most drivers will never make because "trigger clauses" allow brokers to STEAL the medallion away from the driver before the contract ends, leasing medallions to unsuspecting drivers to push the cost of operating taxis onto new drivers, etc.).

Baxter and David are doing their best to learn what they can in a matter of weeks in preparation for applying to win a City Contract to study three aspects of the Cab Industry: 1) Lease Rates, 2) Medallion Values, and 3) Rate of Fare. You can read the entire City Contract by Googling the City of Chicago website and typing in a search for "Request For Proposal For Taxicab Industry Studies" or type in "Specification 96329"—Final Proposal due December 5, 2011. Ms. Rupal Bapat who heads Public Vehicles informed us in a meeting between UTCC members and herself the cost of a study with the SCOPE and MAGNITUDE of The Taxicab Industry Study would be budgeted at \$200,000.

A cynic might say Baxter and David are pursuing this contract to make some BIG CASH over the three months or so it will take them to finish it. However, UTCC believes their hearts are in the

right place—PROBLEM IS, they are way out of their element wandering around in a vast forest looking for clues. From what UTCC members can tell it is only a two or three man operation with "Good Old Boy" political connections in place to correctly execute the huge undertaking of doing a Taxi Industry Study correctly.

UTCC will apply to do all three parts of the study as we are uniquely positioned to give a complete and accurate accounting of the state of the Taxi Industry and future trends in Taxi Transportation. UTCC has a large organization in place to do a full and comprehensive study. UTCC has all of our driver members and associates—a great number of individuals who have 20 to 50 years of Taxi Driving and Cab Ownership experience. UTCC has our own Lawyers we work with. UTCC has the full resources of Human Rights Groups, Civil Rights Advocates, Public Policy experts, Workforce Relations Consultants, Statisticians, Financial Analysts, and Economists. UTCC has long standing relationships with University Professors with expertise in Taxi Industry Research. UTCC has long standing relationships with other Taxi Industry Experts. UTCC has partnered with Public and Consumer Advocacy Associations. UTCC has partnered with two progressive Environmental Consulting Firms. UTCC and our coalition partners are the best choice to do the Taxi Industry

Study with complete perfection for the common good of all Chicago citizens.

All UTCC Members, Associate Members and non-member Drivers and Owners call the UTCC office at (773) 342-8822 if you would like to participate in this Taxicab Industry Study. **Finally, we urge you to MAIL IN the UTCC LEASE HIKE and FARE INCREASE SURVEY.**

—ANONYMOUS

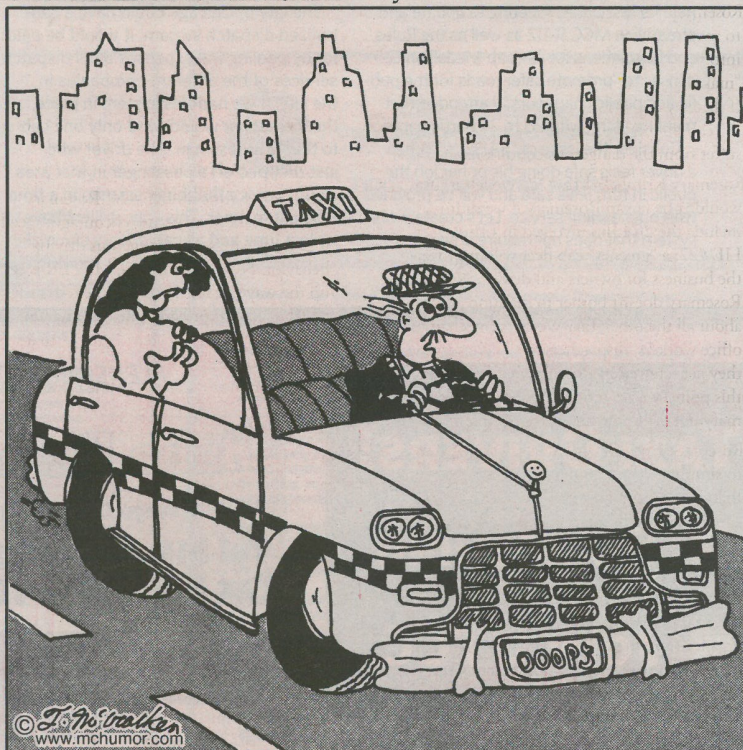
Recently, I read that the City Council Budget Committee Heard From Commissioner Rosemary Krimbel Whose Department Oversees Taxicab Regulation

This is the first of many dog and pony shows to RIP-OFF and LIE to the citizens of Chicago. The following list says it all.

1. The 14th Ward Alderman Ed Burke HEAD OF THE CITY FINANCE COMMITTEE dislikes Taxi Drivers and could care less about the PUBLIC INTEREST especially when it comes to Cab Customers. Ed Burke wants to slap a \$1-a-ride fare surcharge claiming this will generate \$70 million for the city. Ed Burke said "that's a considerable amount of money that hopefully would not negatively impact the industry." Ed Burke knows full well the \$1-a-ride surcharge

—YOU CAN'T GIVE BIRTH IN THE CAB—

McHUMOR.COM by T. McCracken



"You can't give birth here ma'am. I don't have a baby seat and I can't risk another ticket on my record"

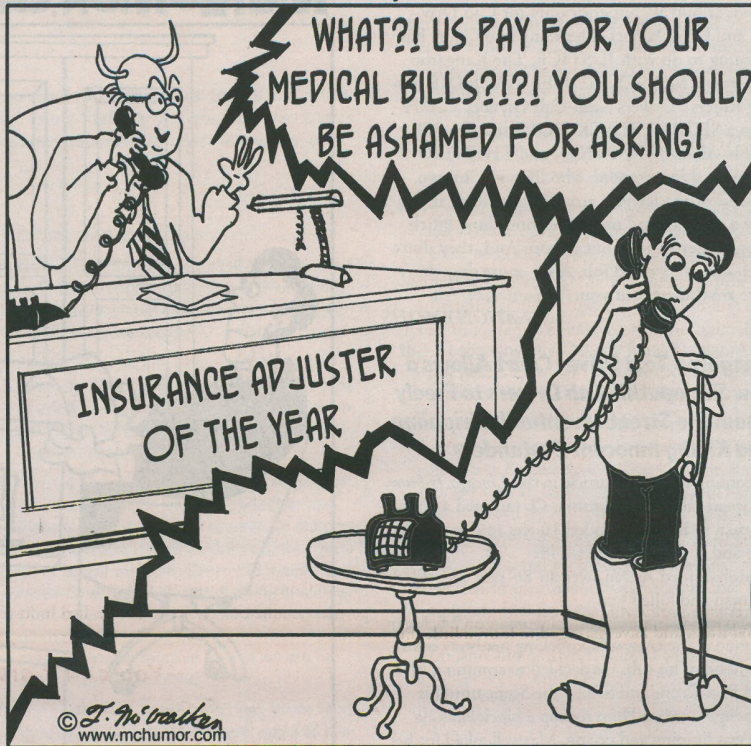
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

creates a heavy burden on poor people who are barely able to afford taxi service now. Ed Burke doesn't care! Here's an idea: How about Ed Burke getting rid of his group of ARMED COPS who go with him everywhere which has cost the city of Chicago \$11 MILLION since 1983. Go to Ed Burke's Wikipedia Page and see all the other things he has done costing the city double this amount. Where is the sense in letting Ed Burke "the fox" guard the chicken coop (Chicago's tax revenue)? We understand why Ed Burke wants to squeeze \$70 Million out of Chicagoans—so there is plenty of money for him to pilfer from the City treasury. The TAX PAYING PUBLIC can't afford Ed Burke anymore. [NOTE: Keep in mind Ed Burke is the HEAD OF THE CITY FINANCE COMMITTEE with an INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE of City Finances going back decades.

2. City Commissioner Rosemary Krimbel's LIE #1. Rosemary Krimbel claims she is working with UNPAID CONSULTANTS looking at the city's entire set of cab regulations. While technically true, the real truth is Rosemary is giving the UNPAID CONSULTANTS who know very little about the intricate nature of the cab industry insufficient information to COOK THE NUMBERS before the UNPAID CONSULTANTS bid on the city contract to do the "Clouded in Secrecy TAXICAB INDUSTRY STUDY." Boy, these UNPAID CONSULTANTS will get paid pretty good then.
3. Rosemary Krimbel's LIE #2. Rosemary aims to make cabs safer. We are not going to get into the cobweb of LIES here. Suffice it to say "making cabs safer" is Rosemary's last concern. If this city wants safer cabs, they should ask the cab driver community—we're the ones who suffer from the dangerous conditions!
4. Rosemary Krimbel's LIE #22. We felt it just wouldn't be fair to Rosemary if we didn't include the 20 LIES involved in LIE #2. LIE #22: a "greener" cab fleet will improve the business for owners and drivers. Notice Rosemary doesn't bother to mention anything about all the other Taxi Workers (mechanics, office workers, dispatchers, etc.). We surmise they get screwed in Rosemary's calculations. At this point, we are seriously concerned Rosemary doesn't know how to do simple math.
5. Rosemary Krimbel's LIE #23. Rosemary wants to simplify the fare structure. What does that even mean? The fare structure is already simple. Does Rosemary mean she will add Ed Burke's \$1-a-ride fare surcharge?
6. Rosemary Krimbel's LIE #24. Rosemary wants to make cabs more accessible. Oh, give us a break! Cab drivers and their representative organization, the UTCC, have been telling her, her staff, the previous less competent Commissioner, Norma Reyes, and her staff how to make cabs more accessible for 4 years.
7. Rosemary Krimbel's LIE #25. Rosemary said—and this is a direct quote—"Driver lease rates also are low." Okay Einstein, we guess that explains why Taxi Drivers make 33% less now

—DEVIL INSURANCE ADJUSTER—

MCHUMOR.com by T. McCracken



Insurance Tactic No. 472: Bully the Taxi Driver into not making a claim

- than we did 20 years ago. It also explains why Taxi Drivers consistently have trouble paying their leases and oftentimes are behind in lease payments, and pay leases late.
8. Rosemary Krimbel's LIE #26. Rosemary claims the meter structure encourages speeding, recklessness, and dangerous driving behavior. NOT TRUE. The METER is set up the way it is for a reason. The METER STRUCTURE provides the incentive for Taxi Drivers to be time efficient (after all that's why people take cabs), use the most efficient direct route, give the lowest cost to the customer, and enable the Driver to make his or her wage for the day. More simply, the METER STRUCTURE requires strategic and efficient movement through the flow of traffic that does not require speed and reckless lane changes. Rosemary has NO IDEA what the cab driving experience entails. The problem is the City is TOO LAZY to offer "safe commercial driver courses" to all commercial drivers in Chicago. "Safe commercial driver courses" would solve the problem of reckless and dangerous driving city-wide. I have heard that our cab driver union, the UTCC has designed comprehensive "safe commercial driver courses" to meet these needs. Why doesn't Rosemary Krimbel consult with our cab driver organizations?!
 9. Rosemary's TRUTH #1. Rosemary said—quote—"the economics are not there to

support a clean and efficient taxicab fleet." You got that sister. Well, it is actually a HALF-TRUTH. There are innovative ways to think "outside of the box" to move toward clean and efficient taxicabs, and the drivers themselves are the ones who have the best ideas about them. We are the ones who do the work, 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, and almost 365 days a year. There are more LIES, but we don't want this article to go on forever into infinity.
—ANONYMOUS (One more angry cab driver)

VOICE YOUR OPPOSITION TO THE \$1 TAX ON ALL TAXI RIDES IN CHICAGO. CALL YOUR ALDERMAN AND SAY: "WE ARE NOT TAX COLLECTORS NOR THE ATM FOR THE CITY OF CHICAGO AND WE NEED A FARE INCREASE."

FIND YOUR ALDERMAN HERE:
www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/about/wards.html

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Cab Drivers & Cab Owners Get Hauled into Kangaroo Court

A SPECIAL KANGAROO COURT exists down at 400 W. Superior only for Cab Drivers and Cab Owners. The Kangaroo Court has nothing to do with JUSTICE. The Kangaroo Court is a MONEY RIP-OFF MACHINE piping Riders', Drivers', and Cab Owners' CASH into a SECRET BLACK HOLE ripe for POLITICAL CORRUPTION and THIEVERY subsidized by everyone who lives in Chicago.

Most of the lawyers around town look at you like a number and only care about how much money they can get out of you. And, they don't even do a very good job. After court they don't care anything about you.

—ANONYMOUS

Kangaroo Taxi Driver Court Allows a Few Sociopathic Cab Drivers to Freely Roam the Streets eventually Crippling and Killing Innocent Bystanders

According to a recent article in the *Chicago Tribune*, Chicago cab driver Matthias O. rammed a young woman so hard she landed 10 feet in front of the cab and is now crippled for life.

Mohammed A. ran over an 86 year old elderly woman and killed her.

Maxwell G. rammed into a woman on Michigan Avenue in the crosswalk knocking her body onto the hood of his cab. He decided to commit a HIT and Run Crime and SPLIT the Scene until his passengers ordered him to stop a block later. As she was limping and crying, Maxwell asked for her phone number, gave her one he said was his and told her to get in his car. The woman refused. The driver immediately took off to escape from the POLICE who were on their way. He later called her repeatedly while she was at the hospital, YELLING at her for seeking treatment. The driver may have crippled this woman for LIFE.

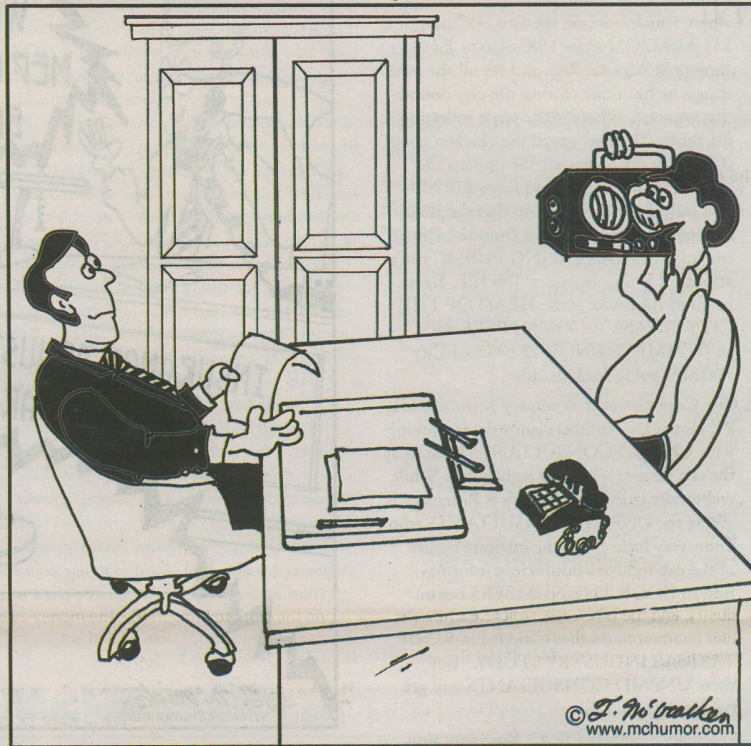
Kangaroo Court at 400 W. Superior St. should have detected and permanently revoked the Taxi Drivers Licenses of these three Chicago cab drivers, who are clearly UNFIT TO BE CAB DRIVERS! However, Kangaroo Court did not detect these DANGEROUS DRIVERS because MONEY is the ONLY PURPOSE of Kangaroo Court's existence. JUSTICE for the PUBLIC is NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL.

The City's Deputy Commissioner of Public Vehicles, responded to Maxwell's EVIL BEHAVIOR—his HIT and RUN CRIMINAL CONDUCT with the least imaginative WEAK RESPONSE one could ever believe possible. City officials, DID NOT treat the DISEASE that allows this type of CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR to occur. Instead, they saw these tragedies as a way to make EVEN MORE "MONEY" for the City and punish all Taxi Drivers by making all Drivers pay to get a DRUG TEST. In NONE of the incidents cited by the *Tribune* article were drugs mentioned AT ALL as a cause or factor in the accidents!

Veteran Drivers with 10 years of experience or more had been exempt from this requirement before this year. Here is the problem—99% of Taxi Drivers do not do drugs. Heck, the vast majority don't drink alcohol either. The 1% of Drivers who do drugs know where to get pills, juices, and

—BOOM BOX LEGAL—

MCHUMOR.COM by T. McCracken



"I know the legal process doesn't really work like it does on TV, but couldn't you at least have a sound track since your blackmail rip-off scheme is the same for all cab drivers—despite the wide difference in phony violations."

tonics on the internet and health food stores to beat the drug tests.

So, Deputy Commissioner's ridiculous response to the many core problems that lead to these tragedies solves nothing, unless you consider arbitrary punishment and squeezing more money out of a lot of decent hard-working professional Drivers good public policy. This is just one of many CORRUPT PRACTICES at Public Vehicles that betrays the PUBLIC TRUST. Never forget that

Department of Consumer Services of which Public Vehicles is a part has a history of being INEPT and CORRUPT. Back in the 1970's and 1980's a large number of Department of Consumer Services employees went to PRISON.

If the city wants to have an efficient process to detect incompetent, incapable or unqualified drivers in our workforce, they should come and ask us drivers to collaborate in crafting one.

—ANONYMOUS

DRIVERS & OWNER-OPERATORS!

NEXT TIME YOU HAVE A DATE WITH COURT AT 400 W. SUPERIOR, CALL YOUR UTCC ORGANIZATION AND LAWYERS HERE WILL RESOLVE YOUR ISSUE FOR AS LITTLE AS \$20 AND LESS THAN 30 MINUTES OF YOUR TIME FOR EVERYTHING. UTCC REPRESENTS DRIVERS IN COURT WITH CONVICTION AND ALL YEAR ROUND WE CONTINUE TO WORK FOR YOUR RIGHTS.

PHONE: 773-342-8822

SURVEY

TAXI DRIVERS' AND TAXI WORKERS' SURVEY: LEASE HIKE AND FARE INCREASE

Chicago Cab drivers! Before you fill out this survey, you need to know several things about the history of the Taxi Industry in Chicago. We in the UTCC know that many of you are new, and many veteran drivers may need to be reminded of what has happened the last few years, or even the last few months.

In the last six years:

1. 5 years ago the "flag pull" on the taxi meter went from \$1.80 to \$2.25.
2. Average price of 12 hour leases went from \$275/week to now \$340-420
3. Average price of 24 hour leases went from \$475 to now \$575-650/700 or more for hybrid taxis
4. Cost of living increases average 4.5 % per year= 27% increase in living expenses and cost of doing business as a cab driver
5. Former Commissioner of Consumer Services (now Dept. of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection) Norma Reyes declared in public testimony in 2007 that the Lease Cap in Chicago for 24 hour leases was \$493.
6. It is well known among cab drivers in the industry, and the UTCC has concrete evidence that most owners and affiliations have been overcharging for leases for at least the last three (3) years
7. Despite numerous requests by UTCC that the City send its' investigators to gather evidence from the drivers at the garages of the Affiliations about these overcharges, the City has refused to enforce their own rules

- about overcharged leases
8. The new Commissioner of DBACP (Dept. of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection) Rosemary Krimbel has recently announced that "leases are too low".
 9. The City has recently commissioned a "Taxicab Industry Studies" proposal in order to analyze the cost of doing business as an Affiliation, a Medallion Owner, or a Medallion Manager.
 10. The City has held meetings with Affiliation owners, Medallion owners, and other taxi industry representatives to open up dialogue with them about their business costs. The City has not met with Drivers to inquire or research about OUR cost of doing business. [Reminder: WE DRIVERS are the ones who do the work to bring in ALL the money every one of these people live on and we are the ones who pay the leases.]
 11. The system for "short trips" was started more than 20 years ago, when there was less traffic, and is very much out of date and needs updating for current conditions.
 12. Five years ago, gas prices were less than \$2 per gallon and now its almost \$4 a gallon.

We in the UTCC feel that the City is searching for any and all justifications for raising Lease Caps so the Cab owners can legitimately charge more for our leases, when they have been overcharging the current Lease Cap for at least three years with no enforcement by the City. No one in the City has ever tried to discover the "Cost of Doing Business" of the average cab driver. We feel this is an enormous injustice to our workforce.

{Members of the PUBLIC please answer questions that apply to you and mail this survey into our UTCC office—Thank You}

UTCC says NO to a HIKE in DRIVER LEASES—and—YES to targeted "FAIR" FARE INCREASES to those who can most afford it while keeping FARES the SAME for the poor, working poor, elderly on fixed incomes, disabled, students and single riders.

FILL OUT THE SURVEY—LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK

1. Should the credit card charge be lowered to 3.5% and the customer pays it, like in Las Vegas? **YES / NO**
2. Should costs be cut to Cab Owners so they can lower leases? **YES / NO**
3. Add \$1 extra for each additional customer between the ages of 12 and 65 that goes directly to the taxi driver? {Note: not Ed Burke's plan for a \$1 city tax} **YES / NO**
4. Keep the \$1 gas surcharge to pay for the high price of gas? **YES / NO**
5. No Airport Stamps for Short Trips at O'Hare and Midway? **YES / NO**
6. Increase the time for Short Trips to 55 minutes? **YES / NO**
7. Implement a bribery reporting system to

- prevent Hotel doorman from selling Airport Fares to cheating Taxi Drivers and Limos? **YES / NO**
8. Add \$5 for each extra person going to or coming from the Airports? **YES / NO**
 9. \$3 gas surcharge for trips over 10 miles to pay for the high price of gas? **YES / NO**
 10. Advertise Taxi Fares inside Airport Terminal and Hotels next to Airport Express (AE) Fares so the riding public gets the best value for their money? **YES / NO**
 11. Mandate that drivers should always get Cash Money for Credit Cards the same day the charge is authorized? **YES / NO**
 12. Reform the Justice system at 400 W. Superior by commissioning a study that would

- better serve the intent of overseeing the cab driver workforce? **YES / NO**
13. Should payment for advertisements on cabs be enforced by the City? **YES / NO**
 14. It is estimated that Taxi Drivers have paid nearly \$100 Million into Workman's Compensation. Should there be a law that would require the Industry and the State to regularly publish statistics about how many claims have been paid out and the status of this fund that is intended to compensate taxi workers? **YES / NO**
 15. It is estimated that the Airport Stamp TA X the PUBLIC pays to go to and from the Airports pulls in \$20 Million a year. Should there be a public accounting of how and where and when these monies have been paid out? **YES / NO**
 16. Abolish the Physical and Drug Testing requirement for older Veteran Drivers as stated in the BRAND NEW law? **YES / NO**
 17. Give Cab Owners the right to extend the number of years a cab can be on the road from 5 to 8 years so Cab Owners have a longer time to depreciate the cost and make profits from Hybrid Vehicles if they would like to help save the environment? **YES / NO**
 18. Would you like a SINGLE CENTRAL dispatch system so you have a chance to take the overflow of radio calls during peak periods and terrible weather when the BIG COMPANIES stop answering their phones so you can SERVICE communities in the far reaches of the South side, West side, and North side when you are there? **YES / NO**
 19. Would you be willing to pay a \$1 bid board fee to help service customers who otherwise are stranded and marginalized in poor under served neighborhoods by the narrow-minded archaic city designed dispatch system? **YES / NO**
 20. Should ALL TAXI WORKERS who are Mechanics, Office Workers, and Dispatchers receive fair wages, benefits, and fair working conditions? **YES / NO**
 21. Should there be strict laws limiting the City's ability to arbitrarily revoke medallion owners right of ownership to his or her medallion? **YES / NO**
 22. Should the Safety Placard be larger on the rate sheet so people actually see it and can read it? End result: Drivers are safer from violent crimes. **YES / NO**
 23. Several years ago cabs had PANIC BUTTONS installed in cabs to call the Police immediately when a Taxi Driver was in danger. Should we bring back the PANIC BUTTON feature for Drivers' safety? **YES / NO**
 24. Should anti-violence BANNERS that read "Battery of an on-duty Taxi Driver is a Class 3 felony, punishable by up to 5 years imprisonment" be placed along the length of both back cab doors and the bumper to increase knowledge of the law concerning violence against cab drivers? **YES / NO**
 25. Should a system be put in place (similar to the card swipe to enter Bank ATMs after hours) that requires customers to swipe their State ID or Driver's License so we know the identity of people who commit a

SURVEY

HATE CRIME or VIOLENCE against a Taxi Driver? **YES / NO**

26. Should the City require BRAND NEW TAXI DRIVERS to participate in the ROAD SHARING TRAINING PROGRAM with respect to Pedestrians, Roller Bladers, Cyclists, Horse Drawn Carriages, City Roadway Workers, Out of Towners, and various other classifications of the public? (New Driver training specifically suited to driving a Taxi in City traffic) **YES / NO**

27. Should cab companies like Yellow Cab be allowed to charge back credit cards weeks later and take money away from drivers after the cab company has given an approval code for the credit card to go through for payment? **YES / NO**

28. Should people who file complaints against Taxi Drivers be required to pay a filing fee of \$25 to guard against phony frivolous accusations the same way it is done in New York City? **YES / NO**

29. If you as a cab driver could earn \$1,000 extra per month, would you agree to non-punitive field supervision and driving coaches? **YES / NO**

30. Do you think it would be a good idea for the Chicago taxicab industry to adopt the Australian system of archiving a digital video and audio recording of everything that happens in the cabin of the cab when the engine is on for the purposes of fair formal complaint resolution at 400 W. Superior? **YES / NO**

Please leave additional Comments in the space below.

CHECK ONE OF THE BOXES:

- Yes, I WANT TO BECOME A FULL DUES PAYING MEMBER—\$100
 Yes, I WANT TO BECOME AN ASSOCIATE MEMBER—FREE

NAME: _____

(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

E-MAIL: _____

(SO WE CAN KEEP YOU INFORMED ON THE FARE INCREASE)

CELL PHONE: _____

(TEXT MESSAGE FARE INCREASE UPDATES)

HOME PHONE: _____

(OCCASIONALLY UTCC LIKES TO GET FEEDBACK ABOUT WAGES, WORKING CONDITIONS AND IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT)

MAIL THIS SURVEY TO: United Taxidriers Community Council, 2040 N. Milwaukee, 2nd Floor, Chicago, IL 60647, ATTENTION: SURVEY

VISIT UTCC'S OFFICE!

2040 N MILWAUKEE AVE / 2ND FLOOR

OFFICE HOURS: MON-WED / 1PM-7PM

PHONE: 773-342-8822

MEDALLION TRANSFER MONTH FROM 9/1/11 TO 9/30/11

CLOSING DATE	PV NUMBER	SALE PRICE
9/29/2011	3376	\$185,000
9/29/2011	4947	\$185,000
9/29/2011	4972	\$185,000
9/29/2011	6504	\$185,000
9/27/2011	3771	\$280,000
9/26/2011	3980	\$225,000
9/21/2011	5819	\$267,000
9/20/2011	4224	\$277,000
9/20/2011	2896	\$275,000
9/20/2011	6718	\$243,000
9/20/2011	6199	\$248,000
9/14/2011	3433	\$100,000

MEDALLION TRANSFER MONTH FROM 10/1/11 TO 10/31/11

CLOSING DATE	PV NUMBER	SALE PRICE
10/27/2011	2951	\$292,000
10/27/2011	3605	\$292,000
10/27/2011	6297	\$300,000
10/25/2011	3400	\$200,000
10/21/2011	5473	\$252,000
10/17/2011	568	\$275,000
10/17/2011	5745	\$275,000
10/14/2011	2785	\$285,000
10/13/2011	3879	\$200,000
10/12/2011	6320	\$260,000
10/12/2011	5176	\$260,000
10/6/2011	2270	\$285,000

The following is an analysis of the Chicago City Government's Play Book For Every Fare Hike in the Past that Screws the Public and Drivers

1. Fare Increase.
2. Cab Companies raise leases too high along with non-compliant illegitimate charges added onto leases.
3. The City orders the police to ticket cab drivers like crazy for the smallest or FICTITIOUS infractions to raise money.
4. Heavy TARGETING of Taxis by City Tow Trucks to RAISE EVEN MORE MONEY. Tow Trucks GRAB Taxis out of CAB STANDS and 15-MINUTE WAITING ZONES while a Driver goes into an establishment to use the restroom or get a cup of coffee. This Tow Truck Charade COSTS Drivers \$250 when you include the time to retrieve the Taxi, the BOGUS TICKET, lost work time, and the Cab Fare to get to the Tow Yard.
5. Cab Drivers don't make a dime more, and usually less after this MULTI-PRONG squeeze attack from the Police, the City, and Cab Companies.

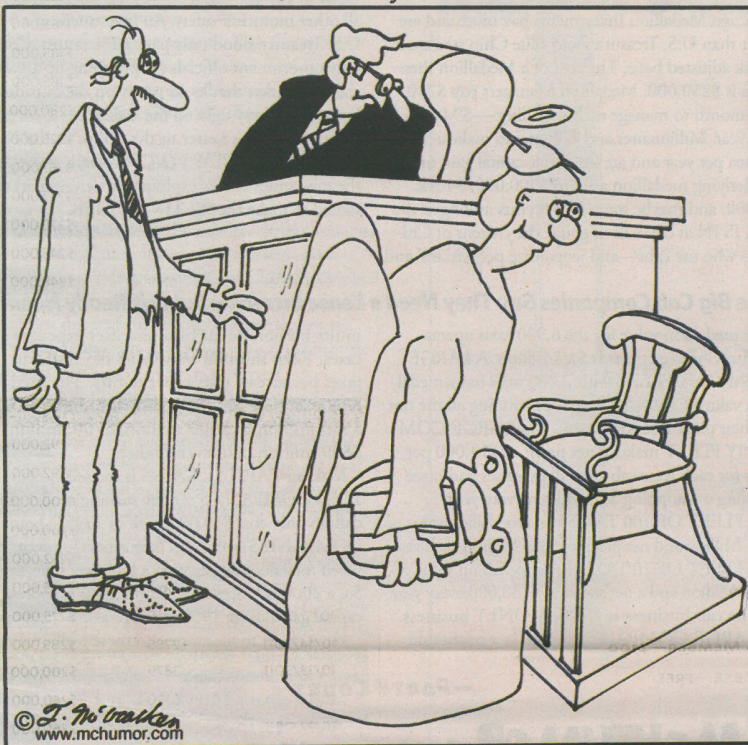
The Public is less safe. The Public receives less service. The Cab riding experience is extremely unpleasant from the rude and irritated hired help who is relentlessly exploited by the inept power structure.

—ANONYMOUS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

—COURT ANGEL—

MCHUMOR.COM by T. McCracken



"I call my next witness: the victim."
Adventures in Kangaroo Taxi Driver Court

What Happened To Sam?

Sam was a fixture at Midway Airport Taxi Staging Area for the past few years. He would clean windows, wash our cabs and be an all-around pleasant fellow, well-liked by most drivers. He was NOT a beggar, he always tried to make himself useful, and made a meager living doing it. He never bothered anyone.

I'll tell you what happened to Sam. Two maintenance men made up a cock and bull story about how

Sam was using paper towels from the cab and limo drivers bathroom to clean cab windows. The bathroom doesn't have no paper towels. Sam wouldn't use paper towels no how because newspaper cleans with a streak-free shine. Everybody who reads this call the Midway Department of Aviation at (773) 838-0667 to let them know we want Sam back.

—ANONYMOUS

Why Did Two Maintenance Workers Lie On Sam?

Sam is just trying to make a living in these tough economic times. The Aviation police more than likely believed the lie and told Sam not to come back to Midway because he is black.

The maintenance workers should be required to make a full police report about the paper towels in the bathroom for the drivers at Midway and sign the statement. Then, the police can conduct a high level investigation into the men's bathroom paper

towel mystery. When the police discover the obvious they should allow Sam to come back and clean the cabs. In the meantime, I invite the two maintenance workers to come forward with their name, address, and phone number so you can tell us all about the paper towels in the bathroom. Leave you names and contact information at the UTCC office (773) 342-8822. Someone will call you back.

—ANONYMOUS

Chicago Tribune Reporters Do a Disservice To Chicago By Not Reporting The Real Truth About The Cab Industry

"Worst Cabbies Get a Free Pass". What a skewed report the *Chicago Tribune* reporters have produced in their Sunday October 16, 2011 paper. It is a shame they have disgraced their profession by giving one side of the story, and manipulating statistics to make hardworking Chicago taxi drivers look bad. What percentage is 7 of the 10,000 drivers in

Chicago? Barely 1/14th of 1% (.07%). Really?

Why did Jason Meisner, Cynthia Dizikes and Joe Mahr not talk about the thousands of other honest, safe drivers providing for their families, raising children, and making an honest living? Why did the *Chicago Tribune* reporters remove the human face of taxi drivers who like everyone else have mothers,

fathers, sisters, brothers, wives, sons and daughters?

Why didn't the reporters talk about the drivers who have PhD's? Why no discussion about drivers whose children are top students in their schools? And why did they not talk about the drivers without any complaints in the past 30 years? How about drivers who are loved by their customers and repeatedly hired privately?

Did *Chicago Tribune* reporters, Jason Meisner, Cynthia Dizikes and Joe Mahr, ever try to find out the reason why Zafar Shah has been getting speeding tickets and why he has been falling asleep at the wheel? Did they ask why I sometimes start falling asleep at the wheel? Derek de Board is right to ask "What are they waiting for—are City officials waiting for somebody to get paralyzed?" I also feel that a bigger question Mr. de Board should be asking is why the driver who hit him was driving in such a reckless way?

The fact of the matter is that Chicago drivers have been losing money over the years due to high lease rates, credit card fees, gasoline prices, and other costs of operating their business. There has been no fare increase for five years. Chicago fares are the second lowest in the country. Chicago cab drivers have been economically squeezed to the point where they have to drive between 16 to 18 hours to make the same amount of money they made 5 years ago in a 12 hour shift. I used to drive 10 to 12 hours per day and now I have to drive 16 to 17 hours per day. Where do you think I will fall asleep? Will it be at a red light, stop sign, cab line, O'Hare airport parking lot, or while driving? When will the City of Chicago wake-up and correct this problem? When will *Chicago Tribune* reporters report on this matter? When will we have a public response? Will it be when a high ranking political official like Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel's family dies in a cab accident because the driver fell asleep at the wheel while driving 55 mph on the expressway?

Making things more painful and worse for taxi drivers is the fact cab company owners are lobbying the City of Chicago to increase the maximum cap on the lease rates for Chicago cabs. Under Mayor Rahm Emanuel's leadership the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection has "unofficially" hired Mr. David Champion of Environmental Impact Initiative to work with a cab company lobbyist, Baxter Swilly, to come up with an economic model that will work for the Chicago taxi industry. David Champion and Baxter Swilly add up to an inadequate two man show and they have no experience with the complicated issues affecting the Chicago cab industry. Why were they "unofficially" hired to do this job? And what's the deal with the cab company lobbyists working only in their interests without a care in the world about anybody else? This is cow town K-Street politics. Why wasn't a professional consulting firm with the staff and resources to do an independent study "unofficially" hired to do such a complicated job for the City? Or, is David Champion just a front man accompanied by his buddy, Baxter Swilly, hosting a sideshow which misrepresents the City as an independent study to be conducted by them which prematurely concludes lease rates should be increased? Are *Tribune* reporters influenced by cab company lobbyists to the extent they give one-sided stories of the cab industry?

Imagine if cab lease rates are increased. There will be more speeding. Drivers will run a lot more red

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

lights and stop signs. Drivers will be working longer and longer hours to make ends meet. This is bound to have an ill effect on the safety of the Chicago cab riding public. There will be more innocent people like Mr. Derek de Board injured.

How much more will the cab companies and the City squeeze out of cab drivers? Cab drivers' fuel costs, credit card fees, tolls, and airport tax costs alone have gone up over \$12,000 to \$15,000 per year. It's a long time overdue that Chicago cab drivers be given a fare increase and a fair system, not a lease increase and more unreasonable strict rules.

I highly encourage the *Chicago Tribune* Watchdog Group and their reporters to do justice to their profession, and to look into this matter to uncover the real truth.

—ANONYMOUS

How Can Taxi Medallion Prices Surge 525%, While Stocks Have Been in a Bear Market, Home Foreclosures at Record Highs and Real Unemployment at 15.6%!

A Taxi medallion cost \$40,000 in 1995. A Taxi medallion is valued at \$250,000 today. How do you account for the huge price spike when drivers make 33% less today than they did in 1995? How do you account for the market capitalization of an entire industry going from \$180 Million to \$1.7 Billion with per cab industry revenue equal to what it was in 1995? The boom economy years of the late 1990s and early 2000s are long gone. Is this a pump and dump scheme by Millionaires and Billionaires on the taxpaying public of Chicago? Is there a secret boiler room operation in someone's basement unloading Chicago Cab medallion Ponzi scheme investments on unsuspecting investors Bernie Madoff style?

—ANONYMOUS

We Seem to Have a Few Fake Taxi Drivers Advocates Who Claim To Speak For Drivers, However They Speak With Forked Tongue

The past months have been filled with powerful, creative, and passionate displays of drivers fighting back against a system rigged against them for a long time. But, many of the so-called Taxi Drivers Advocates—specifically GEORGE LUTFALLAH, publisher of the CHICAGO DISPATCHER continues to sit on the sidelines PRETENDING he cares about Taxi Drivers. Worse yet, GEORGE LUTFALLAH looks out only for MILLIONAIRES, BILLIONAIRES, BIG CAB COMPANIES, and his RICH ADVERTISERS (like YELLOW CAB which now goes by the misleading pretty MONOPOLISTIC name—Taxi Affiliation Services). Did you hear "CITY INSIDER" Former Commissioner NORMA REYES just got hired by YELLOW CAB as the Special Projects Coordinator? Could it be her SPECIAL PROJECT is to SCREW Taxi Drivers and Taxi Workers one last time to re-live her cherished memories for good old time's sake? However, the REAL TAXI DRIVERS ADVOCATES will keep writing and publishing the REAL FACTS about this collusion until we see the cab industry transformed for the benefit of all Taxi Drivers, all Taxi Workers, and the Public in the city of Chicago.

—ANONYMOUS

The Big Cab Companies Plan To JACK UP LEASES And Slightly Raise Fares So MILLIONAIRE AND BILLIONAIRE CAB INVESTORS Get Richer While They Give Customers Less Safety And Service For Their MONEY!

Chicago Medallion Investments pay more and are safer than U.S. Treasuries and Blue Chip stocks on a risk adjusted basis. The cost of a Medallion these days is \$250,000. Medallion Managers pay \$750 per month to manage each medallion—\$9,000 per year. Millionaires and Billionaires make a 3.6% return per year and are insured a capital gain on the underlying medallion asset to \$300,000, \$400k, \$500k, and maybe more in 2-5 years as long as the FIX IS IN at city hall to gouge the citizens of Chicago who use cabs—and jeopardize pedestrians' and

all other motorists' safety. An investment in a 5-year U.S. Treasury Bond only pays a 1% return. Corrupt City government officials are propping up an artificial cab market that looks pretty on the outside, but is very, very, very ugly on the inside.

See my group's Letter to the Editor in the NEXT ISSUE of the *UTCC VOICE* to learn more about the mechanics of this exploitation driven market designed to make the RICH—RICHER.

—ANONYMOUS

The Big Cab Companies Say They Need a Lease Increase, But is it Really Needed?

The medallion value for the 6,900 taxis operating on Chicago streets is \$1.7 Billion. A LARGE COMPANY FLEET with 2,000 taxis has a medallion value of \$500 Million not including all the rest of their plant and equipment. The LARGE COMPANY FLEET makes a net profit of \$13,000 per year for each lease cab after all expenses and taxes totaling a whopping \$26 Million every year.

A FLEET OF 100 TAXIS has a medallion value of \$25 Million and net profit of \$1.3 Million each year.

A FLEET OF 10 TAXIS has a medallion value of \$2.5 Million and a net profit of \$130,000 every year.

The cab business is a BIG MONEY business. A LARGE COMPANY FLEET is a profitable

multi-million dollar business after expenses and taxes. Keep in mind they don't pay much in taxes because of tons of write-offs. The medallion asset base has the potential to increase from \$500 million to \$600 million, \$700 million, \$800 million, and even higher.

Making CAPITAL GAINS is the second part of a BIG COMPANY'S money making model. A medallion only cost \$40,000 back in 1995. These BIG COMPANIES have been in business for decades when medallion prices were a lot lower than that. So, a 2000 cab fleet now sits on \$420 million in capital gains using 1995 as the baseline.

How much more money do these Millionaires

—PARTY COURT—

MCHUMOR.COM by T. McCracken



"...the party of the first part is to give the party of the second part..."
Adventures in Kangaroo Taxi Driver Court

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

—SAFETY FIRST—

MCHUMOR.COM by T. McCracken



"The city's safety plan for Taxi Workers."

and Billionaires need?

How much more cash do they want to suck out of the cab riding public with no increase in safety and service to customers?

How much more pressure do Cab Companies want to put on drivers and all other Taxi Workers who are underpaid, exploited by high lease expenses, have no benefits, and suffer poor working conditions?

How many more Chicago Citizens must be killed and maimed by cab drivers forced to work long hours in a fog of delirious exhaustion?

How much longer are brand new drivers going to be denied adequate driver safety training and as a consequence endanger millions of Chicago Citizens?

When is City government going to stop prohibiting taxi drivers from giving excellent customer service to passengers who pay a substantial sum to ride in a taxi?

When will the public wake up to see the LEASE HIKE and JACKED UP METER FARES (Big companies want to use the SHOTGUN METHOD hitting everybody unequally as opposed to a TARGETED FARE INCREASE to those who can easily afford it) as a BIG CASH PASS THROUGH SCHEME from the public to Millionaire and Billionaire investors?

STOP THE MADNESS!

The BIG CAB COMPANIES want to raise lease rates drivers pay to enrich themselves at the expense of the riding public. In its current CITY PRE-ORDAINED FORM an increase in lease rates guarantees an "UNFAIR" FARE HIKE on the public.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

1. Millionaires and Billionaires who own taxi medallions get richer on several revenue streams.
2. Cab Drivers don't make any more money, and arguably less when you factor in HIGHER LEASE RATES. Furthermore, POLICE and SPECIAL CAB VEHICLE COPS will ticket cabs with greater frequency to cash in on the FARE HIKE BONANZA for the city. Traffic management will also greatly increase fly-by tickets on cab drivers to cash in for the city. A fly-by ticket occurs when the police write down your license plate number and send you a ticket in the mail without ever stopping you.
3. THE BIGGEST LOSER: the citizens of Chicago. The people will pay a great deal more, and in return receive no improvements in public safety and customer service.
4. THE BIGGEST WINNER: the BIG CAB COMPANIES. Once again, they get to RIP-OFF the people of Chicago by passing the public's money straight to themselves.
5. City Government: Politicians SELL OUT the public interest.

—ANONYMOUS

UTCC Has a Series of "Safe Driver - Safe City - Green Taxi" Initiatives We Would Like to Share With the City If They Would Only Sit Down With Us and Listen

City ordinance states a 24-hour cab lease should be no more than \$473. Name one company that follows this law. UTCC has received reports some drivers in a 2-person driving team are be-

ing gouged for as much as \$900 for Hybrid lease cabs and \$1100 for Natural Gas lease cabs. In its current form the City's "Green Taxi Initiative" will make it a standard practice to hike leases anywhere from 90% to 130% above the current city regulated lease rate. The Big Cab Companies are looking to charge \$500 for each 12-hour shift despite the fact Taxi Drivers make 33% less than they did 20 years ago. The City is poised to force feed the "Green Taxi Program" down the throats of the Cab Industry while it is subsidized by the PUBLIC at a GREAT COST.

Rosemary Krimbel, who heads the Department

of Business Affairs, and Rupal Bapat, who heads the Public Vehicles Division are complete BUFFOONS working with goofy misguided "out of whack with reality" ideas based on punishing everyone in Chicago society to get what they want.

UTCC has a detailed plan and set of initiatives that makes putting Hybrid and Natural Gas Taxis on the streets of Chicago that doesn't require LEASE HIKES, doesn't require heavy handed draconian measures, doesn't endanger the public at large, doesn't cost one penny, and actually saves money for everyone in the City of Chicago.

—ANONYMOUS

Non-Punitive Professionalization as a Means to a Just Extra Person Charge

BY GREGORY MCGEE

THE BEST WAY MANY PEOPLE FEEL TO IMPROVE the earning power of the Chicago taxicab driver is to upgrade the social contract. That is, provide a higher quality product—and then we can justify a higher rate on the meter.

But first, it is necessary that one not be in denial about the poor overall quality of the service, or the "product."

If one were to look objectively at the state of the Chicago taxicab industry, then one would agree

that the vast majority of drivers could benefit from field supervision and coaching so as to improve the skill and safety level of their driving. Also, the fleet is not kept clean enough.

But, if there were two programs – (paid for by the medallion renewal fees) one to put 50 field supervisor driving coaches on the streets, and another to have the cabs cleaned for free when they come to O'Hare and Midway, then we could justify a significant increase in our income.

Specifically, I am proposing \$5 for each extra

person in the city, and \$10 for each extra passenger to and from O'Hare and Midway. The ages this would apply to would be from ages 25 to 62. This would provide the cab driver with an extra \$1,000 per month of additional income. By asking each grown adult to pay a decent fare for the service it avoids raising the price of the cab ride for the individual passenger when he or she is traveling alone.

Grown adults traveling for either \$1.00 or 50 cents is nothing less than a form of free-loading.

But to justify everyone paying a decent fare, we need to provide a decent service. That is skilled and safe driving in a clean cab! ■

The Complaint System for a Chicago Cab Driver

BY PETER ALI ENGER

DID YOU KNOW WE CHICAGO CAB DRIVERS HAVE a complaint system with the City? Well, we do. There is a form at the Ogden Ave. Dept. of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (DBACP), at the front window, and it is called the "Public Vehicle Industry Investigation Form". They will give it to you if you ask for it. It will also be available at the UTCC offices at 2040 N. Milwaukee, and a UTCC member will help you fill it out if you ask them. This complaint form is made so that cab drivers have a system to complain about any injustices we suffer in the taxi industry here in Chicago, and the City has to investigate it and report back to us. It may not always work, but sometimes it does. I believe it is worth doing, because if enough cab drivers complain about the same thing, then maybe the City will have to do something about a situation.

Three years ago, I complained about not receiving a \$100 bond back from the American United offices at Belmont and Western. I also complained about not getting paid back for a half-day's work when my cab broke down. The City Rules and Regulations for Public Chauffeurs say that if your cab breaks down, and you cannot work, the cab company has to pay you back money off your lease for your lost hours. At American United at that time, they always told the drivers, "That's your free day." (They advertised that their weekly leases were for six days, and included a 'free day', usually Sunday). I told them that I wanted to pick my OWN free day, not lose money when the cab broke down. They didn't listen to me.

Many American United drivers told me that Bobby Botalla, the manager at American United at Belmont-Western garage, NEVER gave a bond back, and NEVER paid drivers for lost time when the cab broke down, and I shouldn't bother trying to get my money. I didn't listen. I filed a complaint with the City, and I got a check from the company for \$125. One hundred for my bond, and \$25 for a half day's lost work.

Recently, Yellow Cab Co., which now owns the American United Affiliation, began collecting a bond from all the American United drivers by taking \$25 out of every \$100 cashed from our credit card receipts at the cashier at Belmont/Western. Since I already have a bond with the owner of my medallion at my garage, I thought this was unfair. I should not have to pay two bonds to work! The City Rules and Regulations allow the owner of a medallion to collect up to \$500 for a bond to protect them from disputes with

drivers about accidents, or for tickets the drivers refuse to pay. When I asked what this new bond was for, I was told it was to protect the company (Yellow) from potential "charge backs" on the credit cards. In other words, if the credit card authorization system somehow authorized a credit card, and then failed and changed its mind, then the driver would have to give back the money to the company!

I was outraged! I went to the Ogden Avenue to file a complaint, which you can read in this paper.

The main point is that drivers should *not* have to pay two bonds to work, charge backs are *not* a big problem in the industry, and if they are, it should be an issue between the cab company and the credit card authorization company. Drivers should *not* have to pay for this problem! After all, we don't have any control over whether we can take a credit card, we don't

own the credit card machines, and we are the ones who actually do the work—we drove the customer to her or his destination, and we should get paid!

So I filed my complaint. I don't know what will happen, but I feel it is always worth doing, to fight injustice. I think all drivers should do the same thing. Instead of complaining to each other, let's let the City do its job of investigating these situations. After all, they sure do follow up when people complain about us!

I will report back in this newspaper about what happens.

You can pick up complaint forms at the Ogden Ave. offices of DBACP, or at the UTCC offices at 2040 N. Milwaukee, 2nd Floor. I believe they are open Monday thru Wednesday from 1-7 pm. You can call them at 773-342-8822. ■



BY HYBACHI LEMAR

VOICE IN THE ALLEY

PICTURE A GLASS WINDOW THE HEIGHT AND LENGTH of the universe itself standing before you. Isolating you, with a confinement which grows ever the more apparent.

Now envisage a wrecking ball approaching, accumulating with rage; growing with intensifying anticipation and then finally *shattering* it with unapologetic audacity!

The obstacle of governments – which is *transparent* to say the least – stands before us like this façade; this idea that we can see an attainable future its cut-throat empire of factional pursuits, which in truth is nothing short of naïve realism. The intimate understanding that the government of one human being over another is an unnecessary evil must gain momentum in the acceleration of Reason if we the masses are to thoroughly and irremediably smash the State!

Our capacity for liberating ourselves from dictation and social servility to *any and all* ultimately resides in our reclamation of the instruments to govern ourselves – from state power to Peoples' Power.

The unconfinable fury forever ready to be hurled against the structures of domination is exponentially linked with the need for the homeless to occupy the vacant buildings throughout the city. The necessity for the workers to occupy the factories, and for our

working brothers & sisters slaving in food – packaging factories to ally themselves with the farmers in the rural who are perennially losing acres of farmland due to agribusiness.

Workers in the transportation sector however also contain a motive force in the mobilization of the masses (you & I) in the revolutionary transition of moving from Point A to Point B in the desire for Self-determination.

An unrelenting, consolidation of such (necessary) forces must naturally precede any great social upheaval or movement of merit.

The Resistance calls for comrades intent on overthrowing the established (dis)order and gang bangers in the city to unite & watch the backs of the workers who are revving in revolt and demonstrate solidarity with the Movement, such as the United Taxi Community Council (UTCC).

As comrade (and cab driver) Bill Burns so accurately articulates: "Organization creates revolution. Organizing is the process by which we increase peoples' capacity to affect change."

The window period between now and the hour of liberation is determined by the utilization of this capacity. Through a united front we can smash the system which under serves the marginalized and move toward a life lived off the leash of coercion and collectively defy domination. ■



The Work and Lives of Chicago's Taxi Drivers: Every Driver Has a Story

BY TRACY LUEDKE

MY NAME IS TRACY LUEDKE, OF NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS University here in Chicago. I am a professor of cultural anthropology. As a cultural anthropologist, I am interested in all the people of the world and their ideas, activities, experiences, and relationships. I have done previous research in Mozambique (in southern Africa), studying and learning about traditional healers, their medicines, their practices, and their organizations.

I became interested in the lives and working conditions of Chicago taxi drivers when I met Peter Ali Enger, who was a student at Northeastern. Peter has been a cab driver for six years and was one of the founding members of UTCC (United Taxidriers Community Council). A couple of years ago, I was asked to serve as a non-voting community member on the Board of Directors of the UTCC, and I happily accepted.

The work of taxi drivers is central and very important to the transportation systems of all the major cities in the world. Chicago cab drivers help drive the second largest economic engine in the United States, and Chicago cab drivers' work lives are good examples of labor conditions in a globalized workforce. However, taxi drivers' experiences, opinions, and knowledge are usually hidden—the American public does not know anything about what it is like to drive a taxi: the long hours, the difficulties of dealing with the taxi companies, the rules and regulations they have to follow, no health insurance, no

vacation or sick pay, stress and increasing expenses. The public also has no idea how much experience their cab driver has about the deep knowledge of the city, the interesting conversations with visitors from all over the world, and the skill it takes to be an effective driver. These issues are almost never studied by anyone. Peter and I have been working on a research project that we hope will allow us to capture this information and these experiences. We plan to document the everyday lives of drivers, both in the work they do in their individual careers and when they come together as a community of workers.

Interviewing drivers about their experiences in the taxi industry is a central part of our research activities. We welcome the participation of a wide range of drivers with different experiences. Participation is entirely voluntary and we will schedule interviews when it is easy for the drivers. We will work around YOUR schedule.

The goal of this project is to produce a book that will be useful to all of the people, drivers and others, who are involved. We hope it will be useful to drivers themselves, as a record of their work. We hope it will also be useful to UTCC in their ongoing efforts to organize drivers and to defend drivers' rights. And we hope it will be useful to other individuals and organizations who work in support of human rights for the global workforce. Finally, we hope it will help to positively change public opinions of taxi drivers, by giving a voice to their stories and humanizing their struggles. Please feel free to get in touch with me if you have any questions: t-luedke@neiu.edu. ■

INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL DAY

See UTCC's Website goutcc.org to watch all the videos from the TAXI WORKERS FESTIVAL



FRANK (1): UTCC is friends with lots of organizations making a difference all over the world from OCCUPY CHICAGO to helping Somalians, Ethiopians, and Kenyans during the worst African Drought crisis in 60 years.



KATHY KELLY (2): I recently returned from doing a humanitarian mission in Afghanistan. It was a pleasure spending time with Taxi Workers and their families from so many worldwide ethnic backgrounds.



SAM (3): My name is Sam. You may recognize me as the person who used to Windex your windows and mirrors out at Midway Airport so you could see crystal clear, provide a panoramic sensational experience for you customers, and give the highest quality safety standard your customers deserve. UTCC Members are my best customers—word.



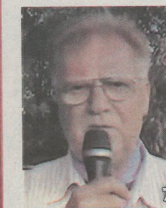
BILL (4): Solidarity is the best policy.



CAMILLE (5): I care.



GREGORY (6): I drove a cab for 6 months in Madison, Wisconsin, and have driven a cab 9 years and 5 months in Chicago. I have been preaching that if we are ever going to get any money out of this occupation, we need to improve the lousy state of the Chicago cab service. The unskilled hazardous sloppy driving, the unclean cabs, the blue tooth cell phone use, which all happen while passengers are on board.



FAYEZE (7): For the taxi industry to flourish in the City of Chicago we must address the ultimate solution to achieve total safety for taxi drivers and the public.

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Lean about what is really wrong with America and what is beautiful about America.

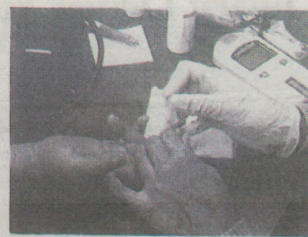
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