

UTCC VOICE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

WE MUST BE HEARD OR WE WILL STRIKE

THE UTCC WILL PICKET CITY HALL ON WEDNESDAY, June 27th to demand a hearing on a fare increase. If we are not granted a hearing by June 30th we will strike.

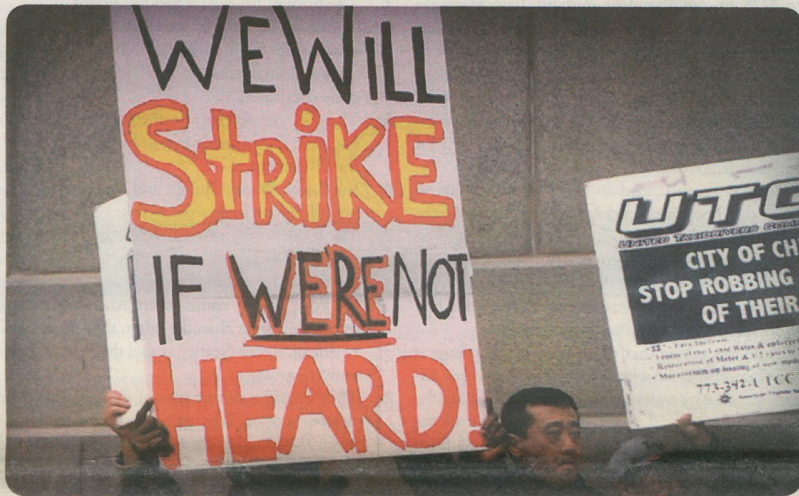
We have not had a fare increase for seven years. We will be paying more to lease our cabs starting July 1st. The City unfairly denied our petition for a hearing, and removed our right to petition, a right we have had for decades. We demand a hearing, and the right to petition.

Come to City Hall at 121 N. LaSalle on Wednesday, June 27 at 12 noon. Join our picket line or circle City Hall. We must be granted a hearing!

Any unbiased mediator can see that we deserve a raise after seven years simply because of the cost of living. In addition we face sky high gas prices, often illegal over charges on our leases, and unjust fines at the city's Kangaroo Court on Superior. We must be granted the right to present our case.

All licensed cabdrivers are welcome to attend our weekly Strike Committee meetings at 2 p.m. Mondays at the UTCC offices at 2040 N. Milwaukee, second floor.

We hope a strike is not necessary. We hope to be able to present our case to the City Council



A sign at UTCC's March 7 City Hall demonstration

and reach a fair and reasonable resolution. But if we are denied the right to be heard we must

demonstrate that we play a vital role in making this city work. ■

UTCC ORGANIZERS VISIT NEW YORK TAXI WORKERS

BY PETER ENGER

IN MARCH OF THIS YEAR, THE UTCC RECEIVED an invitation to attend a banquet and fundraiser in New York City from the New York Taxi Workers Alliance, the New York cabdrivers' union. This was to be an event to commemorate the new relationship the New York cabdrivers had formed when they affiliated with the AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor - Congress of Industrial Organizations), and Richard Trumka, the President of the AFL-CIO, was going to attend. We immediately accepted, and started making plans to travel to New York in April.

While getting ready to leave, we learned the AFL-CIO and the NYTWA were in the process of forming a national cabdrivers' union, to be called the National Taxi Workers Alliance, or the NTWA, and Chicago's UTCC was being asked to join, along with the Philadelphia and Boston cabdriver organizations.

We landed at 3:20 pm and immediately took a cab to the address we were given, where several pro-



AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka and Bhairavi Desai, head of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance, at a demonstration against lease overcharges in New York last month.

tests was planned at taxi garages nearby. When we got there, we met up with the New York cabdriver organizers and about 20 to 30 drivers marching and protesting. Guess what they were protesting? LEASE OVERCHARGES—just like in Chicago!

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And guess what else? These garages were owned by SIMON GARBER, the owner of Chicago Carriage Cab affiliation! What a coincidence! Cabdrivers in Chicago and cabdrivers in New York have the

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AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE, COMMUNITY ALLY

EDITORIAL**The New York-Chicago Alliance**

ON APRIL 26TH, 2012 THE UTCC WAS INVITED to the Inaugural Fundraiser Reception of the NATIONAL TAXI WORKERS ALLIANCE in New York.

Three members of our Steering Committee flew to N Y to join President Richard Trumka of the AFL-CIO, and other labor and community leaders of New York, Philadelphia and beyond in this celebration. The creation of the National Taxi Workers Alliance is a watershed moment in United States Labor History. This is the first new charter for non-traditional workers in over 60 years, and the first for Independent Contractors.

As soon as we landed in N Y, we took a taxi to meet our host organizers while in action Marching in front of garages in Queens to protest against Lease Overcharges. We dropped our bags and joined the drivers in their picket line where we heard from Bhairavi Desai, executive director of New York Taxi Workers Alliance, and President Trumka.

I told the crowd that the owner of this garage is Mr. Symon Garber who is a familiar name in Chicago because he owns Carriage and is following the path of money and greed and exploitation of the taxi drivers all over the nation. We moved from one Garage to the other and the message was the same: STOP OVER CHARGING THE DRIVERS, STOP THE GREED AND LOWER THE LEASE.

At the reception for president Trumka's speech, I read what Mr. William Lindauer wrote on a flyer; **TOP 10 REASONS WHY TAXI OWNERS NEED A LEASE HIKE:**

10. It costs so much to buy and maintain condos on six continents.
9. Do you know how high the price of caviar is these days?
8. It's time for a new Rolls Royce and Lamborgini.
7. The price of private jet fuel has soared.
6. The cost of leasing the new Queen Mary cruise ship for a party for 300 of your closest and dearest relatives and friends has simply gone overboard.
5. They are comfortably in the top one percent, but have unjustifiable fear of becoming part of the 99 percent.
4. Bill Gates, Warren Buffet, and Mayor Emmanuel still have a higher net worth.
3. The acute need for so many donations to clergy members to receive forgiveness for exploiting drivers and perpetuating injustice. You know the Pope doesn't come cheap. And just in case one faith is truer than the other, they must cover 'em all. Recently, they added the Falun Gong and Scientology.
2. They consider drivers part of the so-called undeserving poor. Why give them a livable wage when they'd only waste it on things they don't need- like wallets.
1. Buying a politician and lobbyist coast more than ever and you need to buy so many.

After our trip to New York, Bhairavi Desai and two other NYTWA members visited us here in Chicago, and shared some of their valuable experience. We can learn much from their success.

—**FAYEZ KHOZINDAR,**
CHAIRMAN, UTCC

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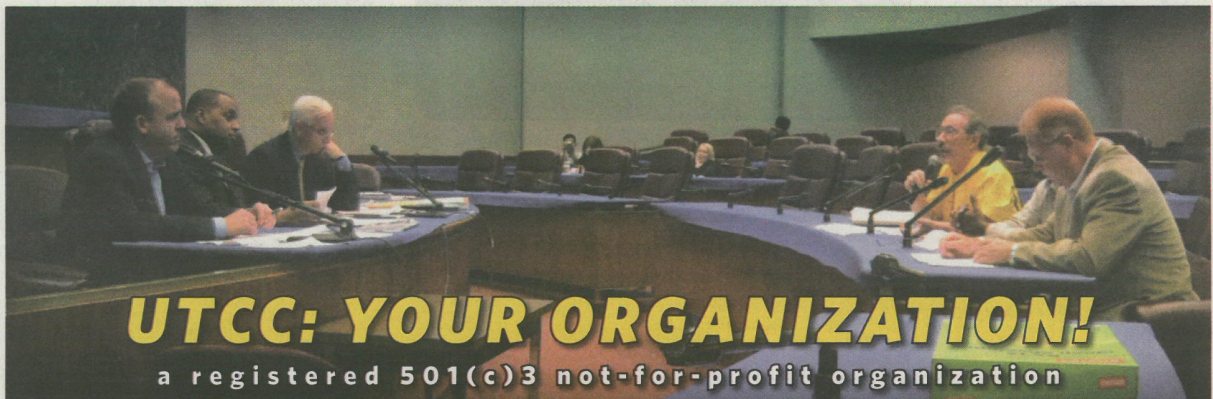
**We welcome your contributions,
feedback and letters!**

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The New Lease Rate Structure—What's Wrong With It

Next month some rates will jump

BY PETER ENGER

HERE IT IS, FOLKS! THE NEW TIERED LEASE Rate structure that the City authorities (mainly Commissioner Krimbel, of the Dept. of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection, or DBACP) have been telling us is an improvement over the old lease rates. So what is wrong with this picture? We in the UTCC have been looking at this, researching the issues, and analyzing the situation for the last six months, since January, when the City Council passed the new Ordinance that contains this new Lease Caps for the companies. We posted this Lease Rate Structure at O'Hare the other day, on May 30th, and many drivers seemed upset and outraged about it, so we decided to publish it here in our paper. It can also be accessed online on the Chicago City Clerk's website, under "Taxi Regulations".

First of all, the City is giving the owners an official increase in the lease rates. Of course, the owners have already been cheating the drivers by overcharging on leases for the last 4 years, and the City has done nothing to enforce the current rules. But since Hybrid cars have been introduced into the Taxi Industry here in Chicago, and the owners pay thousands of dollars more for the cars, they want to charge the drivers more for the hybrids. Right now, they are doing it illegally. But with the new rules, the City will allow them to charge us more—and do it legally! How can we drivers expect the owners to follow the new rules, when they don't follow the rules NOW, and the City does not enforce them?!

LEASE RATES EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2012					
Tier	Vehicle MPG	12 Hour Daily Maximum Lease Rate	12 Hour Weekly Maximum Lease Rate	24 Hour Daily Maximum Lease Rate	24 Hour Weekly Maximum Lease Rate
1	Greater than or equal to (≥) 36 mpg or greater than or equal to (≥) 21 mpg natural gas vehicle	\$74 per 12 hour shift	\$518 total for seven consecutive 12 hour shifts	\$101 per 24 hour shift	\$707 total for seven consecutive 24 hour shifts
2	Between 25 to 35 mpg or less than or equal to (≤) 20 mpg natural gas vehicle	\$69 per 12 hour shift	\$483 total for seven consecutive 12 hour shifts	\$93 per 24 hour shift	\$651 total for seven consecutive 24 hour shifts
3	Less than or equal to (≤) 24 mpg	\$59 per 12 hour shift	\$413 total for seven consecutive 12 hour shifts	\$85 per 24 hour shift	\$595 total for seven consecutive 24 hour shifts

Rates do not include the workman's compensation fee. There is no discount for weekly rates.

The Commissioner tells us that hybrids save the drivers money on gas. But if we pay \$100 or \$200 more per week for the hybrid taxis, all our savings on gas goes away! We get NO savings, and are stuck in the same place again—paying for ALL the new technology that makes the owners and City look good and GREEN, but we drivers lose any benefit

from the gas savings! So why should we support it? Next Friday, June 8, you can come to the Town Hall Meeting at the Ogden facility of DBACP to voice your opposition to these new rules. Call UTCC for topics that we can discuss at this meeting! IT'S IMPORTANT! FOR OUR FUTURE! GET INVOLVED! ■

UTCC SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

COMING OFF THE HEARING AT CITY HALL IN January, where many Chicago cabdrivers came out to protest the new rules being introduced into our industry without any input from our drivers, the UTCC has been busy forming committees and building campaigns and strategies for achieving the goal of having a voice and a seat at the table when decisions are made by the City authorities that regulate our industry. As all cabdrivers already know, we are pushed around and pulled here and there, and money is taken from us at every turn, and we have no way to fight back and get some DIGNITY and JUSTICE! The UTCC is committed to changing this situation. But we cannot do it without YOUR help—the Chicago cabdriver workforce! If we are ever to get any political power in this City, it will not be by hiring lawyers, complaining to the newspapers or TV reporters, asking the Aldermen to help us, requesting the Mayor to step in, or whine to each other. The UTCC—the UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL—can only get political POWER if the drivers (that's YOU GUYS and GALS) give it to us! *How can you give us power?* BY PARTICIPATING IN CAMPAIGNS THAT ARE IN OUR INTERESTS, BY BECOMING MEMBERS OF UTCC!

Here are some ways you can participate:

- * **FARE INCREASE COMMITTEE:** The Fare Increase Committee work began by an attempt to challenge the denial of legitimate signatures collected by veteran cabdriver and human rights activist Ted Budzynski. These signatures were denied by DBACP and Ald. Beale, head of

the Transportation Committee at City Council. The new rules take effect July 1st, and after that time, the right to petition for a hearing is taken away from us. So we have been trying another strategy. We are meeting with Aldermen to plead our case for a Fare Increase Hearing, where cabdrivers will be able to testify about the economic conditions we are in. This will be a big opportunity to win over the general public to the cabdrivers' cause, as the media will be there. We hope to win political support among the Aldermen to vote for our much-deserved and long-overdue fare increase. This is a very important cause, as Mayor Rahm Emmanuel has come out publicly as being opposed to a fare increase.

What you can do:

1. **JOIN THIS COMMITTEE.** Volunteer to attend meetings with Aldermen, where UTCC organizers make our case for a fare increase.
2. **VOLUNTEER TO SET UP MEETINGS** with the Aldermen in your Ward, and invite UTCC organizers to come with you.
3. **MAKE A COMMITMENT** to attend the Transportation Committee Meeting, and bring your friends with you.
4. **VOLUNTEER TO DISTRIBUTE LITERATURE** to your passengers, and ask them to support a fare increase for cabdrivers. (Call UTCC to come pick up literature.)

- * **LEASE OVERCHARGE COMMITTEE:** This committee has been engaged in a new campaign to expose the systemic problem in the Chicago

Taxi Industry of the owners charging more for leases than they are allowed to under the current Lease Cap. Most of the affiliations have been committing contract fraud on the drivers for the last three years, and the City regulatory authorities have done nothing to investigate or enforce their own rules. When we have met with them, DBACP has told us that they cannot investigate or prosecute any cases if the drivers won't sign a complaint and promise to testify in court about their case. So the UTCC has been working on reaching out to drivers to convince them to step up and sign complaints, in order to trigger proper investigations by the City. These could lead to prosecutions of lease cap violations, fines for the companies and garages who steal from the drivers, and restitution (pay back) for the drivers lost money. We have been targeting two of the worst violators in our Industry so far, Dispatch Cab Company, and the garage of the notorious Khaled Mahmoud. We have had protests in front of these two garages, and we will continue to have more. The campaign is not limited to these two owners, however. We will be targeting all the affiliations who are violating the driver's rights in time. Next on our list are Carriage and Yellow.

What you can do:

1. **JOIN THE COMMITTEE.** Bring your leases to UTCC for examination for overcharges. Be willing to sign a complaint if you are being cheated, and be willing to go to court to testify.

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Health Care Disaster

BY FINN EBELECHUKWU

FOR 10 YEARS I'VE WORRIED, FOR 10 YEARS I've driven a cab in the City of Chicago and for 10 by years I've been without health care coverage. This is not because I do not want health care, but because it is priced out of my financial reach as an individual.

In 10 years I have watched many of my friends and colleagues die from heart attacks, fall to strokes due to uncontrolled high blood pressure and develop diabetes due to weight gain, poor quality of food and lack of exercise. People are not designed to sit in a constrictive cabin called a cab for 12 hours. Human beings are meant to be very physically active and exercise to promote good cardiac and respiratory health and to keep blood pressure in check. Activity aids in the prevention of heart and blood related diseases, strokes, heart attacks, diabetes to name a few.

Today I can say there is a change coming to the Taxi Cab industry in the area of health care and wellness and I give all the credit to UTCC. A few months ago activities in UTCC kicked up at a high level. The UTCC steering committee has created a subcommittee to look into health care issues affecting the industry as a whole. The health care committee immediately went into action and has had high level consultations with health care experts in highly respected health and medical institutions for advice on health and wellness issues. Now we are develop-

ing strategies to find ways to fill this critical need. UTCC is currently evaluating various programs that are available to the general public that can help meet the needs of the cab driving community.

Available health programs include Medicare, Medicaid, Care Link, the Affordable Care Act of the Federal Government and basic health insurance through the private health insurance providers such as Blue Cross Blue Shield or Aethna. We are also looking into a worker's compensation medical clinic for cabdrivers at the University of Illinois Medical Center. This is available for cab drivers who are injured on the job, so that they can get world class care for injuries sustained from accidents.

1. Medicare is for anybody over the age of 65 years old and this is a federally administered program that covers doctor visits, in hospital stay and Medicare part D for prescriptions.
2. Medicaid is a program to covers children and people who are living in poverty at federally sited level of income, such as a family of 4 making less than about \$42,000 annually.
3. Care Link is a program administered by the Cook County health system, to help pay or cover the cost of health care for people living below the poverty line as qualified by the federal government.
4. The Affordable Care Act (the health care law popularly known as Obama Care) is a program

that presents UTCC with the possibility of having large numbers of cabdrivers join a health care pool, and acquire health care through the health care exchange which is being designed by the state of Illinois. This program will come into effect in 2013, as long as the United States Supreme Court does not strike down the individual mandate as unconstitutional.

5. Private health care. If we pooled enough cabdrivers we could do collective bargaining with the private health care providers to achieve affordability and reasonable premiums.

So, these are some of the options UTCC is looking into to help our brothers and sisters in the cab industries!

The best news so far is that the UTCC Voice will soon add a health and wellness column to the publication to help advise drivers on personal health and wellness. It will be aimed at diet; what to eat, what not to eat, how to prevent health problems. It will introduce simple exercise regiments that cab drivers can engage in while on the job.

We are also looking at partnering with a gym so that cabdrivers can get discounted membership rates.

My fellow cabdrivers, make sure you can get and keep in touch with UTCC to get the latest updates on the issues discussed above, and make sure you become a member of UTCC. That is the best and most effective way to take advantage of these benefits when they kick off. ■

New York Visit

Continued from page 1

SAME ISSUES with the SAME OWNERS!

We had a lively protest starting from 4 pm at one garage, during shift change. At this protest we were joined by Richard Trumka, President of the AFL-CIO. He joined us in our chants against the owners, and against overcharged leases, and then gave a speech for the media. Bhairavi Desai, the head of the NYTWA, also gave a speech. The garage owners were playing loud music through the windows to drown out our chants and speeches, and at one point they sent a counter-organizer to hand out leaflets to confuse the drivers. One of the garage workers, a lady, was taking a picture of us with her cell phone, and Chicago organizer Finn Ebelechukwa put an umbrella in front of her camera, which she grabbed and pushed out of her way. Finn then pulled the umbrella away from her.

After about 30 minutes we all marched and chanted our way to a second garage about three blocks a way, when a police car pulled up and tried to arrest Finn, saying the lady at the garage was claiming he assaulted her. When the police saw the video on his phone, they agreed that he did NOT assault her.

At the second garage, we chanted and protested for another half an hour, and one driver from inside the garage actually came out to join our protest! All in all, it was a successful and exciting afternoon in New York, and one driver gave us a ride to our hotel to drop off our luggage. He then took us to the banquet in mid-town Manhattan.

Trumka was the main speaker, describing how cab drivers had lost collective bargaining rights when they were converted to independent contractors, and how the AFL-CIO, the country's largest union, was going to start organizing them coast to coast. Trumka was formerly head of the United

Mine Workers, one of the most progressive unions in the country.

The banquet was well-attended, and we met drivers from the Philadelphia and Boston cabdriver organizations. We had meetings afterward to share strategies for organizing and reforms in the taxi industry, and the possibilities for coordinating national campaigns concerning common complaints about credit card fees, lease reforms, health insurance, and other important issues.

New York visits Chicago

The following week, the New York cabdriver-organizers paid a visit to Chicago. They came here to attend a Labor Conference at a hotel near O'Hare, but they told us privately they really came to visit our organization, and meet Chicago cabdrivers. We had a Saturday afternoon meeting at our offices at 2040 N. Milwaukee, and a dozen or so Chicago cabdrivers showed up to share experiences from our lives as cabdrivers in big cities. Bhairavi Desai gave a brief history of the organizing that has been done in New York in the last 16 years, and some of the successes they have had. The question and answer period could have gone on all night, but we broke it up around six pm. The next day, the New York drivers wanted to come to O'Hare to meet drivers, but it was raining and windy, and O'Hare turned into a drive-thru, so we couldn't make that happen. All in all, it was a very successful and important connection that was made between the two largest taxi workforces in the US.

History of NYTWA

The New York Taxi Workers Alliance was formed 16 years ago, in 1996. It was incorporated as a not-for-profit organization, with the goal of achieving justice, workers' rights, and a strong



Bhairavi Desai, executive director, New York Taxi Workers Alliance, speaking at the rally.

advocacy organization for the reform of the taxi industry in New York and for improved working conditions for the New York cabdrivers. It has the exact same formation as the UTCC, Chicago's taxidrivers' organization.

The UTCC used the model of the NYTWA when we were forming our organization four years ago. Several New York organizers came to Chicago to visit with us three years ago, and we have kept in touch with them regularly ever since. They are a valuable ally, and as they have been organizing for 16 years, they are about 10 years ahead of our own organizing efforts with the UTCC. We can learn a lot from them about how to achieve success in some areas, and they can learn from us. Cabdrivers the nation over, and even around the world, have much the same kinds of issues—exploitation, overwork and underpaid conditions. We can gain much from being united. ■



UTCC IN ACTION!

On April 30, UTCC held a demonstration at the Dispatch garage, calling the owners out on their lease overcharges and unfair treatment of their drivers. On May 1, UTCC held a similar demonstration at Khaled's garage, then later joined with the rest of the May Day demonstrators sending a united message of justice and equality in the workplace!



NATO Visits Chicago

BY LIZ NERAT

AS MANY OF YOU ALREADY KNOW, THIS PAST weekend, NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) held their summit in Chicago.

NATO is the main organization responsible for collective military power. This was proposed by Rahm Emmanuel as an opportunity to put Chicago on the map as a Global City, thus also pulling the city out of the financial rut into which it has fallen. However, for months leading up to the summit, money has been cut from funding that otherwise would have gone to health clinics, mental health clinics and the Chicago public school system in order to fund the training, preparation and presence of police officers, both local and out-of-towners, in Loop for the past two weeks.

Why was this upgrade in law enforcement seen to be a necessary or relevant choice for our city? Whenever a global summit (NATO, G8, G20, WTO, etc.) is held in any city, that summit is met with a strong and unflinching backlash by the people. Grassroots movements, unions, local, national and international organizations hold mass demonstrations to highlight the oppression, hypocrisy and injustice that are glorified by such global structures. These demonstrations often include marches, rallies and non-violent civil disobedience to convey a host of messages that all come back to a unified concept: to fight against oppression. They are comprised of everyone from parents, to nurses, to laborers, to teachers, to students, to artists, musicians and performers, all from different ethnic groups, religions and regions, united in the common thread of a vision of a better world.

What ends up happening in these situations is that the light cast on the protesters vilifies them, highlights the illegalities of certain actions and distracts citizens from the message that they are conveying, pumping up the police force as a noble presence protecting those unwitting citizens from the crazy radical youth that have come to reek havoc on our city. In reality, however, this is not the case. The vast majority of protesters are peaceful, non-violent activists. Undercover police officers and informants are sent to infiltrate certain groups, collect information and from time to time, instigate violence while presenting themselves as fellow activists.

One such occurrence landed three young activ-



Chicago police made a show of force at the NATO Summit

ists in jail with potential terrorism charges. I went to talk to a person who had met these people and knew the man whose home they were staying at quite well. Her name is Danielle Villareal. She said that a man named Bill, who is a dedicated environmental and social justice activist, allowed activists in from out of town to stay at his home for the summit. He had several guests all of whom, along with Danielle, Bill and his girlfriend decided to go out to go out to the beach after a day full of demonstrations. Among the guests were a few people who were very loud, offensive and immature. After a while of staying with the group, Danielle, feeling frustrated with the loud, offensive and immature ones, decided to head elsewhere.

It was later that three people who were also staying with Bill were accused of being terrorists and having material to build bombs. These so-called bomb materials were none other than the materials used to home-brew beer. However, the loud, offensive and immature people turned out to be police informants, reporting erroneous information. This is just one example of the fear mongering that

was used to dehumanize the protesters and cause the residents of Chicago to distrust activists fighting for social justice and equality, thus continually quelling political dissent.

How does this effect cab drivers, you might ask? The same sense of fear was instilled in shop owners, business owners and employees who worked in the Loop caused the vast majority of businesses, schools and restaurants downtown to be shut down in addition to multiple streets and transit stations. Downtown Chicago was transformed into a virtual ghost town, teaming with police officers. This was not only bad for those businesses, but also shut down all downtown taxi driver hot spots, thus inspiring many drivers to stay home. Small business owners and cab drivers lost hundreds to thousands of dollars due to the City's massive shut down.

Ultimately, what ends up happening at these events is a shift in truth; obscuring the fundamental messages of the protesters and glorifying systemic oppression, all the while shifting the focus away from what the NATO representatives were actually discussing. ■

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Why you should become a member of UTCC—NOW!

THE UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL HAS BEEN AROUND over four (4) years now, and we have a proven record of success in some matters. The significant thing about our successes is that they have been achieved with mostly volunteer work by a small number of cabdrivers. Think of how much MORE we could achieve if we had more volunteers, more members, more money and MORE SUPPORT from the Chicago cabdriver workforce that we are dedicated and determined to ORGANIZE!

With organization, and collective action, the Chicago cabdriver workforce can gain so much. Look at New York. They have an organization, a UNION, of cabdrivers that has been around over fifteen (15) years! They have campaigns, they have some amount of political power with the City of New York, they have an office with 8 paid staff, and many benefits for their members, and are working on more benefits. We can have the same here in Chicago, but we need the support of YOU CABDRIVERS!

The UTCC is your UNION, and if you want justice and rights, you have an obligation to join and support it.

We in the UTCC have a vision for our Chicago cabdriver workforce. This vision includes:

1. A membership based organization that is well-funded by annual dues and other fundraising strategies.
2. Political power to advocate for serious reforms in our industry that will benefit the drivers, the riding public, and put a stop to exploitation and abuse of our worker's and human rights by the companies and City policies.
3. Recognition as a Union, with ties to organized labor in the United States, ties to other cabdriver organizations around the nation and the world, and the power to represent our workforce in collective bargaining with the companies and the City.
4. Benefits for our taxi workers, like in other workforces, which would include health and dental insurance, accident and death and dismemberment insurance, legal benefits, retirement plans, and more.
5. A living wage, and regular pay increases to keep up with cost of living and cost of driving increases.

In order for us to achieve these goals, Chicago

cabdrivers need to STEP UP and support and JOIN your ORGANIZATION, your UNION, the UTCC! Membership dues are only \$120 per year, which pays for a bond card and a Legal Services Plan, to help fight tickets at 400 W. Superior. The dues also help UTCC carry out the mission of everything we do—office staff, office rent, copying, printing, pens, computers, and more. You can stop by our offices to pay for your membership:

Downtown office: 637 S. Dearborn, 3rd Floor, open Mon-Fri, 11-5 pm. Call first: 312-427-8294

Milwaukee office: 2040 N. Milwaukee, 2nd Floor, open Mon-Wed, 1-7 pm. Call first: 773-342-8822

We will be carrying out a Membership Drive very soon, and will be staffing tables at the airports and some restaurants where you can join the UTCC.

ARE YOU A MEMBER YET? IT'S ABOUT TIME.



SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Continued from page 3

2. **RECRUIT OTHER DRIVERS YOU KNOW** who are being cheated also. Bring them to the UTCC offices with their leases for analysis for overcharges.
3. **MAKE A COMMITMENT** to join the UTCC when we have protests at the garages who are cheating drivers—Khaled's garage, Dispatch, Carriage and Yellow to start with. As we find more drivers being cheated by other companies, we will protest at their garages too.

* **OUTREACH COMMITTEE:** This is the Committee that is working on forming political relationships and making allies for cabdrivers with political leaders (such as Aldermen and Cook County officials), City officials (DBACP, Police Community Liaisons), and community organizations, such as faith-based organizations, ethnic organizations, and organizations based on national origin. We meet with these organizations in order to win political support for our campaigns, and to form mutually beneficial relationships. Cabdrivers as a workforce need friends. It is this committee that is working on winning friends in order to increase our influence in the community and political landscape in Chicago—political power!

What you can do:

1. **JOIN THE COMMITTEE.** Volunteer to attend meetings that UTCC is scheduling with Aldermen and community organizations.
 2. **VOLUNTEER TO CONTACT YOUR OWN ALDERMEN,** or community organizations that you know of, set up meetings with them, and invite UTCC organizers to come with you.
 3. **BECOME A UTCC ORGANIZER** yourself.
- * **LEGAL COMMITTEE:** This is the committee that needs the most help at this time. It is a very important committee. Its job is to identify possible legal options for actions to take to achieve justice for cabdrivers, and to defend

our worker's and our civil and human rights. Then one of the hardest tasks of all: to find lawyers who will be willing to take on these cases for little to no money. We have the bare bones of a committee right now, and could use a lot of help. This committee needs a special kind of help—cabdrivers who have some sense of the law, and what kinds of cases are appropriate, and have some chance of success.

But there are simpler things that can be done, which include fundraising for our newly set up Legal Defense Fund for the Chicago taxi industry. Drivers have been telling us for years now: "Just collect 10 or 20 or 50 dollars from every driver, and just HIRE a lawyer!" This is easier said than done, but the UTCC has created a new mechanism to do it. It is on our Membership application. When you apply for membership in UTCC, you can now make an extra donation to the Legal Defense fund. When we get enough money, we can look into hiring a lawyer to take on the big cases we need to fight for our human and worker's rights.

What you can do:

1. Join the Committee. Come to a meeting to discuss what potential legal cases Chicago cabdrivers may have, and what options we can pursue to recruit lawyers to take them on.
2. Become a member of UTCC. Make a donation to the Legal Defense Fund on your application.
3. Make a donation to the Legal Defense Fund, and recruit your friends to also make a donation. Since the UTCC is a not-for-profit 501-C3 organization, your donation (and membership) will be tax-deductible.

* **STRIKE COMMITTEE:** This can also be called the Action Committee. The Strike Committee was formed because any workforce that is in the situation that Chicago cabdrivers are in—overworked, underpaid, with no broad-based membership organization or well-developed political power—needs to have the STRIKE as an option to gain power. Make no mistake, Chicago cabdrivers!—if we all worked together to take action

as ONE, we could become the most powerful union in the City! The truth is, Chicago depends on the taxi industry—every major city in the world is the same. Without the transportation that cabdrivers provide, the economic life of the City would shut down. The City knows this—and that is why they do NOT want to see us organized, and able to STRIKE at will. AND—that is why we MUST get organized, and BECOME able to STRIKE at will! The STRIKE is the ultimate weapon in our arsenal to gain political power in this City. That is why it is important that YOU realize this, and be willing to work to make it happen when the time comes, and recruit your friends to participate.

What you can do:

1. Join the Committee. We meet every Monday at 2 PM at the UTCC office at 2040 N. Milwaukee. We have a lot of work to do. Time is running out. New rules go into effect July 1st and we need to be able to influence, amend and reform them as soon as possible.
2. Recruit your friends to join the Committee. Bring them to the meetings.
3. Volunteer to pass out literature—to other cabdrivers, and to the passenger, to win their political support.
4. Fill out our Strike Survey and our Commitment cards. Volunteer to take these cards and get them filled out by other cabdrivers. When the time comes, the UTCC will need contact information for thousands of drivers, to let them know when and where the STRIKE will take place. You can help collect this information.
5. Make the commitment to STRIKE when the time comes! We may have to start having multiple strikes to get our message across. We know this is a hardship on our pocketbook. But the sacrifice will be worth it in the end. No social or political change has ever been made without some sacrifice. Think of your life—haven't you made sacrifices in order to achieve some greater good in your life? ■

How To Use Twitter

In the last issue I set up several social media pages for UTCC, in hopes of creating an easier way to communicate among drivers and to share information. One site in particular that I have heard people state confusion about it Twitter and how it works.

Twitter is a site where one is able to share statements that are 160 characters or less at a rapid pace. To "follow" the tweets (posts) and be notified when a tweet has been posted, a person has to have a twitter account themselves. This also allows people to post information on the twitter page. However, if a person does not have a Twitter account, they can still view the information; they just cannot contribute to the chain. The tweets and the page are public.

This is the same for Tumblr and Facebook. Facebook is completely public. Again, if you are not a member of Facebook and have not "liked" our page, you cannot contribute on the page, but you can still view all the information that has been posted. This includes tweets from Twitter as well as information posted directly to the Facebook page.

Without becoming a member of any of these sites, but to still have up-to-date information, go to the sites, Facebook and Twitter and VIEW what has been posted. Becoming a member would allow you to be more active in the sites, however, even checking them from time to time is an effective way to stay in touch with what is going on.

LIST OF THE NEW UTCC SITES:

- * **E-MAIL** — utccchicago@gmail.com, info@goutcc.org
- * **FACEBOOK** — www.facebook.com/pages/UTCC-United-Taxidrivers-Community-Council/125505620914070
- * **TWITTER** — [@utccchicago](https://twitter.com/#!/utccchicago)
- * **TUMBLR** — utccchicago.tumblr.com/
- * **YOUTUBE** — I am still working on getting the youtube channel up and running. I will let you know as soon as it is.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

HISTORICALLY PEOPLE CONNECTED WITH UTCC and the Voice have had conflicts of one kind or another with George Lufallah, publisher of the *Dispatcher*.

Recently, in the last two issues of the UTCC Voice, there have been articles critical of him. One was a supposed anonymous letter to the editor. As a journalist Lufallah had no trouble figuring out that the supposed anonymous letter had the same tone and writing style of a UTCC member who had written other articles in that issue. The second piece was in the last issue of the VOICE in an editorial critical of Mr. Lufallah for critical comments he made of UTCC.

As a UTCC member who has never been a part of the conflict between my organization and George Lufallah I would like this wounding to stop! I was a part of allowing the anonymous letter to be published. For this I apologize to George Lufallah. That letter should never have been published. The editorial by Chris Chandler had a second milder version which was meant to be published but instead a first draft which was more critical of George Lufallah was published by mistake.

How did these mistakes happen? As an organization, we of UTCC work by consensus. In theory we review things collectively, but in these cases the system didn't work. I can tell you that from now on this kind of mistake will not be repeated. From now on there will be tighter editorial control of all that appears in the UTCC Voice, and more care taken to be sure that all that is published in the Voice meets the approval of the UTCC Steering Committee.

CAN WOUNDS HEAL?

There has been hurting that has gone on between some people connected with UTCC, and with George Lufallah and people who at one time or another have been grouped with him. Could the wounds be healed? Could the wounding between the different folks be prevented in the future? It starts I believe with people willing to forgive other folks. It can not be about who is right and who is wrong. As long as we do that we will never get

anywhere. There has been right and wrong on both sides. We can start the healing by being willing to listen to each other and saying I hear you and over time building a degree of trust that allows us to work on common projects together that will build a strong taxi industry. It can be so if we want the wounds to heal.

We have drivers that come from all over the world where there has been serious war and genocide between peoples. Sometimes I think taxi drivers must look at the disagreements UTCC and the *Dispatcher* and just shake their heads and say human beings will find just about anything to disagree about and they are right. But I believe we shall listen to each other. We can change when we see it is what we can do.

Is it not time that all of us who are getting screwed by the rich and powerful find ways to listen to each other and come together? We are at a very critical time in our taxi industry. The taxi industry is but a slice of what is going on in the world. Global economics as expressed in Global Capitalism is running rough shod over the working peoples of the world. The rich are getting richer and the hell with everyone else. We have seen it with this NATO meeting here in Chicago. Are not these nations of NATO the same nations that colonized and exploited peoples world wide, destroying the economic infrastructure of the nations they ruled. Taxi Drivers who come from all parts of the world, leaving behind those whom they love, come here to this country and other NATO nations because they want better jobs.

Well who asked these NATO delegates in their arrogance to parade around Chicago?

It was not the working people of Chicago!

Our taxi industry is changing for the very worst. As taxi drivers we have never had it easy but it is getting so very hard to keep our nose above water. The big companies of Carriage, Yellow etc. with their New York monies, with strong ties to Global Capitalism, have come into Chicago able to afford more expensive vehicles and technology. They are gobbling up taxi companies left and right. They are the ones who have upped the price of the medal-

ions making it impossible for the a driver to afford a medallion. Soon at this rate they will control the whole taxi industry in Chicago. There will no longer be room for the small taxi owner, not even for companies such as Blue Ribbon, Flash, Globe etc. unless they make deals with the New York cab companies.

How can we fight against all of these powerful forces that are being thrown at us?

By the power of listening, talking, cooperation. We of UTCC, the *Dispatcher*, the Chicago Taxi Operators Association, the physically challenged, progressive Alderman,

Unions, and all working folks can recognize our common interests and fight with all of our collective will to build a taxi industry that serves us all well!!!

BILL BURNS
STEERING COMMITTEE
UTCC

RESPONSE

YOU SAY IN YOUR LETTER that the draft of my editorial was mistakenly published, and that is true. But I prefer the draft, and stand by it. I was not personally involved in the feuds that took place years ago. I don't think I've ever met Mr. Lufallah. I talked to him on the phone once, asking his permission to reprint an excellent article in the *Dispatcher* about our City Hall protest. He declined but we had a pleasant conversation. But there is no question in my mind that he has been unfair to UTCC in the past.

I really like most of your letter, which is an inspiring view of how we can bring about reforms in the cab industry. We agree that good terms with the *Dispatcher* are desirable.

I understand how important inter personal relationships are to you, and respect your dedication to your ideals. But on this matter we have a small disagreement. I think you are being unfair to your organization.

CHRIS CHANDLER
STEERING COMMITTEE
UTCC

The Dangers of Being a Cabdriver

Five robberies at one location

BY PETER ENGER

TWO UTCC ORGANIZERS WERE STANDING ON THE STREET outside of our downtown offices on Dearborn St. when a passing cabdriver slowed down, stopped, and waved us over. "Did you hear about the robberies?" he asked us. We told him we had not. He proceeded to tell us the following story. We are leaving out the name of the cabdriver, and the name of the garage, for the protection of the driver and the company. We don't want to give any information out that could be used against them.

Ephraim (not his real name) told us he was coming out of his garage, after cashing his credit card receipts, when a customer flagged him down a block or two down the street. The passenger was going to Rogers Park. Ephraim figured it was his lucky day! That's a long trip, and far from his garage! About four blocks later, on a side street, the passenger asked Ephraim to pull over for a minute. Ephraim did. That is when an arm holding a long knife came around the corner from the back seat

through the safety shield, and pressed it against Ephraim's neck!

"Give me your money!" demanded the passenger!

Ephraim was nervous and scared, but not too scared. He said "Sure! Here it is!" and reached into his pocket, pulled out his wad of money he had just cashed, about \$500 and something dollars, and threw it through the safety shield into the back seat.

"More! Give me MORE!" demanded the customer.

"That's a lot!", Ephraim said, "That's all I have! That's a lot of money, check it out!"

When the passenger looked down and was checking the money, that's when Ephraim took his chance! The arm with the knife was a little more relaxed, so Ephraim grabbed the arm, and shoved it strongly toward the ceiling away from his neck, while at the same time with his right hand he started closing the safety shield! There was a struggle

of strength for a minute, and then the criminal robber pulled his arm back through and exited the taxi and ran away. Ephraim was pumped up with his near-death experience, but relieved he had survived it. He did not give chase.

Ephraim called the police, who told him to come to the station to make a report. When he got there, he discovered that four other drivers from his garage had also had robberies in the same method. This criminal had figured out that cabdrivers cash their receipts at their garages, and had deliberately chosen to flag them down the street! Ephraim was able to make a proper identification of the criminal from the police mug shots (pictures of known criminals the police keep in books), and he told us the police caught the guy.

Lesson for Cabdrivers: Be extra careful when coming out of your garage after cashing credit card receipts. If one criminal could figure out this is a good time to rob cabdrivers, other criminals could figure this out too. Just be EXTRA CAREFUL! ■

MEDALLION TRANSFERS FROM 3/22/12 TO 6/30/12

Closing Date	PV Number	Sale Price	Closing Date	PV Number	Sale Price	Closing Date	PV Number	Sale Price
3/6/12	3599	\$280,000	4/5/12	3779	\$275,000	5/18/12	3289	\$365,000
3/13/12	4484	\$350,000	4/6/12	6407	\$357,500	5/18/12	6305	\$362,000
3/13/12	4967	\$355,000	4/6/12	6121	\$350,000	5/21/12	5093	\$215,000
3/15/12	5720	\$315,000	4/6/12	6919	\$353,000	5/21/12	2100	\$350,000
3/16/12	3381	\$290,000	4/6/12	2239	\$345,000	5/21/12	5873	\$350,000
3/16/12	3341	\$325,000	4/9/12	5826	\$357,500	5/23/12	3200	\$372,000
3/16/12	6881	\$325,000	4/9/12	6175	\$355,000	5/23/12	2443	\$385,113
3/16/12	555	\$325,000	4/9/12	2482	\$340,000	5/23/12	3189	\$385,113
3/16/12	2587	\$325,000	4/19/12	1590	\$334,000	5/23/12	1782	\$375,000
3/16/12	3368	\$312,000	4/20/12	1801	\$335,000	5/24/12	5417	\$360,000
3/22/12	3434	\$350,000	4/20/12	3485	\$349,000	5/24/12	4772	\$350,000
3/22/12	655	\$320,000	4/23/12	1727	\$333,000	5/24/12	6628	\$345,000
3/22/12	6412	\$320,000	4/23/12	3293	\$333,000	5/30/12	3718	\$325,000
3/22/12	3075	\$330,000	4/23/12	5072	\$333,000	5/30/12	3746	\$325,000
3/22/12	5207	\$300,000	4/23/12	6073	\$325,000	5/30/12	3691	\$375,000
3/22/12	4943	\$320,000	4/27/12	6473	\$360,000	5/31/12	1381	\$325,000
3/26/12	3839	\$325,000	4/27/12	6601	\$325,000	5/31/12	1882	\$325,000
4/4/12	2665	\$350,000	4/27/12	5594	\$345,000	5/31/12	1421	\$325,000
4/5/12	2086	\$275,000	4/30/12	6182	\$348,000	5/31/12	1451	\$325,000
4/5/12	2087	\$275,000	5/3/12	1839	\$360,000	5/31/12	1472	\$325,000
4/5/12	504	\$275,000	5/4/12	2297	\$370,000	5/31/12	1516	\$325,000
4/5/12	513	\$275,000	5/8/12	240	\$355,000	5/31/12	1696	\$325,000
4/5/12	541	\$275,000	5/8/12	1427	\$375,000	5/31/12	1757	\$325,000
4/5/12	548	\$275,000	5/8/12	5357	\$375,000	5/31/12	1824	\$325,000
4/5/12	559	\$275,000	5/8/12	2316	\$373,000	5/31/12	1608	\$325,000
4/5/12	257	\$275,000	5/8/12	3441	\$375,000	5/31/12	1619	\$325,000
4/5/12	565	\$275,000	5/10/12	2713	\$345,000	5/31/12	1662	\$325,000
4/5/12	576	\$275,000	5/10/12	4978	\$320,000	5/31/12	3751	\$365,000
4/5/12	2073	\$275,000	5/10/12	4981	\$320,000			

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Leahia Franklin Acos, licos@ccc.edu; 773-960-1908 (c)

Improved taxi program starts at Olive-Harvey College June 2

Certificate program offers expanded capacity, courses and location

May 25, 2012 (CHICAGO)—City Colleges of Chicago today announced that its newly expanded and strengthened public chauffeur licensing program—revamped to meet Chicago's immediate need for hundreds of new taxi drivers—will begin classes June 2, 2012 at Olive-Harvey College.

City Colleges also will launch a shuttle service between the Olive-Harvey campus and the 95th Street Chicago Transit Authority bus and train hub to provide all students quick and easy access to the school from public transportation. For more information on the program and shuttle schedule, please call (773) 291-6100 or visit the Olive-Harvey College web site.

Earlier this month, City Colleges of Chicago and the City of Chicago's Department of Business Affairs & Consumer Protection announced the program's move from Harold Washington College to Olive-Harvey College. The move allows for the enactment of comprehensive taxi safety and training reforms announced by Mayor Emanuel in December 2011, which incorporated input from taxi companies, drivers, independent owner-operators and aldermen.

With driving simulation technology, a road course and expanded classroom space, the Olive-Harvey-based program will offer enhanced behind-the-wheel training, customer service skills, and will leverage the school's educational resources in the areas of transportation, distribution and logistics (TDL) as part of the College to Careers initiative.

"Olive-Harvey's unique assets will help ensure that Chicago's taxi drivers hit the road safely with strong customer service skills, geographical knowledge and increased small business experience," says Cheryl Hyman, chancellor, City Colleges of Chicago. "This is part of City Colleges' mission: to offer relevant education and skills training that drives Chicago's economic growth."

One goal of the program is to increase the number of certified drivers by 50 percent. Currently, Harold Washington College produces up to 1,000 certified drivers each year. No current students will be affected by the move, and current program instructors will move from Harold Washington College to Olive-Harvey College. City Colleges plans to add instructors to meet growing student demand.

In March, Chancellor Hyman, Mayor Emanuel and Governor Pat Quinn announced the construction of a new transportation, distribution and logistics center at Olive-Harvey College as part of City Colleges' College to Careers initiative. The facility will be the first comprehensive TDL education center in the state, preparing students for an

estimated 110,000 jobs over the next 10 years in the growing ground, air and rail transport, multi-modal distribution and logistics fields.

ABOUT: The City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) is the largest community college system in Illinois and one of the largest in the nation, with 5,800 faculty and staff serving 120,000 students annually at seven colleges and six satellite sites city-wide. The City Colleges of Chicago is in the midst of a Reinvention, a collaborative effort to review and revise CCC programs and practices to ensure students leave CCC college-ready, career-ready and prepared to pursue their life's goals.

The City Colleges of Chicago includes seven colleges: Richard J. Daley College, Kennedy-King College, Malcolm X College, Olive-Harvey College, Harry S. Truman College, Harold Washington College and Wilbur Wright College. The system also oversees the Washburne Culinary Institute, the French Pastry School, two restaurants, five Child Development Centers, the Center for Distance Learning, the Workforce Institute, the public broadcast station WYCC-TV Channel 20 and radio station WKIC-FM 89.3. For more information about City Colleges of Chicago, call: (773) COLLEGE or visit www.ccc.edu



City of Chicago
Department of Business Affairs and
Consumer Protection

PUBLIC VEHICLE INDUSTRY NOTICE

May 25, 2012

Notice No. 12-028

**Public Chauffeur and Public Passenger Vehicle Courses
Moving to Olive-Harvey College**

Starting June 2, 2012, the City Colleges of Chicago will offer public chauffeur courses (training, discourtesy, safe driving, etc.) and all other public passenger vehicle courses (livery driver, taxi medallion, etc.) only at their Olive-Harvey College campus.

Olive-Harvey College
10001 South Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago, IL 60628

For information on Olive-Harvey College, call (773) 291-6100 or visit: <http://www.ccc.edu/colleges/olive-harvey>

For information on the public chauffeur courses offered, visit: <http://www.ccc.edu/colleges/olive-harvey/events/Pages/Public-Chauffeur-Training-Institute-Taxi-Program.aspx>

For more information about City Colleges of Chicago, call (773) COLLEGE or visit www.ccc.edu.

► Please note that public chauffeur and public passenger vehicle courses will NO longer be offered at Harold Washington College.

For questions or to join the BACP mailing list to receive industry notices and other department news, send an email to BACPPV@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
BACPPV@cityofchicago.org • 312-746-4300
www.cityofchicago.org/bacp

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TAXI DRIVERS!

DO NOTHING
 JOIN UTCC

UTCC: YOUR ORGANIZATION!

THAT WHICH WE SEE

BY BILL BURNS

WOULD LIKE THIS TO be a regular column in our paper. As taxi drivers we have known much of life's experiences. It is not easy to leave our families and friends and to come to a land, this country in which all too often, people we drive do not see us and treat us with a lack of respect. Because we have known what is hard we can feel and see when people are treated badly, many taxi drivers can feel for those who do not have. All day long, as we drive, we see those who have so much and the people who have so little. It is why the homeless often come to us for money, and many of us often give them spare change. Taxi drivers are often hard on the outside and easy on the inside.

Recently I was coming down LaSalle street near Huron. It was raining and three homeless people were using a bus shelter as a place to get out of the rain. There were two homeless men and a woman. I did not have long to see what was happening but I did see because we make our living reading the street. The one homeless man with large hands rough from too much work and too much living was very tenderly putting some kind of medical ointment on various spots on the woman's face. The look that she was giving the man was acceptance and trust. In that moment there was love between these people that hard times could not completely destroy.

I've been driving a taxi for a very long. I have many memories. My feelings as I see rich, poor and most of us in between is that for regular working folks things are getting real bad fast. When these NATO people came to town it has left me very angry. They are the rich and powerful. They have taken monies out of my pocket, and from many small businesses, yet they somehow think that they can tell the lie that it was good for Chicago. Yeah it was good for them.

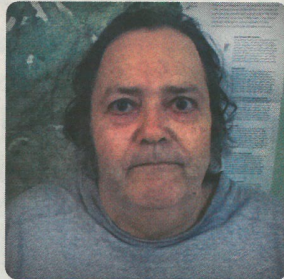
What do you think, feel, and see when you drive. Tell it!

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.

CALL: 773-342-8822

Looking back on a lifetime of cabdriving



James Bruce King is 62 and dove a cab in Chicago for 39 years, from 1972-2011. He has been a political, civil rights, and environmental activist for his entire adult life and has also been a strong and vocal taxi driver advocate.

He is a writer and an artist. He is currently finishing a fully illustrated book that tells the story of Chicago politics through the eyes of a taxi driver protagonist fighting against corruption and oppression in the city.

King will be a regular contributor to the UTCC Voice with poignant pieces about the taxi industry.



ACTION COMMITTEE MEETINGS

WILL BE HELD AT UTCC OFFICE EVERY MONDAY AT 2 PM. LET'S COME TOGETHER TO MAKE PLANS, AND DEVELOP UNITY, COOPERATION AND COMMUNICATION AMONG ALL CHICAGO CABDRIVERS!

MONDAYS - 2PM @ 2040 N. MILWAUKEE AVE.
UTCCCHICAGO@GMAIL.COM • (773) 342-8822

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Join the fight for rights, respect & human dignity!

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- . Check For Any Pain or Injury of the Back , Neck , Arm , Leg or Herniated Disc.
- . Free Chair Message for All.



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