

Cab Gab
by Abe Mittleman

We All Have To Join The Fight

I haven't paid an MTA toll since May 6. That was when the New York State legislature passed the unfair MTA tax that is scheduled to begin on November 1.

I'm not sure that the drivers in our industry realize the impact of the MTA tax and what effect it will have on the industry. Needless to say, if this tax is actually enacted on November 1, and passengers balance the tax against their tip they will feel the effect. Drivers will feel the effect when they find it a little bit more difficult to find fares because passengers will opt for other means of transportation because they don't want to pay the extra cost. And while drivers suffer the MTA will be laughing all the way to the bank. They will collect 50 cents for every trip that is recorded.

So, why are we still willing to pay to use their tunnels and bridges when there are times we don't have to? We can win this fight by fighting fire with fire. STOP PAYING THE MTA WHEN IT IS NOT ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY! DON'T USE THE MTA CROSSINGS! When they realize what we are doing they will get the message where it hurts the most, on their bottom line. This is the only way they will understand that we are mad and we are not going to take it.

It may not seem like much to save \$4.15 by not using the MTA crossings. But just think about it. Two times a day is \$8.30. If you multiply that by 25 days a month that you may drive the amount saved and not paid to the MTA is \$207.50. That could pay a bill you haven't been able to pay. It could help pay for health insurance that you don't have. Just think: If you gave it to the MTA it will pay for health insurance for one of their workers. Why do you want to pay for someone else when you can pay for yourself?

You may say, I won't see this money because my passengers are the ones paying the toll. Yes, this is true, but when they realize you are saving them money they will compensate with bigger tips. And of course there are probably times that you use these crossings on your own. Well, DON'T!

It's really not that hard to avoid the MTA tolls. Consider this: each time you use the Midtown Tunnel you are accessing the LIE. This can be very easily done with

the 59th street bridge upper level and it really won't take any extra time to do so!

All you have to do is take the upper level of the 59th street bridge. Exit to the left onto Thompson Avenue. Then make your first right turn onto 30th street. Go two blocks to Borden Avenue. You will pass under the LIE. Turn left and follow under the LIE a few blocks until you see the entrance. That's all there is to it.

I did exactly this with a woman passenger one day in July. I explained to her exactly what I wanted to do and why before using the 59th Street bridge. As we crossed the bridge it became obvious to her that this would indeed save her the toll money as I had promised her. When the ride was over and we arrived at La Guardia she not only tipped me but she gave me the extra \$5 that she saved. She was a regular rider to La Guardia. She thanked me for showing her how to save this toll money. Many passengers don't know this. So, let's tell them. We will all be better off.

In the last issue of Mini Press we explained the ways from JFK and La Guardia airports that you can by pass the MTA crossings. If you need to be refreshed on this you can send an email to nyctaxinews@aol.com and we will be happy to explain.

Many of you reading this will no doubt agree with this strategy. So, not only should you practice it, you should spread the word to other drivers who haven't thought of this.

All's Not Lost Yet

The clock is ticking! July is here and it will soon be August. That leaves three months until we are supposed to be required to collect a fifty cent surcharge per trip for the MTA!

The legislation enacted by the New York State Senate by a majority of one vote was wrong. In last months Mini Press I outlined all the reasons that I believed this to be wrong.

In a letter to a prominent New York State Senator I gave all these reasons for consideration and hopefully possible future legislation to reverse the requirement

of this unfair surcharge. I am happy to report that I have received a positive response to this letter and a promise to follow up.

The portion to the MTA bailout that included the taxi surcharge was drawn up in secret meetings. The vote was a ridiculous division of democrats who had a one vote majority over the republicans that were all opposed.

The upstate republicans and their constituents are all up in arms over the payroll tax part of the legislation. With a little luck new bills will be introduced in the future and hopefully these unfair taxes will be repealed.

Livery Stands

Recently the TLC proposed the following:

The TLC's third pilot program would set up "livery stands" at busy locations on private property such as shopping centers. These locations would become "virtual" satellite bases at which there would be a dispatcher during peak hours who could respond to the transportation requests of prospective passengers. Our rules and regulations requiring prearrangement would in no way be comprised, and the "chain of accountability" that is so crucial to passenger service and safety would be as solid as it ever was.

I would like to point out that all of the current illegal livery activity in the boroughs of Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx takes place on public property and the streets of The City of New York. Setting up these livery stands on will not help with this problem.

Two locations I would like to bring attention to, and there are others, are the Queens Center Mall on Queens Boulevard and the taxi stand on Main and Roosevelt Avenues in Flushing when the dispatcher is not on duty. It would help first to rid these locations of the illegal activity before any experiment is started with so called "Livery Stands".