

# Gemütlichkeit

BMW CCA Old Hickory Chapter Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2019



BMW Car Club  
of America  
Old Hickory Chapter





## Spring/Summer 2019

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Let me first welcome you to the Old Hickory Chapter of the BMW Car Club of America – or BMW CCA. If you are a new member, we encourage you to attend our monthly dinner meetings and other great events.

There have been many things on my calendar, which is sometimes hard to keep straight with BMW Club Presidents meetings and membership meetings. So I need to apologize, as I have not been to the past few due to work conflicts. However, after September, I am hoping to change a lot of my conflicting schedules. Until then, I ask that you bear with me. And with a vice-president Jody Ruffner to help take up some of the slack, it has been a wonderful – Thank you, Jody!

The last German Cars and Coffee was a rain fiasco! I stopped by, while working, to get a quick view of who was there and who wasn't. But it had a few cars, and more than I would have thought with the weather! There was even an interesting Volkswagen XLI there! Hopefully the next one in September will give us a good day to enjoy even more of the fantastic automobiles, and motorcycles, that Germany has to offer.

Also, for those who aren't sure, our dinner club meetings are every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month, beginning at 6:30 pm. Some come a little early to get a start on dinner. But if you can make a meeting, you will be able to enjoy many great conversations to talk about – what else! – BMW's. You can check the website or the emails monthly for meetings locations.

I have also received many messages stating that members have not been getting emails. Sometimes I can add you manually to the chapter email list. However, if you have previously unsubscribed from receiving emails, then I cannot add you! You will need to subscribe yourself. If you have questions regarding this, you can email me at [jc.bmwcca@gmail.com](mailto:jc.bmwcca@gmail.com) and I can help you reset your subscription.

If you are not receiving the emails, you are also missing out on a lot of great stuff like drive announcements and other social gatherings!

Some other items that has come up recently comes from the national office – dues! BMW CCA dues are increasing on September 1st from \$48.00 to \$58.00 for a one-year membership. Three-year memberships will go from \$134.00 to \$165.00, and five-year membership will go from \$220.00 to \$270.00. This leaves almost a three-month “buy up” window allowing members to renew at the current rates. You should see an official announcement from the National office regarding these changes in the next week or so. Of course, this will be communicated to the entire membership.

That is all I have for now from the president's corner!

Happy Bimmering!

JC Costarakis

President, Old Hickory Chapter

# CHAPTER EVENTS

*We're constantly sending notifications for new and updated events, so watch your email closely!*

## Chapter Meetings

Meet members for food and conversation! Meetings begin at 6:30. Second Thursday of the month. Check our website and member emails for updates and locations. Upcoming meetings August 8, September 12, October 10, and November 14. Stay tuned for location updates!

## Area Car Events

**German Cars & Coffee.** The ongoing showcase of German vehicles, with rotating sponsorship by Nashville's BMW, Porsche, and Mercedes clubs. If you have been in the past, then you know how the scenery looks: with new machines coming each time! A great gathering for the German motorsport enthusiast! Now held at Bavarian Bierhaus at Opry Mills (see ad this issue), the next ones are September 14 and October 26. 9:00-11:00 AM.

**Cars & Coffee.** Saturdays at the Carmike Theater parking lot Cool Springs Blvd, 8:00. This has grown into a big C&C, and an especially large turnout, including exotics, shows up the first Saturday of warmer months. See [carsandcoffeefinder.com/carsandcoffeefinder.com/banner/nashvillecool-springs-tn/](http://carsandcoffeefinder.com/carsandcoffeefinder.com/banner/nashvillecool-springs-tn/) for info.

**The Lane Motor Museum.** The Museum's permanent collection includes a number of rare, classic BMWs, along with an eclectic assortment of rare, unusual, and quirky vehicles. Be sure to check out the current exhibit, Then & Now, which showcases classic cars that have received modern updates—think Volkswagen Beetle, Fiat 500, Mini Cooper. See [lanemotormuseum.org](http://lanemotormuseum.org) for information – including schedules for their “Vault Tours,” in which you can see some amazing hidden gems. And consider joining as a member for special events – like a ride in a 1964 Amphicar August 10, at Percy Priest Lake!

## Please welcome our NEW MEMBERS

Jason Adcock, *Shelbyville*  
Chad Baur, *Nashville*  
Gary Bellar, *Hendersonville*  
Nick Biddle, *Whites Creek*  
Daniel Biederman, *Franklin*  
Brad Calvert, *Nashville*  
Jonathan Caplan, *Brentwood*  
Jennifer Cerasuolo, *Franklin*  
Ian Coburn, *Franklin*  
Jeremy Eisenbrandt, *Thompsons Station*  
Efren Gort, *Franklin*  
Anthony Gruen, *Franklin*  
Donald Holladay, *Franklin*  
Daniel Jelley, *Hendersonville*  
Adam McDonald, *Gallatin*  
Scott McQuiston, *Thompsons Station*  
Saumir Patel, *Spring Hill*  
Steven Peters, *White House*  
Dave Pomeroy, *Franklin*  
Jose Rivera, *Nashville*  
Evin Stovall, *Clarksville*  
Daniel Swiger, *Franklin*  
Wilson Taylor, *Mount Juliet*  
Nicholas Twork, *Nashville*

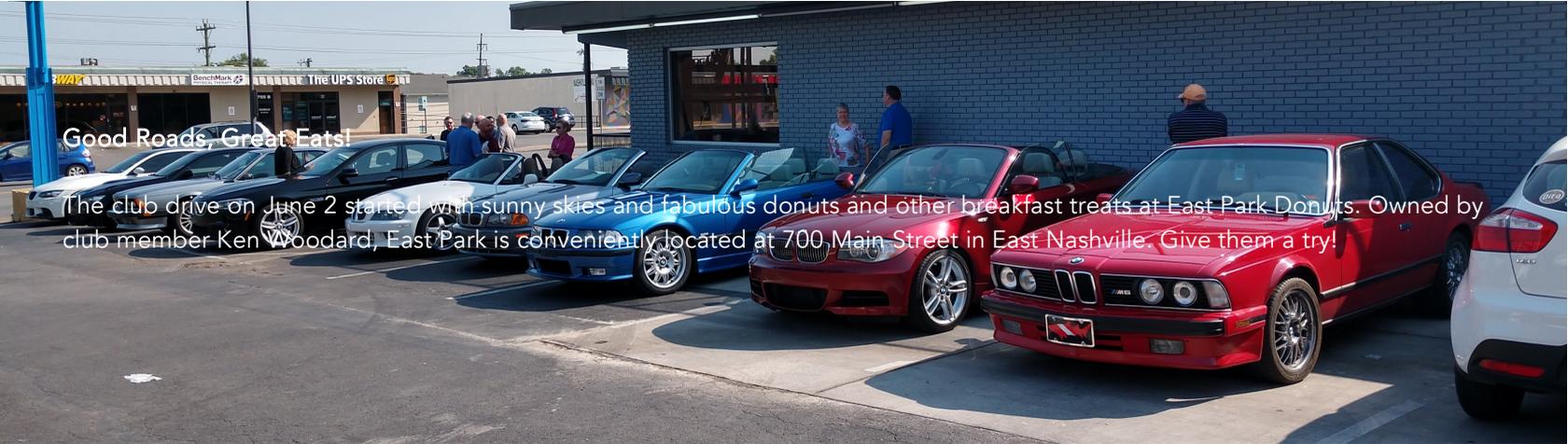
To all new and current members:

- Be sure to visit [oldhickorybmwcca.org](http://oldhickorybmwcca.org), our official website, for news, event updates, and other good stuff.
- If you're not getting emails for our Chapter activities, contact an officer. Be sure your email is registered with BMW CCA.
- You can also follow us at [twitter.com/OldHickoryBMW](https://twitter.com/OldHickoryBMW) and at [facebook.com/groups/1384431348368092](https://facebook.com/groups/1384431348368092)

**Gemütlichkeit wants to know!** Did one of our articles get you thinking? Do you have a sweet car or event photo to share? A good BMW story? A Bimmer for sale? Do you have an idea for an article? Send letters, stories, classifieds, and big photos to [msmith@oldhickorybmwcca.org](mailto:msmith@oldhickorybmwcca.org).

Pass *Gemütlichkeit* on to a friend! You can help us spread the word about BMW CCA activities, discounts, and benefits by keeping *Gemütlichkeit* in circulation. Forward this issue to another BMW owner or someone interested in cars. Send a link to someone you know. Print interesting articles – or write one! – to show your friends. And join us at our events!

# OLD HICKORY HAPPENINGS



## BAVARIAN BIERHAUS



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## Celebrate your event with us!

Our private dining room, The Jägerstube, seats up to 128 with no room fee or minimum required.  
Contact Shalimar to learn more: [shalimar@bierhausnashville.com](mailto:shalimar@bierhausnashville.com) or (615) 200-8719

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## Maintenance American Style

First off, I'm going to rewind back to 1991. I was living in Chattanooga and just like always, the Summer was dreadfully hot. I lived there for 10 years, and each Summer seemed to be a replay of the one before. I recall one year when Chattanooga had 10 days in a row of temps above 100 degrees. That year it was Nationally recognized as being one of the hottest places in the US, and I'm not even mentioning that the humidity was always in the 90 percent range.

That leads me to the fact that one of my vehicles did not have AC. It was a 1969 Ford Ranchero that I had purchased from a body shop guy in my home county. It was one of his side projects that he worked on when not much else was going on in his shop that he would later sell for extra cash. He had pretty much restored it as a daily driver and not necessarily as a collectible. It had a Mercury Cougar engine with a C6 transmission, Ford Pinto bucket seats, Mustang rally wheels, a factory original AM radio, and this particular car had the optional two-way tailgate. With a 351 "Cleveland" engine with straight pipes and straight-thru mufflers, it was by far the meanest sounding vehicle I have ever owned. The Ranchero served its purpose well over the years transporting furniture, mulch, lumber, trash, dogs and such, but not having AC was becoming more and more of a problem.

One weekend when I visited home, I went to visit a relative. As I drove to their house, I saw what appeared to be a maroon El Camino with a for sale sign in their neighbor's yard. I immediately wheeled in, knocked on the door, and asked to take a look. The owner snickered because he had placed the for sale sign on the vehicle not five minutes prior. What I found was a one owner, 1986 GMC Caballero, (an El Camino with a GMC nameplate), with just under 20,000 miles on the odometer (remember, I'm still in 1991). He quoted me his price, and I immediately handed him a down payment to hold the car until I could get to the bank. We shook hands, he took the for sale sign off, and before the end of the day I was driving a GMC Caballero with cold AC, automatic transmission, power brakes, power steering, bench seat, roll up windows and no radio. Shortly thereafter I sold the Ranchero in exchange for sweet, cold AC.

Now, let's fast forward 28 years and 127,000 miles. I still own and drive the Caballero, and it's currently 33 years old and has 147,000 miles. Over the 28 years of ownership, it has been a relatively trouble-free vehicle with typical maintenance issues. I've replaced the water pump once, the starter twice, power steering pump

once, alternator twice, the AC compressor, once and the transmission fluid and filter have been changed twice, plus new shocks all around.

Over the last year or so, the vehicle has been losing anti-freeze, not large quantities, and not enough that it was overheating. Closer inspection revealed that I had a leak near the top of the radiator, explaining why it was not overheating. Recently, I finally decided that it was time to repair the radiator. Being that this was the original all-metal radiator, I checked local to find a radiator repair shop only to find that Dickson no longer has any radiator shops. Further research determined the closest radiator shop was over 40 miles away, pretty much negating any possibility of having this one repaired, so I just ordered a new one from a local parts store along with new upper and lower hoses and new thermostat. The installation went without a hitch, I buttoned everything up, and the Caballero was good to go.

Just a few days later, I was advised by my wife that she and her sister were having a yard sale in Franklin, and that I need to transport a load of yard sale goods to her sister's house. The Caballero and I were up for the task. Not only did it have a new radiator, hoses, thermostat and fresh anti-freeze, it was also sporting a brand new full set of tires, so I loaded up and headed out for the 30 mile delivery.

On the way back home, I noted that the engine had a significant miss at low speed that seemed to clear up with higher speeds. As I was traveling through Fairview, I had to stop for a red light, and the car started missing. As I proceeded forward when the light turned green, I saw an ominous symptom of a significant problem: clouds of white smoke (steam) were pouring out of the exhaust. Shortly thereafter, the temperature needle started rising quickly toward the hot end of the gauge, causing me to suspect a blown head gasket.

I pulled over at the nearest convenience market and purchased several gallons of bottled water, filled up the radiator, cursed at the car, and continued on home leaving a steam trail behind me as if I were a Stanley Steamer. I can only guess that the new radiator was what caused the head gasket to let go. The engine had been operating for quite a while with no pressure within the cooling system, and when the cooling system was repaired, the pressure build up quickly finished off the bad head gasket that would have eventually gone out anyway.

When I got home, I did a visual survey of what it was going to take to replace the head gaskets. Accessory

removal was going to be a huge pain, the engine is a corporate GM 4.3 liter V6, basically a small block V8 with two cylinders removed. It appeared to me that the accessory brackets were afterthoughts by the designing engineers. Brackets on top of brackets, reinforced with stabilizing bars bolted to the head as well as the intake and exhaust manifolds. This was the also the age of vacuum operated switches for functions unknown, as well as the early beginning of electronic motor management as shown by numerous electrical connections on the top, bottom and sides of the motor.

The engine is fueled by a Rochester throttle body fuel injector that looks simple enough once you get past all of the electrical connections and vacuum hookups. It didn't take me long to determine that I was going to need assistance from someone with a little more experience with GM engines. I recognized that my mechanical abilities steered more toward German engines, specifically, BMW engines.

I have a friend who owns and operates a starter/alternator rebuild shop in Dickson, so I went to pay him a visit. He has an employee who is a pretty accomplished mechanic I determined might be able to assist, so I politely asked his employee, Danny, if he would take a look, and would he be willing to help me out. After some discussion and negotiations, Danny agreed to help me out, and as an added bonus, my friend the shop owner was going to allow us to perform the repair in his shop after hours.

When work started, Danny was very diligent marking electrical and vacuum connections as we dis-assembled. Everything else was pretty much straightforward for the removal. In about four or five hours of work time, we had the heads off. It was obvious that the #3 piston on the driver side was the one where the gasket had failed. The valves and top of the piston had a "steam cleaned" appearance. I was fortunate that antifreeze had not gotten into the oil, and oil was not present in the antifreeze. After some debate, we decided that since the heads appeared to be in really good shape, that we would just clean them up and re-install. Some may think that this was a poor call, but remember, this was a good running engine prior to the blown gasket, and plus ... it's a 33 year old vehicle.

Reassembly went reasonably well. We got the heads reinstalled with new gaskets and torqued them down. Then we got the intake and exhaust manifolds back in place. Making sure the alternator, AC, and power steering brackets were bolted in correctly and in the correct order was a bit of a challenge, since some of these brackets were attached to the exhaust and intake manifolds. The distributor had to come out, and when

reinstalled, presented the best opportunity to install a new cap and rotor button as well as new spark plugs.

Soon it was time for the moment of truth; start up. We had checked all of our connections, poured in fresh antifreeze and oil, then rechecked everything again. When we turned the key, it fired up immediately, but something wasn't right, it was running really rough. We triple checked all of our connections, made sure the plug wires were on correctly, that all vacuum lines and electrical connections were tight, but to no avail, the engine just wouldn't run like it should. After considerable troubleshooting, we decided to run a compression check on all of the cylinders. The first four we checked all measured out at over 165 psi. When we checked number five we had zero, and number six, like the others, was over 165. We had found our problem.

We pulled the valve cover on the passenger side and made some adjustments to the middle cylinder. Typically, it is sometimes recommended on these engines to do the final valve adjustment with the engine running, however, that was not going to be possible the way the accessories and wiring are situated on this engine, so we did a manual engine rotation to get the cylinder in the correct position, then adjusted the intake and exhaust valves according to specifications. A turn of the key and the engine fired up and settled down to a perfect idle. We both breathed a sigh of relief that it was done.

So I've had the vehicle now for 28 years and maybe the time has come for me to part ways with it. It almost pains me to think about it because I've owned it for so long. It doesn't look near as good as the day I purchased it. The paint died long ago and now has a distinguished rustic/classic appearance. However, although there may be a few spots of surface rust here and there, I can find no rust through anywhere on the car. I guess you could call it a survivor car because it still has its original paint, original interior, original transmission, and believe it or not, the spare tire has never seen action.

Even with its rough appearance, it still gets noticed when I'm out in it. Everyone seems to think that they would enjoy having a car/truck for a driver. I guess that's always been the case with me since I've owned a car/truck continually for over 30 years. And did I mention? My 33 year old GMC Caballero with roll up windows still has a functioning AC that blows refreshing ice cold air in this 95 degree Summer heat, and that was the main factor as to why I bought it in the first place.

Happy Motoring – Murray



## NYC Taxis

Taxis, like just about everything else in New York City, have evolved over time into an incredibly unique and complicated system, full of rules, regulations, local politics, lawsuits, and of course scandals.

For starters, while everyone knows that NYC taxis are yellow, it turns out that only some of them are yellow. “Apple green taxis,” otherwise called “street hail livery vehicles” or more commonly “boro taxis” began operation in 2013, and they only operate only in the outer boroughs and upper Manhattan, outside the Manhattan Central Business District.

“Black cars” refer to pre-arranged ride service vehicles and are also regulated by the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC). While they don’t have to be black, they can’t be yellow or apple green. Black cars cannot be hailed on the street, but rather dispatched by off-site businesses. These businesses usually use luxury vehicles such as the Lincoln Town Car or Mercedes S-Class due to their almost exclusively business clientele, and drivers are not paid in cash. This explains why you are not likely to see your favorite celebrity getting out of a yellow cab.

As of 2016 there were a total of 143,674 for-hire vehicles licensed by the TLC, including 13,587 yellow or Medallion Taxicabs, 7,676 boro taxis, 38,791 black cars owned by 500 companies, 21,932 livery cars, 288 commuter vans, and 2,206 paratransit vehicles, according to the NYC Taxi and Livery Factbook.

Another fun fact is that the first NYC taxis were electric. The Samuel's Electric Carriage and Wagon Company began running electric hansom cabs in New York in 1897. It later became the Electric Vehicle Company and built the Electrobat electric car. It had about 100 taxicabs running by 1899. By the early 1900s the Electric Vehicle Company was running up to 1,000 electric taxicabs on the streets of New York City until in January 1907 a fire destroyed 300 of them, which along with the Panic of 1907 caused the company to collapse. Horsedrawn cabs once again became the primary means of transport around New York City.

Following the collapse of the Electric Vehicle Company, Harry N. Allen began The New York Taxicab Company. These gasoline-powered cabs were originally painted red and green, but Allen repainted them all yellow to make them more visible from a distance. By 1908 the company was running 700 taxicabs.

During prohibition the social status of cab drivers began to change. Not only were they expected to know the

streets, but also what was going on behind them. A good cabbie always knew where the action was! Also in the 1920s automobile manufacturers like General Motors and the Ford began operating taxi fleets.

During the Great Depression cab drivers fought against plummeting fares, and the streets were filled with thousands of taxicabs. At one point drivers waged a taxi strike in Times Square. The strike spiraled out of control, leading to violent confrontations across the city between drivers and police. A commission to study the taxi system was appointed by flamboyant Irish “Tammany Hall” Mayor Jimmy Walker in 1930. He recommended that the city sell a single franchise to one company to operate all the cabs. But around that time, Walker was investigated for corruption. It was discovered that he had accepted a gift of securities from the Parmelee Company, which owned the largest taxi fleet in New York. Under pressure from Franklin Roosevelt, Walker was forced to resign in 1932 and decided to leave his wife and take an extended holiday in Europe with his girlfriend, showgirl Betty Compton.

His successor, the diminutive Jewish-Italian Fiorello LaGuardia ran for office on an anti-corruption platform. After his election he appointed a committee that agreed on diversity of taxi ownership. In 1937 LaGuardia signed the Haas Act, which established the “medallion system” that remains in place today. This law required that taxis display a round, numbered metal badge known as a medallion on their hoods. A limited number were issued. Initially this was 16,900, but it dwindled to 11,787, then stayed the same over the next six decades. The idea was that by controlling the number of cabs, the City could maintain higher standards.



There were many different makes and models of taxicabs over the years—the eight-passenger Desoto, the Ford Galaxy, the Plymouth Fury Three, the Chevy Impala. But most successful was the Checker Cab Manufacturing Company of Kalamazoo, Michigan. Founded by Morris Markin in the 1920s, Checker produced large yellow and

black taxis that became the iconic Checker Taxi of 1956-1982.

In 1954, New York City revised its specifications for taxicabs. Checker responded by introducing a new design, calling it the A8 (known as the Marathon in non-taxi guise), and that body style would continue for the duration of Checker production until the end in 1982. Featuring robust construction, bolt-on rear quarter panels and lack of yearly styling changes (simplifying parts management), the Checker became synonymous with “New York Taxi” for an entire generation.

In 1967 New York City ordered all medallion taxis to be painted yellow to help cut down on unofficial “gypsy cab” drivers and make official taxicabs more recognizable. According to the Rules of New York City, “The exterior of the vehicle must be painted taxi yellow (Dupont M6284 or its equivalent), except for trim.” (The specified M6284 paint code is actually a Ford code for school bus yellow.)

By the 1970s the taxi system, along with just about everything else in NYC was in serious decline. Conditions were not great for either drivers or passengers. Drivers seemed either homicidal or suicidal, seatbelts and AC were not guaranteed, and unwitting passengers were frequently “taken for a ride.” Drivers were often robbed, injured, and occasionally murdered while on duty. Despite the widespread use of bullet-resistant taxi partitions introduced in 1967, seven cab drivers were killed in NYC and 3,000 were robbed in the first nine months of 1970.

Things got a little better in the 1980s. But 1982 also marked the end of the production of the iconic Checker Cab, although many remained in operation. The “whale bodied” Chevrolet Caprice (aka “Shamu”) and Ford Crown Victoria Ltd (aka “Crown Vic”) became the industry’s top choices, with former police cruisers providing a ready source for cab fleets. Both police and taxi buyers viewed 4,000-pound cars with V-8 engines, body-on-frame construction, and rear-wheel drive as desirable attributes.

During the 1990s Mayor Rudi Giuliani’s zero tolerance policy cleaned up the condition of the cabs and service, although his harsh tactics didn’t win him any friends among cab drivers. By this time, the Chevrolet Caprice was the workhorse of the taxi fleet until it was discontinued in 1996. This tipped the balance toward the Ford Crown Victoria. Yellow cab operators also began to use the Honda Odyssey, Isuzu Oasis, Chevrolet Venture, Ford Freestar, and Toyota Sienna minivans, all of which offered increased passenger room.

The distinctive Checker cabs were durable however, and many stayed in service. As long as they passed regular inspections, Checker owners were allowed to keep their

iconic taxis on the road “by virtue of their aesthetic appearance or historic status” according to TLC regulations. Laws otherwise required that taxis be replaced every six years regardless of condition, now increased to every seven years. The last Checker was retired in July 1999 after more than 20 years in service and with nearly one million miles on it.

In 2001 the TLC and Ford together announced the creation of a “stretched” version of the Crown Victoria exclusively for taxicab use, which added seven inches to the size of the chassis. Six inches went to the passengers, and one went to the driver.

In 2007 a plan was proposed to switch New York City’s taxicabs to more fuel-efficient hybrid vehicles such as the Toyota Prius and Ford Escape Hybrid over a five-year period as part of an agenda for New York City to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. But cab companies complained that the cost of maintaining the new hybrid vehicles vastly outweighed the tiny amount of fuel savings they got from going hybrid. Proponents of the traditional Lincoln Town Car and Ford Crown Victoria say they were well suited to their task by being robust and roomy, and that passenger safety was an issue with the newer vehicles. Six months after the program took effect, it was dropped (although there were continued incentives for hybrids).

In 2011, Ford discontinued the Crown Vic. By this time they made up 60 percent of the taxi fleet. The similarly-sized Toyota Camry Hybrids became available in 2010, along with the Ford Escape Hybrid, Toyota Sienna, and Toyota Prius V minivan in 2011. As of 2012, New York City had about 7,900 hybrids representing 59 percent of the taxis in service—the most in any city in North America. (It would take until 2015 for the Ford Crown Victoria fleet to be entirely replaced).

In 2011, the TLC asked carmakers to bid for an exclusive contract to sell and service taxicabs in New York City for 10 years under the moniker Taxi of Tomorrow. Karsan, Nissan, and Ford were the three finalists, and all of their designs were based on small vans rather than sedans. New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced the Nissan NV200 as the winner to replace the city’s 13,000 yellow cabs, to be phased in over five years starting in 2013. (About 1,000 taxis would be exempted for various reasons.)

But the Nissan won no hearts. It can best be described as “ungainly.” It is not wheelchair accessible. And most importantly, it is not a hybrid. In early 2013 the Greater New York Taxi Association filed suit against the City, arguing that the Taxi of Tomorrow plan violates a section of the city’s administrative code that requires a hybrid option. In May 2013 a State Supreme Court judge blocked the Bloomberg administration’s plan for introducing the Taxi of Tomorrow, ruling that a hybrid option was

required for taxi operators, forcing City officials to back down.

In June 2013, the Taxi and Limousine Commission approved an adjusted set of rules in an effort to introduce the Taxi of Tomorrow as one of the options by October 2013. According to the adjusted rules, only hybrids with a large interior of at least 130 cu feet would be permitted. Taxi operators complained that the only available hybrids were prohibitively expensive. A spokesman for the commission noted that the Prius V was available for \$26,650, about \$3,000 less than the NV200. The only two other hybrids that comply with the rule are the Lexus RX450h (\$46,310) and the Toyota Highlander Hybrid (\$41,410).

In June 2018 the Taxi and Limousine Commission reversed the requirement, expanding the option for drivers beyond the Nissan NV200 to a dizzying assortment of over 30 vehicles, including the Dodge Grand Caravan, Ford Transit Connect, Toyota Highlander Hybrid, Toyota Prius V Hybrid, Toyota RAV4 Hybrid, Toyota Camry, and Toyota Sienna. For the moment, that is where it stands.

Back to medallions: During the 1930s medallions sold for a \$10 renewal fee. But New York did not sell any new medallions for 60 years, when it auctioned off slightly more than 2,000. Not surprisingly the exchange price of medallions began to grow. It reached \$2,500 in 1947, \$280,000 in 2004, and by 2014 they were selling for more than \$1 million each. By comparison, drivers' salaries remained flat; in 2004 a taxi driver had an average yearly gross revenue of \$90,747 and a net income of \$49,532. Over the years medallions once owned by individual drivers were sold to investment companies and large taxi fleets.

But starting in 2011 things began to change. Due to competition from ride-share services, the value of medallions began to drop. Rideshare vehicles grew to 100,000 by 2018. Medallion numbers remained flat at about 14,000, but the numbers of licensed cab drivers fell,

due to an exodus of drivers who went to drive for ride-sharing services such as Uber and Lyft.

In 2014, there were 51,398 licensed taxi drivers. By 2016, that number had dropped to 30,488. Presumably, the others were now working for Uber or Lyft, which did not have to factor the cost of a medallion into their rides. Rideshare drivers typically own their cars. By contrast, most yellow taxi drivers lease their cabs from garages on a per-shift basis. During the early 2000s, a driver might pay \$130 for a shift (plus \$20 for gas), and thus not make a single dollar for himself until he clocked in \$151 worth of fares.

By 2017 ride share vehicles outnumbered the city's medallion vehicles at a ratio of almost four to one. Many medallion owners faced the prospect of bankruptcy due to falling medallion prices, which had fallen to a new low of \$250,000. Medallion holders had trouble making payments on the loans that they borrowed to pay for them. This, in turn, led to several high-profile suicides of taxi drivers who claimed to have been bankrupted by ride-share services.

In August 2018, the city voted to stop issuing new ride-share licenses for one year, as well as enacting a minimum wage for vehicle drivers. The vote was intended to regulate the for-hire vehicle industry and prevent taxi medallion prices from falling further. Not surprisingly, Uber and Lyft criticized the restriction, stating that it would have a negative impact on commuters in the outer boroughs.

Don't count traditional taxis as DOA just yet though, as competition from Lyft and Uber has forced cabbies to step up their game. The cab companies have responded with apps of their own that give riders the same convenience as Uber and Lyft but with insured and licensed taxi drivers. The current fleet is clean and well-maintained, and drivers are now likely to be polite, non-smoking, stay off their phones (a legal requirement), give you a receipt, and have some knowledge of the English language. They might even help you with your bags!

