



Marin United Taxpayers Association

TAX NEWS

Only a reduction in public indifference will bring about a reduction in government spending.

819 A Street, Suite 21 ♦ San Rafael, CA 94901-3073 ♦ (415) 456-7910 ♦ January, 2002

*Dues Invoice ** Annual Meeting Notice ** Update and Fund Drive*

This Issue:

- ***Annual Meeting – Candidate’s for District 1 (San Rafael) state their positions on development, traffic, taxes***
- ***Report on Supervisor’s obscene pay hike in face of joblessness, poor economy and calls for service cutbacks***
- ***Joe Nation caves to special interests (banks and insurers) and allows invasion of consumers’ privacy –***
- ***MUTA Pres. on TAM Union School District \$121 Bond Oversight Comm. Update***
- ***MUTA’S “BEST AND WORST”***
- ***Dues and contribution notice***
- ***MGH Sutter operator fails to provide neurosurgical coverage again – breaches agreement with County***
- ***Sadly, few run for office . .***

President’s Message:

During times of tragedy, we don’t expect to see our public “servants” sneak through fat, undeserved pay raises while their “subjects” are distracted or struggling with economic woes. Unfortunately, that is exactly what our Marin Supervisors did, while at the same moment many Marin business were closing, laying off workers, with residents unable to pay mortgages. Now they are planning budget cuts and/or more taxes or higher service fees. Supervisors ignored their own

pledge to have the Grand Jury consider and recommend their salary – and grabbed a 16% pay raise (with even *more* for future years) without any reason given for bypassing the Grand Jury, nor justification for the raise.

On top of the raise, the Sups gave whopping raises to the County Administrator and Department heads – who are doing the day to day jobs that the Supervisors claimed credit for in taking their pay hike. Taxpayers now pay



multiple times for the same job. (See also, *Sups Eliminate Public Scrutiny of Contracts*, pg 2.) MUTA has asked each candidate for Supervisor to pledge to reverse the raise if elected; learn the results at Annual Meeting.

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MUTA Annual Meeting & Debate by Candidates for Supervisor (1st District - Kress seat) Saturday February 9, 2001 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon at Four Points Barcelo in San Rafael (old Holiday Inn) at Terra Linda exit off 101. Please Attend. Be heard. Call 456-7910 by Feb/ 6th to RSVP. Refreshments served. Bring a friend.
 {Also invited are Mike Martini and Lynn Woolsey, Congressional candidates }



DUES – MUTA NEEDS YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT . . .

Please consider making a contribution above our very low dues. We are the only organization in the County not dependent on Government money or influence. MUTA opposes unaccountable, negligent and spend-crazy politicians who take raises when undeserved; who waste money and try to hide it (the San Rafael Millenium Party = \$1.3 million loss); who don't punish fraud and unlawful acts by those in power (Kress and Rose misuse of County credit cards – taxpayers money; Steve Kinsey illegal septic tank and building); and who cater to developers who overbuild, run off with their profits and leave the taxpayers to pay for new schools, roads, sewer and water expansion and gridlock. Send \$20, \$50, \$100, maybe a percentage of your local “add-on” taxes, and help us report what really goes on in some areas of local government (local newspapers don't report this). Or, offer your time to help distribute literature, make calls, attend public meetings, etc. – or both. **If you haven't got the time or energy to fight against government practices you can't stand, help us do it – we are all volunteers.**

****** Director Election******

Please vote, mail in attached ballots today!

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MARCH ELECTION UPDATE:

Sadly, we saw many offices go uncontested for this election. Several “potential” candidates reported they felt there was no way to win against entrenched incumbents, so no one tried. Incumbents have campaign war chests built up during their elected terms, while people seeking “favors” are willing to “contribute”. All Marin Judges went unchallenged despite conflict of interest issues raised over the past year; the DA went unchallenged despite refusal to seek prosecution of Sups Rose and Kress for credit card fraud; and numerous elected Dept. heads, including the Controller who permitted the Sups' credit card misuse, faced no contest. The “power of incumbency” was the basis for

the Term Limits Initiative, now we know why – incumbents can get favors when they are in office.

Some good news . . . a Democratic candidate has surfaced in **Lynn Woolsey'** race - **Mr. Mike Martini, Mayor of Santa Rosa.** While MUTA does not endorse candidates – we do endorse contested elections. Since Marin is overwhelmingly Democratic, no Republican presents a challenge. **Mr. Martini** is indeed brave to challenge **Woolsey**, the liberal-Democratic-Washington funded candidate. Martini's candidacy has had an impact already, Ms. Woolsey is showing up at local events versus taking constituents for granted. However, little is known about Martini and his position on Marin issues; he has many questions to answer – Marin is unlike Sonoma.

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SUPS ELIMINATE PUBLIC SCRUTINY OF CONTRACTS

In addition to taking a whopping 16% pay raise, the Supervisors also just gave the County Administrator the right to approve all professional contracts up to \$25,000 without Supervisors approval and without public knowledge, (these matters won't appear on the Sups weekly agenda; note, the prior limit was \$5,000.) Big payments could be given to ex-Supervisors turned “consultants” (Giacomini or Kress ?) or to Supervisors' big contributors – without the public having a chance to comment and object until AFTER the deal is done and the money paid out of taxpayers' funds. With their 16% raise, is it too much to ask that the Sups review contracts in excess of \$5,000 each week that they meet?

Individuals complain, write to the newspapers, but the Sups keep their pay raise, do less and less work in their part time job, and plan to cut our services and raise fees. **We need term limits for Supervisors.** All of them need to go.





TAMALPAIS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT – \$121 Million in Bond Money . . .

Last year MUTA opposed the \$121 Million Bond Issue for remodels of three high schools in the Tam H.S. District. MUTA opposed the measure because the District insisted on a costly (\$250,000 extra) special election; there had been insufficient effort to obtain State money available; there were questions about remodeling versus new building (which was cheaper); and there were questions about the schools' money management based on its prior track record. The Bond Measure passed by a handful of votes.

To the District's credit, primarily Superintendent **William Levinson**, the District placed a MUTA member on its Oversight Committee to review and watchdog the expenditure of the \$121 Million in Bonds. **Nancy McCarthy**, MUTA President, sits on the Committee

At present the work is being planned, bids are being obtained, the District obtained an excellent interest rate on the bonds, community boards have been set up at the individual schools and are working hard at reviewing plans, making plans, and contributing expertise in several areas. This is heartening.

At Committee meetings MUTA has raised questions about a number of issues, particularly a \$6.4 million expenditure for "Construction Management", which was scheduled originally as a \$750,000 expenditure. There have been explanations given, including: (1) the need to expedite construction schedules (to avoid downtime and more cost); (2) to avoid the hiring of new, permanent District employees to supervise the construction work (who may be hard to terminate at the end of the job, as with most "temporary" public employees who become "lifers"); and to obtain necessary expertise and close monitoring of construction dollars. Unfortunately, the "savings" expected from the use of Construction Management could not be quantified.

We continue to monitor the progress of the work and money spent, and hope that the

"pluses" expected from Construction Management" turn out to be worth the big expenditure. We want to see a successful, cost-effective project – with the money going where it belongs. The District seems to be on track.

JOE NATION SANDBAGS PRIVACY RIGHTS BILL

This past year Assemblywoman J. Speier put a privacy bill before the Assembly which would have stopped banks, insurers, credit card companies, etc. from selling consumers' personal information without first obtaining their permission. After being influenced by big business and banks, **Assemblyman Nation** caved in and wouldn't support the bill.

Presently, *after* he and Gov. Davis benefited from needed campaign contributions resulting from killing the bill, **Nation** is now introducing a Privacy bill which is silent on the critical issue of "opt in" or "opt out" provisions which were covered by Speier's bill. Sadly, it appears that **Nation** has held this critical provision out of his draft bill in the hope of maximizing "contributions" a/k/a "pay-offs" from lobbyists seeking to influence the outcome. This is the ugly game played by elected representatives seeking to extort "campaign contributions" in election years, also called "fetch'm" bills.

Worse yet, **Nation** is spearheading legislation to undo Prop 13, so that we will be annihilated by property taxes on California's wildly inflated property values. People will begin losing their homes *again* for their inability to pay the taxes. **Nation is anti-taxpayer.**

ASSAULT ON TERM LIMITS -

Be sure to vote NO on Prop 45, which seeks to undercut Term Limits. This initiative is the "re-elect John Burton" measure. News reports say that Burton strong-armed those who need him in the State Senate, i.e., big labor and business lobbyists, into spending \$7 million on *his* initiative. He's termed out soon and likely can't get job in the private sector that will pay so much for his part-time "consultants fees" (a/k/a political influence) – if he isn't in office.

MGH/Sutter Fails to Meet its Promises; breaches Contract

Sutter Corp. the private corporation operating MGH, failed to provide contracted for neurosurgical services again and again over the busy holiday weeks. Both before and following the tragic death of Jennifer Childs several years ago, healthcare advocate **William Rothman, M.D.** informed the Bd of Supervisors and Sutter about big gaps in neurosurgical coverage at MGH (the absence of which contributed to the death of Jennifer Childs after she was denied admittance to MGH which had no neurosurgeon to treat her head injuries, and ferried around until she died.)

While Sutter uses MGH profits to feed its many mouths (28 other hospitals in State), MGH's big profits are going elsewhere in the State, not to Marin. Anything we need as an improvement to our hospital requires a fund-raising effort versus ("*soak the naïve Marin rich*") Sutter's use of the big profits it makes off MGH – for MGH. The newspaper doesn't cover this issue evenly because Sutter spends big advertising \$\$ at the Marin IJ. Money paid for influence, the new American way. Enron goes West.

MUTA's 2001 BEST and WORST

Best Government Body: Marin Healthcare District Board, for advocacy which: (1) forced Sutter Corp to improve emergency care at MGH, (2) prodded the Marin Board of Supervisors to improve Trauma Care in the County; (3) obtained promise of Neurosurgical care 24/7 at MGH; and (4) stayed the course on the lawsuit which will return MGH plus \$75-\$100 million to the Marin public for better healthcare.

Worst Government Body: Marin County Board of Supervisors – for taking a 16% pay hike (plus more in future years) while constituents were being laid off and businesses closing, and avoiding their own agreed process

for getting a raise, i.e., Grand Jury approval; and, without a showing of merit for such a substantial raise in pay for a part-time, *no specific hours required*, job.

Worst Individual Politician: **Joe Nation**, for (1) not supporting immediate and fair relief for consumers preyed upon by telemarketers who obtain consumer's personal, financial information from banks and insurance companies due to the absence of a law stating such information can not be sold; and (2) for his stupid plan to undermine Prop 13 – which will take us back to "tax sales" of homes belonging to the elderly and those on fixed incomes or out of work (just look at N.Y.)

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Survey on Issues for MUTA:

Please review this list and tell us what you want MUTA pursue most aggressively:

1. Term limits for Marin supervisors
2. Oppose J. Nation's effort to undue Prop 13
3. Growth/Development issues and problems
4. Proposed transit tax (with diesel train)
5. Indian gambling spread to non-tribal lands; no taxes paid and competition with taxpaying businesses
6. Dereliction of DA in refusing to prosecute Sups embezzlement- credit card misuse (request Grand Jury investigation)
7. Review of family court and Judges conflict of interest issues
8. Development of Vincent/Silviera property
9. The cost of illegal immigration to County

Or, insert your area of interest.
Return your list of interests with the ballot attached, or call MUTA at 456-7910.

PLEASE PAY YOUR DUES, \$6; \$20; \$50 or more. See attached Dues Statement.

"We ought not to be quite so ready with our taxes, until we can secure the desired representation"

-Edmund Burke, 1769
