



# 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 • (415) 456-7910 • Fax 456-4198 • www.marintaxpayers.org • October 2004

## **MUTA's Election Recommendations**

- **VOTE YES on Propositions 1A, 60, 60A, and 69.**
- **VOTE NO on Propositions 61, 62, 65, 66, 67, 68, 70, 72, and vote NO on Marin Measures A, C, E, and F.**
- **MUTA has no recommendation on: Props. 59, 63, 64, 71, and Marin Measures B, G, H, I, J, K, and L.**
- **However, a good rule of thumb is when in doubt, vote NO.**

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### **Dues notice:**

## **Please Send Dues Now**

MUTA for several years has been a year behind, collecting dues at the end of each year instead of for the year ahead. Now we hope to catch up by asking for 2004 dues now. In January we will get back on the proper cycle, collecting in advance at the front end of 2005. It is crucial at this time, due to our increased expenses of printing and distributing flyers, this newsletter and other mailings on the overwhelming number of tax and bond measures now facing taxpayers, as well as our increased office rent and phone expenses.

While still striving to keep our dues at \$6, we depend heavily on your generosity.

*Government expands to  
absorb revenue, and then some*  
—Tom Wicker

## **The President's Message**

by MUTA President Nancy McCarthy

**Your Board of Directors has been working OVERTIME to try to stop the flood of tax grabs and politicians' "salary enhancements" in Marin County.** We have drafted and coordinated ballot oppositions in the voter guides, attended debates to present MUTA's positions, evaluated complex initiatives and tried to get OUR word to the voters as economically as possible. A small handful of volunteers is doing everything to stem the tide of "tax and spend" politicians who care little about spending money that is not theirs, i.e., OUR MONEY.

**In addition to taxes, we are fighting to keep control of our public institutions so that the taxpayers who paid for these facilities are not overcharged and underserved. An example is Marin General Hospital.** Our public hospital is operated by a *so-called non-profit*, Sutter Corp., which *profited \$465 Million last year alone*, in part by cutting care to Marin patients. MGH is now threatened with loss of Medicare and Medical funding, which will be devastating for many of Marin's seniors. Kaiser patients are impacted by overcharges for MGH trauma care. How did this happen to a public owned facility? [History: MGH was operated by the public District board until Sutter's predecessor got control for zero dollars in a conflicted deal.

Sutter now uses MGH revenues to fund their 28-hospital chain.]

We can use any help you can

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*(Presidents Message from page 1)*

provide, money contributions to help with mailers, offers of help handing out flyers, website assistance, work on issues, attending public meetings, etc. If you don't have the time to help personally, please send a donation so that we can mail more flyers to more voters stating MUTA's positions. Help us to help you.

Stay tuned, pass out our flyers (attached) to everyone you know. It is getting nearly impossible to hold out against the well funded special interests. Thanks for your support. Check our [www.marintaxpayers.org](http://www.marintaxpayers.org).

During the past year, MUTA had a number of guest speakers at our board meetings, among them, Marin Democrat Central Committee Chairman John Alden last November; Brenda Walker of FAIR and immigration attorney David Strand in March, on immigration problems; Dwayne Hunn in April on spoil disposal from dredging the San Rafael Canal; Paula Reynolds, Barbara Young and Laurie Harden of Mill Valley School District in May; in July, Sara Lockwood of No on Measure E; and in August, Supervisor Steve Kinsey advocating the Measure A half-cent sales tax.

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## The Marin Healthcare (MGH) District Election

by Norman Carrigg, M.D.

In November most of us will vote for what we consider the better choices. Marin Healthcare District (all of Marin except Novato) voters will fill two vacancies on the five-member board.

The board's chief function is to oversee Marin General Hospital, owned by District residents but leased until 2015 to Sutter Health, a Sacramento-based hospital chain. Marin's Dr. Archimedes ("Archie") Ramirez and Jonathan Frieman are both strong advocates for patients and stellar choices.

Sutter Health uses MGH as its cash cow. Money siphoned by Sutter from the non-profit MGH can legally be invested in for-profit Sutter businesses. Patient revenue siphoned to Sacramento means lesser care at MGH. In fact, the privatized MGH is now in danger of losing its Medicare and

Medi-Cal funding because of Sutter's sub-standard quality of care.

Of the five candidates, Terry Rosenthal, a consultant, claims, "I know hospitals inside and out." Sharon Jackson says, "I don't think a move away from Sutter would be progress," while Judy House says, "Sutter has a good reputation." Jonathan Frieman, on the other hand, says, "I would not advocate renewing that lease." Dr. Ramirez, like Mr. Frieman a strong patient advocate, has sharply criticized Sutter's failures to put healthcare above profit in its cutbacks in both staffing and services.

The role of the elected board is limited until the hospital reverts to community control in 2015. Nevertheless, we need strong consumer advocates on the board now doing everything possible to upgrade patient care.

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## Supes hold 101 motorists hostage with Measure A

by Vice President Mike Cunningham

Marin County Supervisors and their cadre of special interest agents dragooned into promoting the Measure A sales tax hike are holding motorists hostage with the threat that if we don't vote yes on A, Hwy 101 through San Rafael effectively will never get the carpool lane we really need.

They want us to vote a \$300 million tax increase so the \$25 million carpool lane will be built sooner. The rest of the \$300 million goes to special interest groups which can use the money any way they want, like paving city streets that we already have paid for with our property taxes, or as recently seen, the "County Cultural Offices."

Why do we have to pay \$300 million for a \$25 million freeway job?

We've seen in the IJ that Marin County took in an extra \$27.5 million in property taxes last year. That money alone could go to fixing the freeway if our elected officials were really working for *us*, but they are not. I'm voting no on Measure A until they start working for us and working to get the Highway 101 fixed. Please vote NO on A.

## How Public Employee Unions are “Killing the Golden Goose”

by Mark D. Hill, Vice Chairman  
Republican Party of Marin

In his recent column in *Marin Scope*, columnist Mark Hill compared pay and pension benefits of a Marin County Fire Chief, earning \$200,000 in salary and benefits and overseeing 85 firefighters, and a Colonel who commands roughly 4,000 men and is responsible for assets including tanks, artillery, and infantry weapons and vehicles worth billions, who can be shipped overseas at a moment’s notice, and who makes a grand total of \$92,000 a year.

Our retiring Fire Chief’s pension, after 25 years service, will be over 75% of his pay, while staying on a few more years would raise his pension to 100% of his pay, with annual COLA. The Colonel, retiring after 25 years, would have a pension of about \$60,000 a year, and only after completing 30 years would it reach 75% of his active duty pay, plus annual Cost of Living Adjustment.

Firefighters, like combat soldiers, truly are heroes. Yet an enlisted soldier in military fire suppression with four years service makes about \$20,000 a year, compared to a Marin County fire engineer whose total compensation is \$104,647.

The Marin County system that allows this huge disparity is gravely flawed. While toady’s fiscal pressures on our schools and transportation are overwhelming, yet the County pays out over 10% of its \$192 million budget, \$21 million, on employees who aren’t there (they are “retired”). Further, the County is preparing taxpayers for the bad news, that *two-thirds* of the total County employee workforce will be retiring in *less than five years*. Further exacerbating the problem, County Supervisors recently passed a measure allowing some employees to retire *earlier*, so that their lifetime IOUs will kick in sooner, so that those employees “can move on to other careers.”

The end result is a Marin *fiscal time bomb*, set to go off. In four or five years Marin will have to figure how to pay those expensive lifetime IOUs while trying to hire even more expensive new employees to replace the ones just given early retirement. These one-sided giveaways to public employee unions are

bankrupting the County, and are indeed likely to result in Public Employee Unions Killing the Golden Taxpayer Goose.

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## Half-million taxpayer dollars wasted by County bureaucrats

Thanks to Mark Prado’s exposé in the *Marin IJ*, we now know how the TAM (Transit Authority of Marin) wasted \$224,864 of *our money* hiring outside consultants to sugar-coat the Measure A sales tax increase to con voters into supporting it, and is wasting a further \$350,000 to put Measure A on the ballot.

That’s \$574,000-plus, *more than half a million tax dollars down the drain*, for lucrative incomes for “out-of-town experts with briefcases,” and putting an outrageous tax measure on the ballot. Even worse, it’s *using our tax dollars against us, to rip yet more taxes from us*.

MUTA intends to file complaints about this abuse of taxpayers and misuse of taxes with both the Attorney General and the Fair Political Practices Commission.

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## Members always welcome at MUTA monthly board meetings

Our meetings are on the second Monday of the month, 7:30 p.m., at 819 A Street (2nd floor), an opportunity to meet your directors and share your ideas with them. Location is next to Maxwell the Cleaner (3rd & A Streets). Parking is available on street, in nearby 3rd street garage, and in lot of bank on 3rd at A). And visit us at [www.marintaxpayers.org](http://www.marintaxpayers.org).

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## The Transit Tax - Again!

by Fielding Greaves

Marin voters have twice defeated the attempts to saddle us with a railroad tax to build a “Toonerville Trolley” line to nowhere in the mistaken belief it will relieve highway congestion, when in fact it will contribute to further development, which inevitably means more population and more cars flooding into Marin County, overcrowding our schools and over saturating our streets and highways.

This time advocates of the railroad from

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Healdsburg to Larkspur Landing dropped the railway for now and instead launched what San Anselmo Mayor Paul Chignell has called their “Christmas tree bonanza” — a Measure A laden with giveaway goodies for a whole raft of special interest groups in a sly attempt to get their votes — bike lanes for the bikers, walkways for pedestrians, school crossing guards for kids, street paving for Marin towns, even an amorphous “safe routes to schools” program, but giving short shrift for the real problem, the congested 101 “freeway.”

A major problem with their plan is that it’s based on deliberately distorted data. Their report blames much of Marin’s transit problems on “too many local trips,” but the way they computed local trips was *deceitful*, downright false. For example, if you drive your child to school in the morning, then go on to the gas station, then to the cleaners, finally to the grocery store before going home, TAM (the Transit Authority of Marin) says that’s *four* trips, not just one. But EPA radio ads are encouraging drivers to “spare the air” and help the environment by consolidating all their daily errands into *one* trip. What the feds call one trip, TAM would have us believe is four!

But that’s not the worst of Measure A’s half-cent sales tax. The BIG lump of coal in that Christmas stocking is that it gives short shrift to Marin’s **number one priority**, Hwy 101, which would get only **7-1/2 cents** of every Measure A tax dollar! **Vote NO on A.**

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**The Word for the Day:**

**“EMGAM”**

Zip your purse. Hide your wallet. Button your pockets. The staggering array of new tax and bond issues, state and local, on the November ballot is a major cause for alarm. Taxing and spending agencies (they are the same) seem intent on killing the tax goose that supplies the golden tax eggs they wrest from us.

People ask why does MUTA seem to oppose all new or increased taxes? As former MUTA Director Fred Raab said: “*Because someone MUST.* Otherwise government’s ravenous appetite for taxes would know no bounds. Government is by nature extremely wasteful and inefficient—and often corrupt as well.

**GOVERNMENT DOES NOT NEED MORE MONEY.** It needs the **WILL** to axe the bureaucracies and boondoggles. **Can you imagine how much worse things would be if no one tried to impose the same spending discipline on government that we must all exercise in our own lives?”**

MUTA is fighting valiantly to protect your pocketbook, but *we need your help.* We need *numbers* to create an impact on politicians. That’s why we urge you to activate and accomplish MUTA’s slogan: **“EMGAM”**— **Every member get a member!**

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**RENEW & EMGAM too!**

MUTA’s influence depends upon *numbers*. That’s all politicians understand. We need the help of every taxpayer to make our voice heard. Please pass this application to a friend whom you encourage to become a member of MUTA. MUTA is Marin’s best bargain, with dues at \$6 per family, though we welcome larger amounts to help defray our cost:s of office rent, phone, copies, printing, and postage.



**Enclosed is my check for my Renewal ( ), or Renewal and New Membership for friend ( )**

payable to M.U.T.A. for \$6\_\_\_\_, \$15\_\_\_\_, \$25\_\_\_\_, \$50\_\_\_\_, Other \$\_\_\_\_\_ .

(NOTE: If including NEW MEMBER dues for a friend, include friend’s name, address, phone number & e-mail address on a separate sheet.)

NAME\_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS\_\_\_\_\_

CITY\_\_\_\_\_ZIP\_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone\_\_\_\_\_

RETURN application and check to MUTA, 819 A Street (#21), San Rafael, CA 94901.

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