

Marin United Taxpayers Association

819 A Street (#21), San Rafael, CA 94915-3073 • 415) 456-7910

www.marintaxpayers.org

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

819 A Street (21), San Rafael, CA 94901 • Tel (415) 456-7910, Fax 456-4198 • Oct. 2005

Visit our website: www.marintaxpayers.org

Annual Meeting

WHERE: 101 Lucas Valley Rd. From north or south, take "Lucas Valley Road/Smith Ranch Road" exit from Hwy 101. Building is 0.3 of a mile west of Hwy 101 overpass, a large gray building with large round windows. Building is partially hidden by trees on left (south) side of road, entrance marked by a red & white "Keegan and Coppin" real estate lease sign.

WHEN: Saturday, Oct. 22, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Come meet your directors and discuss the election. Refreshments will be served.

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President's Report

by MUTA President Nancy McCarthy

Dear MUTA Members

Your Board has formed a new partnership with the Sonoma Taxpayers Assn in an effort to coordinate, focus and strengthen both organizations and enhance our effectiveness on certain public and tax issues that impact both counties. Specifically, we have joined to oppose the "railroad to nowhere" planned by the so-called SMART transit agency that threatens Marin and Sonoma with millions of dollars in transit subsidies, with no evidence that traffic will be improved. (see "SMART," p. 3)

This issue-specific partnership will help us resist the taxes that are particularly hard on fixed income and elderly taxpayers, as well as those new homeowners struggling to make mortgage payments, let alone pay all the endless ADD-ON taxes. We need your support and we need it now.

To mount a campaign against the tax-and-diesel fueled train, and to maintain some accountability by our elected officials who

(go to p. 2)

MUTA ballot positions

STATE MEASURES:

YES on Props. 75, 76, 77, & 80

NO on Props. 78 & 79

No position on Props. 73 & 74

LOCAL MEASURES:

NO on San Rafael Measure S

No position on other local measures

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NO on San Rafael "S" to bail out city council

After years of blunders, San Rafael city fathers are asking taxpayers to bail them out. Look at the record of mismanagement. The city council violated its own charter in awarding Millennium Party contracts, and suffered a whopping **\$1.3 million loss**, not the expected profit. They let the Fourth Street Macy's building sit empty for years, with no rent-paying tenant. They allowed the quarry operators to violate the building code and avoid taxes for years. They've overbuilt in the city, giving us downtown traffic jams three times a day. Their raised fees, causing small firms to leave us.

They've exacerbated the city's illegal alien problem (and lost taxes from legal labor) by encouraging black market labor through refusing to enforce residence building code overcrowding violations in the Canal Area, and instructing police not to cooperate with INS agents enforcing federal immigration laws. And all this time, as regular as clock-work, giving bonuses to city manager and other dept. heads, in apparent violation of the State Constitution's prohibiting extra compensation after jobs are performed in whole or in part. After this history of bad management, they want taxpayers to bail them out. MUTA says NO on the "S" sales/use tax measure.

President's Report...*(from p. 1)*

raise taxes for “motherhood and apple pie” (i.e., paramedic taxes, etc.) while plowing the then-excess money into their salaries, we need to wage a campaign. That takes money for mailings. Your Board members are all volunteers, many work full time, and we presently have no paid staff. If you can't help us with your time, help us with donations.

MUTA is the only volunteer organization that even questions new taxsm fees and local government expenditures. Without MUTA taxes would be even worse. Without an infusion of money and support for MUTA, our unique voice will not be heard. Also, if you can donate time to distribute literature, to organize phone banks, to provide clerical assistance, please callus at 456-7910. And after that, find a friend or neighbor and convince them to join MUTA, pay their first fees if necessary, there is strength in numbers. Thank you for your support.

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Pensiongate! Employee pensions in jeopardy

As MUTA foretold when the County's 1977 enriched pension plan was adopted, it could potentially bankrupt the County. Now we see those misguided former county supervisors' chickens coming home to roost. With unprecedented disdain for common sense, our current Board of Supervisors not long ago decided to exacerbate the situation by lowering the retirement age from 55 to 50 “to save money”! How they figure that is incomprehensible, given that employees now will quit sooner, draw retirement benefits longer, and new employees have to be hired sooner to replace them, all that adding up to *more*, not less, money spent over the long haul. Incredibly, Supervisor Cynthia Murray, who justified the change clearly needs more schooling in both math and logic.

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Thank Boxer, Giacomini for Marin's Pensiongate fiasco

by MUTA Secretary Fielding Greaves

Here's the early Pensiongate chronology, on how the current pension plan was adopted by

Supervisors Gary Giacomini, Barbara Boxer and Arnold Baptiste.

1 Jul 75: Actuarial study of proposed plan by Coates, Herfurt & England firm.

March 76: Proposed plan introduced in Legislature at Marin's request (as SB1993 & AB384).

31 Aug 76: Marin Administrator in Sacramento to lobby for plan.

29 Sep 76: Gov. Brown vetoed SB1993 saying: “I have serious reservations about encouraging wholesale withdrawals from the Social Security system.”

Between Sep 76 & Mar 77: A new pension “plan” was devised.

March 77: New plan introduced to Marin.

April 77: County Supervisors signed agreement with Local 535 & MAPE that employee election results would be binding.

3-5 May 77: First election. Employees voted not to drop Social Security. Election was certified by County Clerk. Despite both that & BOS pledges to Local 535 & MAPE, the BOS invalidated the election.

May to mid-Jun 77: Heavy BOS propaganda to dump Social Security. Two Grand Jury reports charged a one-sided picture was given employees; one report said action of some administrators “borders on fraud.”

13-15 Jun 77: Second election. Employees voted to drop Social Security.

30 Jun 77: Social Security program dropped by County. Most cities/towns followed suit.

1 Jul 77: New pension “plan” adopted despite fact that no actuarial survey of the “plan” had been made before adoption as required by law.

NO ACTUARIAL STUDY OF THE NEW PLAN WAS GIVEN TO THE COUNTY UNTIL A YEAR LATER—MAY 78. THUS THE CURRENT PENSION SYSTEM IS PROBABLY NOT LEGAL FOR TWO REASONS: • ADOPTED WITHOUT REQUIRED ACTUARIAL STUDY, AND • SB1883 TO AUTHORIZE DROPPING SOCIAL SECURITY, WAS VETOED AND THUS DROPPING IT WAS APPARENTLY ILLEGAL.

It was Boxer, Giacomini and Baptiste whom we can thank for the YES vote giving us the Pensiongate fiasco. Bob Roumiguere & Denis Rice voted NO.

“SMART” Not so Smart!

by MUTA Vice President Dennis Brown

The Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) joint Sonoma-Marin tax agency is putting a 1/4% sales tax increase on next year's ('06) Nov. ballot, to run 20 years to pay for initial capital expenditures and annual operating costs of the light rail passenger service from Cloverdale to Larkspur Landing.

SMART's credibility issue is undermined by a U.C. Berkeley study which said: "There is no silver bullet. Trains will not significantly reduce congestion on Hwy 101." The study concluded that "Rail works really well in highly populated areas ... but in the suburbs it just does not work.

The credibility issue is further eroded by the fact that SMART is a taxing district created by the State legislature (in a bill by Joe Nation) specifically to promote the train and collect taxes. Its members are appointed, not elected (like BART). Accountability is a significant problem. SMART's own data considerably understate the expected operating costs by at least \$220 million, which greatly exceeds the combined fare and tax revenues, meaning that SMART would soon require MORE TAXES!

It won't come up until a year from now, but meanwhile spread the word to your friends about its false arguments and why we must vote NO.

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Illegal Immigration Costs

by MUTA Director Michael Hartnett

There are at least eight to ten million illegal immigrants in the US, with probably a quarter of them in California. The "p.c." line says they benefit society without a major downside, that they "do the jobs Americans won't do."

"There is no free lunch" certainly applies here. Because illegals will work for less, employers hire them. The glut of such unskilled labor keeps their wages low. When they displace American workers, taxpayers must pay unemployment benefits. As illegals usually are paid in cash, it means that the government loses payroll and income taxes.

Costs of health care and education services to immigrants are staggering to many of our California communities, with total costs to state taxpayers estimated at \$3-7 Billion a year. In the next 20 years, California will add some

20 million people, mostly due to immigrants and their children.

It's wrong to attack the immigrants themselves. They are fleeing serious poverty in their homelands. The blame must lie with Government which leaves our borders open and with unscrupulous employers who flout our immigration laws.

Taxpayers must insist that Government protect our borders. And state and local officials must cooperate with enforcement and issue driver licenses only to those lawfully here. Locally, we must fight against city attempts (at taxpayer expense) to build "hiring halls" for illegal day laborers.

"A country that doesn't protect its borders isn't a country any more." -Ronald Reagan

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Marin General Hospital: Sutter Dodges Lease Duty

by MUTA Director Norman Carrigg, MD

Marin General Hospital, although owned by the residents of the hospital district, is leased to Sutter Health of Sacramento. MGH has been a Sutter cash cow. Every penny possible has been siphoned off to Sacramento. Because of an inadequate number of caretakers at the hospital, patient care too often is deplorable/

Like all California hospitals, MGH will need to seismically upgrade. The newer west wing is okay, but work needs to be done on the central and east wings. As an alternative, the central and east wings

Sutter, a poster child for corporate greed, sued the Marin Healthcare District because Sutter does not want to pay for the seismic upgrade, based on Sutter's interpretation of the lease. The Marin Healthcare District board disagrees. The matter is in court. Sutter profits from MGH could easily cover the cost of the seismic upgrade.

On Oct 4, 2005, the MHD gave Sutter and their bond holders a notice of default based on their failure to seismically upgrade or to even apply for an extension of that obligation. It looks like Sutter may finally get thrown out of MGH. The sooner the better for Marin patients.

HAFB runway to be flooded

by Fielding Greaves, MUTA Past President

Marin is lucky to have Hamilton’s concrete runway, four feet thick, strong enough to take landings by the heaviest cargo aircraft, and a possible life-saver in event of the major “Big One” quake scientists tell us is coming any time in the next few years.

The hard lessons learned in recent weeks by Gulf Coast communities should compel us to preserve that important security asset. But the planned flooding of the airfield to make marsh habitat will destroy the runway.

We can thank Barbara Boxer for its demise; she was the most fervid supporter of spending millions of taxpayer dollars to destroy a multi-million dollar facility that could be the salvation of many Marin citizens in the event of some dire natural calamity, the same Boxer who shares major blame for Marin’s disastrous pension plan (see p. 3).

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Parcel taxes’ many flaws

There are at least two major flaws in the practice of levying taxes only on property owners’ parcels to fund basic public services (police, fire, school, other services).

Allowing seniors to opt out of payment of parcel taxes encourages them to vote for a tax they themselves are unwilling to pay. If they vote yes, their integrity should require them to decline the exemption.

The second flaw is that renters, all of whom benefit from all of those services, can vote for a tax that is paid by someone else. They get a “free ride,” at least for a time.

URGENT!
If you are on the Internet, PLEASE give us your e-mail address. It will be a great help in getting our news-letter to you more quickly in the future. And check MUTA’s website:
www.marintaxpayers.org

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Taxation: A History Lesson

In medieval England, the king decreed a tax on windows. Today, on some of the oldest buildings, you can see bricked up windows, testimony of early tax evasion.

In Rumania, Lt. Valentin Krulik, of the Soviet army invading Rumania in 1944, could not understand why Rumanian peasant houses allowed cooking smoke to trickle out through their front doors—until he learned that there was a Rumanian tax on chimneys.

In Apulia, in the “heel” of Italy, you can see today the “trulli,” stone farm houses with cone-shaped corbelled roofs, made of flat field stones. In early times there was a tax on stone houses, so the wily farmers made theirs without mortar. When they heard the tax collector was on his way, they would quickly disassemble their houses into mere piles of stone, thus avoiding the tax.

Send Your Renewal Now; & Get MUTA a New Member

Enclosed is my check for my own Renewal (), or for my Renewal and a New Membership for a friend (), made payable to M.U.T.A. for \$10____, \$15____, \$25____, Other \$____, or Donation \$-_____.

(NOTE: If including NEW MEMBER dues for a friend, don’t forget to include friend’s name, address, phone number and 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
www.marintaxpayers.org

“A taxpayer is a person who doesn’t have to take a civil service exam to work for the government” —Anonymous

Place 37¢
Stamp
Here

Sutter may be ousted from Marin General

by MUTA President Nancy McCarthy

After years of mismanagement and poor patient care that resulted in MGH nearly losing its Medicare license following investigations by federal and state agencies, the Marin Healthcare District Board gave Sutter a notice of default on their lease at MGH. It seems Sutter has refused to provide a plan for seismic repairs to the proper State agencies as required by law, and they have been telling the public a Tall Tale about why they were not able to provide a plan. Recently the state agency finally informed the Marin Healthcare District that Sutter could have provided a plan all along. Now the elected Healthcare District has told Sutter that if they don't "cure" their breach of the Lease, they could be thrown out pronto.

The sooner the better. Marin has had to accept bad patient care, endless state and federal investigations at MGH, outrageous executive salaries for the so-called non-profit administrators at MGH (while care-giving staff is laid off), claims of overcharging the uninsured, etc. — the list is endless. It is time Marin General came back to the people who own it — the taxpayers.

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New partnership with Sonoma Taxpayers

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increased taxes, but tenants with longer term contracts may go perhaps years before the tax will impact them through increased rent. So at least for a time, many renters get a "free ride" — their fire, police, school and other services paid for by someone else — property owners.

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"Unquestionably there is progress. The average American now pays as much in taxes as he formerly got in wages."

— Henry L. Mencken

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