

Marin United Taxpayers Association

## TAX NEWS

*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. 2006

Visit our website: [www.marintaxpayers.org](http://www.marintaxpayers.org)

### The President's Message

By MUTA President Gary Ford

### Annual Meeting

**WHERE:** 4 Seasons Sheraton Hotel, Terra Linda.

**WHEN:** Saturday, Oct. 7th, 9 a.m.-noon.

**SPEAKER:** Tom Rubin, noted expert on problems of urban rail systems such as the proposed Meas. R "SMART" diesel train. Come meet your directors and discuss the election. Refreshments will be served.

### MUTA recommends:

#### STATE MEASURES:

**YES** on Propositions 1A, 1E and 89.

**NO** on Props. 1B, 1C, 1D, 86, 87, 88 and 90.

**No position** on Props. 83, 84 and 85.

#### LOCAL MEASURES:

**NO** on Measures P and R.

**No position** on all other local measures.

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### Director Vote — Dues Due

This meeting is when we have our annual election of Directors. Your ballot for the individuals standing for election or reelection is enclosed.

It's also time to renew your membership in MUTA, and to get a new member. Your dues statement is enclosed, along with a special request for an added donation to help us fight unreasonable taxes.

It is numbers that give us our strength.

**EMGAM: Every Member Get A Member!**

### Young blood needed!

Vampires aren't the only ones who need fresh blood. MUTA does, too! Young blood and new energy to keep MUTA strong and healthy.

**How about giving memberships in MUTA to some young graduates (high school or college) you know?**

*They face a mounting tax burden caused by decades of waste and corruption. And who knows what claptrap about the benefits of Big Government they've been fed in school.*

Let's encourage them to know the score, get involved, and help prevent their future from being sold down the river by tax-&-spend politicians.

**A MUTA membership would be an original, thoughtful, and worthwhile gift. Where else can you get all that for only ten dollars?**

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### Smart Outlook

by MUTA Vice President Dennis Brown

**Background:** AB 2224 was promoted by the outgoing State Assemblyman Joe Nation to provide for a 20-year Sales Tax. This election proposition to be submitted to Marin/Sonoma voters supposedly provides initial seed money for a single track. Diesel driven rail line service from Cloverdale to a remote point near Larkspur.

### Facts concerning SMART rail:

- Nearly \$4 million expended thus far on environmental planning does not address in

**URGENT!**

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detail concerns about: 1) congestion relief, 2) adequate parking at stations, 3) safety, 4) traffic

delays at crossings, 5) noise factors at several crossings and adjacent neighborhoods.

- The rail line, when working, will not relieve highway 101 congestion. Only 191 people would use the train into Marin from Sonoma.
- The City of Larkspur does not intend to let the train to have a station within its city limits.
- Freight trains will be using the rail line, with residences less than 100 feet from the track.
- The ultimate cost to taxpayers will exceed \$1.4 billion.
- The 2-car train is powered by polluting, diesel converted truck engines, which will add more particulates to Marin's atmosphere.
- The spending thus far by the SMART board includes over \$1 million for "Voter Education."
- Sonoma's Measure M gave SMART proceeds from a 1/4\_ sales tax. Now SMART wants and additional 1/4\_ sales tax from Marin and Sonoma.
- A single line railway is extremely inflexible, with breakdowns shutting down the system.
- It is a foregone conclusion that additional funds (taxes or bonds) will be required to complete the system.
- To continue operation will require Federal subsidies.
- The proposed train system is not a solution to a San Francisco or Oakland commute.
- Telecommuting will increase. Fewer people will need to commute to city offices for work.
- **Why should Marin citizens pay for a Sonoma County train?**

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**Marin Water District**

by MUTA Secretary Basia Crane

A 2006 Marin County Grand Jury report stated that before MMWD commits to spending \$250 million on construction of a desalination plant, and the necessary

several qualified SF Bay Area organizations have clearly said the SF Bay waters are toxic. Director Huffman plans to leave the board this December, and fears his replacement will vote no on the EIR. He is pushing and rushing the EIR process to shorten the normal detailed public review time period, so he can vote on it before he goes.

The engineering report should precede the EIR, and MUTA trusts there will be a 10-day public review period before it comes to the board for approval. MUTA also urges the board to delay approving the EIR until January 2007, when newly elected board members get a chance to review and vote on the desal plant.

If this desal plant sails through without much scrutiny by the public. Jared Huffman will depart for Sacramento and leave behind a board that will be struggling forever with a desalination plant fiasco. MUTA believes the desal plant is totally unnecessary in Marin. We urge the public to attend the MMWD's Wednesday 7:30 p.m. meetings to question this entire project. It's still not too late to influence this board, and the new one.

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**Bay Area's Garbage Dump?**

by MUTA Treasurer Michael Hartnett, M.D.  
State Assembly candidate

There is good news and bad news about the newly completed overpass just north of Novato. The good news is that Waste Management, Inc, the owners of the Redwood Landfill, paid for it. The bad news for Marin and the Petaluma Marsh is that WMI did so because they intend to increase the amount of garbage dumped there by 40%, importing it from other counties. Even though this represents a reduction of WMI's original plans, it still represents a threat to the

annual upkeep of \$20 million, the public must be informed and also be **allowed to vote** on the issue. Jared Huffman and some others on the MMWD board say there's no need for a public vote.

This summer the pilot desalination testing plant was dismantled. Water samples were tested and deemed safe to drink — even though

fragile environment of the Petaluma River Marsh.

The dump, which could reach 160 feet high, sits adjacent to the largest tract of preserved marshland in California. The site is just a few feet from groundwater and the Petaluma River. WMI, the largest garbage

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company in the United States, has a notorious record of violating laws against dumping toxic waste.

In the event of leakage, caused by an earthquake or faulty design, taxpayers will have to foot the bill for expensive cleanup. There will be unknown public health costs as well. Marin County already has one of the highest rates of cancer in the country.

*We urge readers to write the County Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors telling them that you oppose changes in WMI's permit to expand the dump and hold them accountable for their actions.*

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### **College of Marin Problems**

by MUTA Secretary Basia Crane

One reason the College of Marin faces its second year of sanctions by a national accrediting association is that the college still lacks formal education goals to guide its spending — what types of buildings COM will build, for what classes and locations, and at what cost. Despite all this, COM put on three forums to display the three types of architectural plans for both campuses. In the plans were included both student and senior housing to replace the parking lots on Kent Avenue. After strong opposition from homeowner association groups, the college announced it had “no immediate plans for any housing.

June brought the revelation that \$379 million in renovations exceeds the authorized \$250 million on bonds. The cost difference was staggering to college trustees, who had not seen any estimates since they had commissioned a consulting firm to produce a modernization plan and budget prior to passage of the bond. V-Anne Chernock, director of facilities modernization for COM, assured the board that “we will get it back to \$249.5 million because that's

bolster that dormant campus. This plan drew such criticism that it was shelved immediately.

This summer's costly publicity campaign raised Fall's enrollment by a mere 45 students to 6,482—an infinitesimal 0.7%. MUTA has long maintained that COM is already a beautiful campus. Tearing down existing buildings or fixing them doesn't make students come. It's now clear that the college was premature in asking for bond money when it had no purpose or vision (no education plan or mission statement) and hadn't made a serious attempt to upgrade its community offerings. **In reality, the college needs to scale down, not build up.**

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### **Marin General Hospital**

by MUTA Director Norman Carrigg, M.D.

The problems at Marin General Hospital began in 1985 when the five elected directors of the District (all of Marin except Novato) leased the hospital for 30 years to a shell corporation. The hospital CEO and the MGH attorney left public employ to run the privatized MGH (behind closed doors) that came into being with a massive transfer of public funds to the shell corporation.

Beginning in 1986, MGH became a cash cow, first for the California Healthcare System of San Francisco, and then for Sutter Health, the Sacramento-based hospital chain. And it was in 1986 that Supervisor Gary Giacomini described the privatization as the “biggest theft of public property in Marin history.” Moneys needed for patient care simply aren't available. MGH was once known for its high quality care. That was pre-lease and lease up to the time Sutter took over in 1996.

what we have.”

A year-long environmental impact was due to be started in September. Other developments were the closing of COM’s Marine Biology Lab in Bolinas, and the trustees’ proposal to move Science and Nursing to Indian Valley in order to

The hospital requires seismic upgrades of its central and eastern wings. Sutter does not want the responsibility and for that reason, among others, is willing to terminate the lease before 2015. The crucial need now for voters is to elect consumer advocates to the Healthcare District board.

The team of Dr. Larry Bedard and Dr. James Clever is hoping to form a bloc with

Sharon Jackson, a Sutter sycophant, who came on the board in 2004. I do not consider that troika will work in the public interest, although Dr. Clever is somewhat of an unknown. Bedard is not. He was a director in 1994-96, until he was recalled in November 1996.

I think the pro-consumer trio of Dr. Jennifer Rienks, Jonathan Frieman and Kathleen Russell could fill the three vacancies on the board comfortably. Dr. Archimedes Ramirez, a director since 2004, needs to be joined by directors who are interested in bringing back the high standards of yesteryear’s quality patient care.

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**An excerpt from a member’s letter:**

The Sept 11 IJ editorial “Healthcare Circus Must End” deserves comment. I did not consider it a circus, but there was reason for activist anger.

It surprised nobody that Robert Derzon was the choice of three Marin Healthcare District directors to fill the 60-day vacancy created by the death of Dr. Lawrence Arnstein. Directors Coxhead, Jackson and Severinghaus joined by new director Derzon were involved in a controversial vote to sell district property at 1260 South Eliseo. The IJ pointed out that Derzon was accused of conflict of interest because of his involvement with Marin Community Clinic, which wants to buy the property.

management of Marin General Hospital.” The district negotiators were board members Sharon Jackson and Dr. John Severinghaus. This pair negotiated with Sutter secretly, as Sutter demanded. The other board members were excluded. This inexcusable detour around democratic process works in Sutter’s favor, not the district’s.

Sutter will use MGH as a cash cow, and by the terms of the agreement will not have to contribute to any seismic upgrade. The agreement at this point is hardly definitive.

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“BONDS = TAXES PLUS INTEREST”

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**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\_\_\_, Donation \$\_\_\_, Other \$\_\_\_.

**(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**

The 1260 land, not needed now, may be essential in the future. Radiation therapy is now done in Sutter-owned 1350 South Eliseo. It may be mandatory in the future to move out, and 1260, like 1350, has the requisite room lead lining. This is a sale that should be submitted to the district voters, or at least openly and thoroughly debated. Dr. Archimedes Ramirez is the only director to oppose the sale.

Marin United Taxpayers Association  
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**Place 39\_  
Stamp  
Here**

A front page Sept. 13 report advised readers that “negotiators for the Marin Healthcare District and Sutter Health have hammered out a definitive agreement for ending Sutter’s