



*"If you take a step, I'll tax the stair
If you take a breath, I'll tax the air
If you get so sick, I'll tax your care
If you want some fun, I'll tax the fair..."*

*—Updated TAXMAN, by Jeff Perlman
(Not a Beetle, just bugged by taxes)*

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Did you know that from 1998 to 2007, more than 1,100 people every day moved from the nine highest income-tax states, including New Jersey and New York, and relocated mostly to the nine states with no income tax, including Florida, Nevada, New Hampshire and Texas? That is 4,000,000 former taxpayers.

Did you know the top 10 % of tax filers in New Jersey accounts for 80 % of the revenue of our state's income tax, while the top 1 percent – only 40,000 filers – accounts for 40%? What happens when these folks leave? Did you know that the States with no income tax created 89% more jobs and 32% greater personal income growth than those with the highest taxes? (Times of Trenton, 5/26/09)

Yes, the Taxman bugs me even more than mosquitoes in July! Until NJ voters sing a new song, the Taxman isn't going to miss a beat. Taxes are even hurting the tax-exempt!

My wife, Sharon, and I recently attended a fundraiser for Adults and Children with Learning Disabilities (ACLD) with my sister, Toby, and her husband, Marc. We have annually joined over 500 attendees. This year? A disappointing 250. And ACLD is not alone. Several Mercer County fundraisers have been cancelled or downsized due to dismal response from regular supporters.

Perhaps it's the economy, but my family and I noticed some of the former top benefactors of ACLD no longer live in the New York/New Jersey area. And it appears their resources—including their generosity, influence and trickle-down spending—have moved out with them.

As rising taxes affect even the untaxed (non-profits), some of our elected officials are beginning to realize they can no longer vote to increase taxes on the wealthy in order for our state to prosper. I applaud the municipalities in our state who are managing to create budgets with a zero-percent tax increase...even if consolidation of neighboring towns remains an unresolved issue.

Advocacy and citizen action are the best defense against the Taxman. Becoming a member of the Mercer Regional Chamber and reading Mercer Business magazine are steps in the right direction, too.

Speaking of Mercer Business, did you know this publication is celebrating its 85th Anniversary? Published monthly since 1924, it is currently edited by Maggi Hill, and guided by a volunteer committee led by Patrick McCormick of mindShift Technologies and Peter Dawson of Leigh Photo & Imaging. This month's issue will give you an economic update and tell you about corporate services in our region. Find out more at www.mercerbusiness.com.

HAPPY 100th BIRTHDAY TO META GRIFFITH! The inaugural female member of our Mercer Chamber, and one of our former Chairpersons, Meta and her late husband Bill started Griffith Electric in 1938 "with a wing and a prayer." They weathered political, economic and social storms (and even "The Taxman!") and last year celebrated 70 years in business as a vital part of our economy.



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