

## Central Sewer System Cost Now Said To Be \$35.6 Million

To the editor:

On the front page of the Oct. 27 issue of the *Beacon* there was a story about the South Brunswick Water and Sewer Authority in which there was a factual error. The cost of the project was given as \$34 million when, in fact, the present estimate of the cost of the project is \$35.6 million.

Remembering that the original cost estimate of this project was \$19 to \$20 million two years ago, I suppose a mere \$1.6 million jump doesn't look like much. But I remember a wonderful quote from the late Sen. Everett Dirksen who said, "A million here and a million there and pretty soon you're talking about some real money."

I enclose a copy of a page from the Sewer Authority 201 Facilities Plan from August 1994 which clearly shows the present estimate to be \$35.6 million.

Teddy C. Altreuter  
Calabash

### Praise For Council

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The following letter was addressed to Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association. A copy was furnished for use as a letter to the editor.

To the editor:

As islanders, we believe the current (Sunset Beach) Town Council fairly and accurately reflects our views and concerns.

We believe that the island's interests are dutifully and ably represented by a dedicated and sincere council.

Anyone who knows anything about municipal administration knows quite well that political subdivision of Sunset Beach is not a viable idea.

We badly need a new high-rise bridge and a central sewer system, both of which are long overdue.

The population of Sunset Beach owes a debt of gratitude for the fine manner in which the town council has made and continues to make the Town of Sunset Beach a community in which we all can be truly proud.

Gary Singleton  
Sunset Beach

### Salute To Teachers

To the editor:

I would like to offer a salute to the staff and faculty of the Brunswick County school system. They are doing a superb job under very adverse conditions, such as letters to the editor containing garbage which may influence some students to drop out of school or lose respect for their teachers.

Education is available for those who are motivated to work for it. If the teachers were not doing a great job, there would be no doctors, lawyers, nurses, engineers, computer programmers, teachers and other

professionals coming from our school system in Brunswick County.

To the student body of the Brunswick County school system: Don't pass up the opportunity to get the education in high school to see you through college. According to U.S. News, a high school graduate made 49 percent less than a college graduate in 1979. This figure jumped to 83 percent in 1993.

In conclusion, keep up the good work, teachers. You are molding the future of our county, state and nation. You deserve a medal for your dedication and a star for being on the firing line each day of the school week.

H.E. Hickman  
Calabash

### Write Us

We welcome your letters to the editor. Letters must have an original signature and must include your address and telephone number. (This information is for verification purposes only; we will not publish your street/mailling address or phone number.) Letters must be typed or written legibly. Address letters to: **The Brunswick Beacon**, P.O. Box 2558, Shallotte NC 28459. Anonymous letters will not be published.

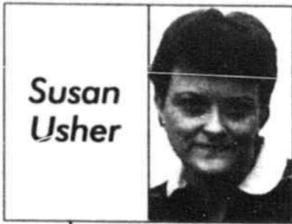
## It's Almost That Time Of Year

It's a Saturday in late autumn, when the last tomatoes are stripped from the vine and the greens are sweet.

On this sunlight-bathed morning every sense seems heightened, sharpened. Change is in the air. You can almost smell it.

Leaves fallen against the damp earth exude an exotic aroma, like an Oriental musk. There's just a whisp of burning oak, from a stove fire started somewhere nearby to nip the morning chill.

From the creek comes the hum of a motor as a small boat heads out. From deeper in the woods rises the bell-like song of deer dogs at work. On Highway 17 the stream of traffic increases momentarily as snowbirds trek south.



Susan Usher

Ears, nose and fingers tingle; the rest of you cushy warm beneath a zipped-up jacket and toboggan cap.

Work falls into a comfortable rhythm. Swish, swish, swish, as the 12-prong metal rake pushes ahead. Pin oak. Water oak. Sycamore. Dogwood. Chinquapin. Maple. Pine. You and your partner work silent-

ly toward the corner from opposite sides, a rule that's simply understood. You break for mugs of hot chocolate, still in companionable silence.

The mound grows larger and larger, until you can no longer glimpse each other across the shimmering offering of red, yellow, brown, bruised purple and orange.

A dog wanders up, circles as ritual demands and plops down at the edge of the pile, snuffling and squirming and pushing until snugly cocooned.

Seconds later he yelps in confusion and horror as two living, breathing torpedoes crash into the pile from opposite directions, barely averting head-on collision. Geronimo!

### GUEST COLUMN

## State Treasurer Speaks Out—Is There Anybody Listening?

BY THOM GOOLSBY

North Carolina's State Treasurer, Harlan Boyles, recently made an obvious, but seldom-heeded call to slow state spending in his newly released book, *Keeper of the Public Purse*.

If anyone in North Carolina should know about state spending, it's Harlan Boyles. He worked 16 years in the Treasurer's Office, prior to his appointment as state treasurer in 1977. With over three decades of experience, Boyles has watched North Carolina's spending grow completely out of control.

### State Spending—Then And Now

Back in 1972, our state ran for an entire year on just over \$1 billion. During the General Assembly's recent spending frenzy, also known as the Short Session, our elected officials approved a \$10.6 billion budget. Such an amount once took over a decade, not just one year, to spend. The point of excess state spending is driven home when one compares the growth of inflation to the growth of state spending. Over the last 22 years, inflation has increased by only 250 percent, while our budget has grown by an astounding 800 percent.

Boyles charts the beginning of rapid increases in spending when, as he sees it, the General Assembly took over state government. This "takeover" occurred when the Republicans won the governor's office in 1984. Boyles believes that around that time a fiscally irresponsible game of one-upmanship began.

Near that same time period, the bureaucratic top-heavy and very expensive Basic Education Plan was instituted by the legislature. All of these events managed to coincide with the federal government's adoption of program "mandates." These mandates began placing heavy spending burdens on state government and required the outlay of tens of millions of dollars in order to comply with federal requirements or risk losing even more money in federal funding.

**Common Sense Recommendations**  
Far from simply complaining,

Boyles' book makes many recommendations to stem the tide of state spending. For the most part, his recommendations make good economic sense. He calls for the elimination of federal mandates and for major reforms in education and other government programs in an effort to make them more efficient and accountable to taxpayers.

What kind of response has Boyles' book received by the leadership in the General Assembly? House Speaker Dan Blue stated that the ideas were good, but many of them were already out of date. It's too bad that in the age of sound bites, we are unable to get Speaker Blue's response to why such ideas as improving the accountability and efficiency of government are "out of date."

Senate President Pro Tem Marc Basnight adopted a similarly weak response to the recommendations put forth by Boyles. He agreed that we needed to reduce taxes, but disagreed that the General Assembly was responsible for such things as the bloated and ineffective education

bureaucracy. Who does he think makes laws in this state?

### Exceeding The Ability To Pay

In the opening chapter of his book, Boyles points out one fact that we cannot avoid: "The growth of state government, if it continues unabated at its present rate, will soon exceed the ability of our citizens to pay their taxes."

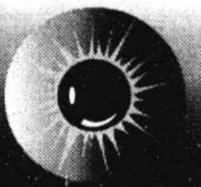
Speaker Blue and Senate Pro Tem Basnight, along with their cronies in the General Assembly, must realize that reality will finally catch up with them. One day, the cold hard slap of a bankrupt state will knock the colorful rhetoric and flowery words right out of their mouths.

However, we cannot allow things to go that far. The reality of State Treasurer Boyles' common-sense suggestions of efficient, effective and accountable government must be heeded. The average citizen realizes that we cannot spend ourselves into prosperity. Will this message ever get through to our free-spending politicians?

Thom Goolsby is an attorney and a teacher at Campbell Law School.

## J. MARK SAUNDERS, O.D.

### FAMILY OPTOMETRY

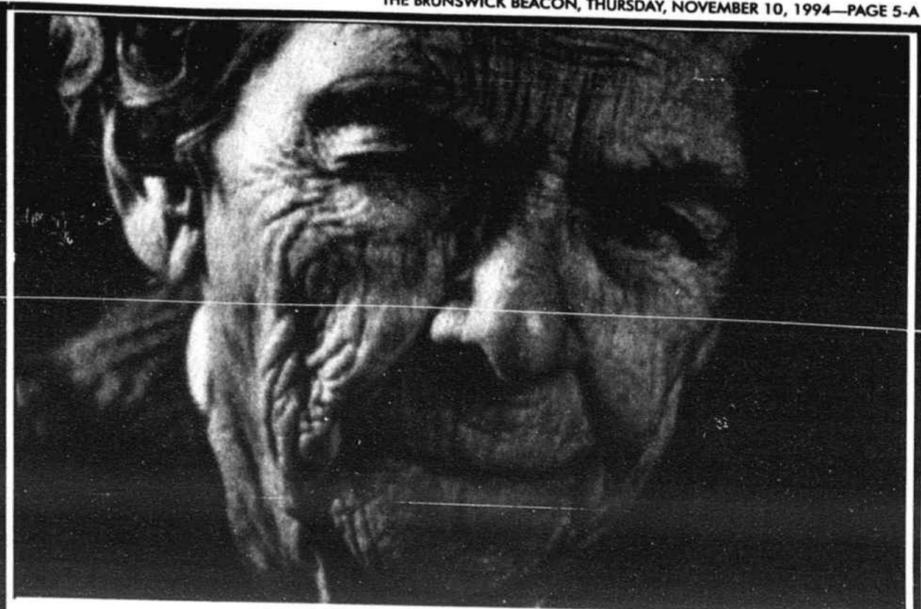


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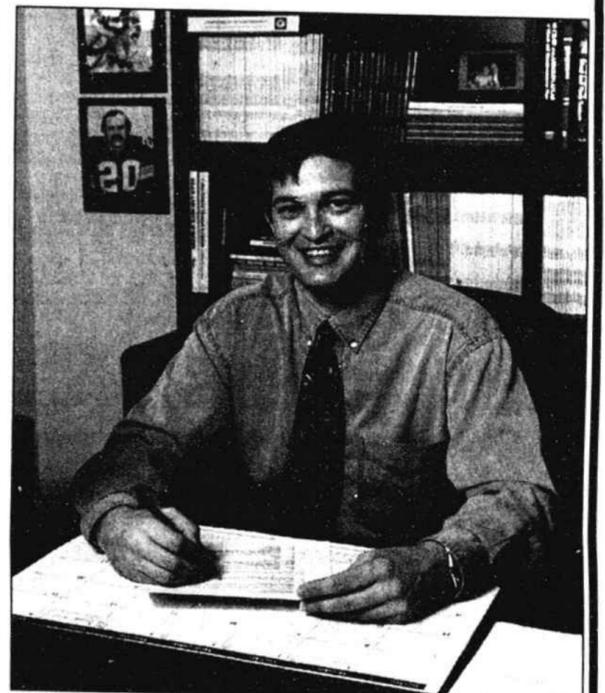


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