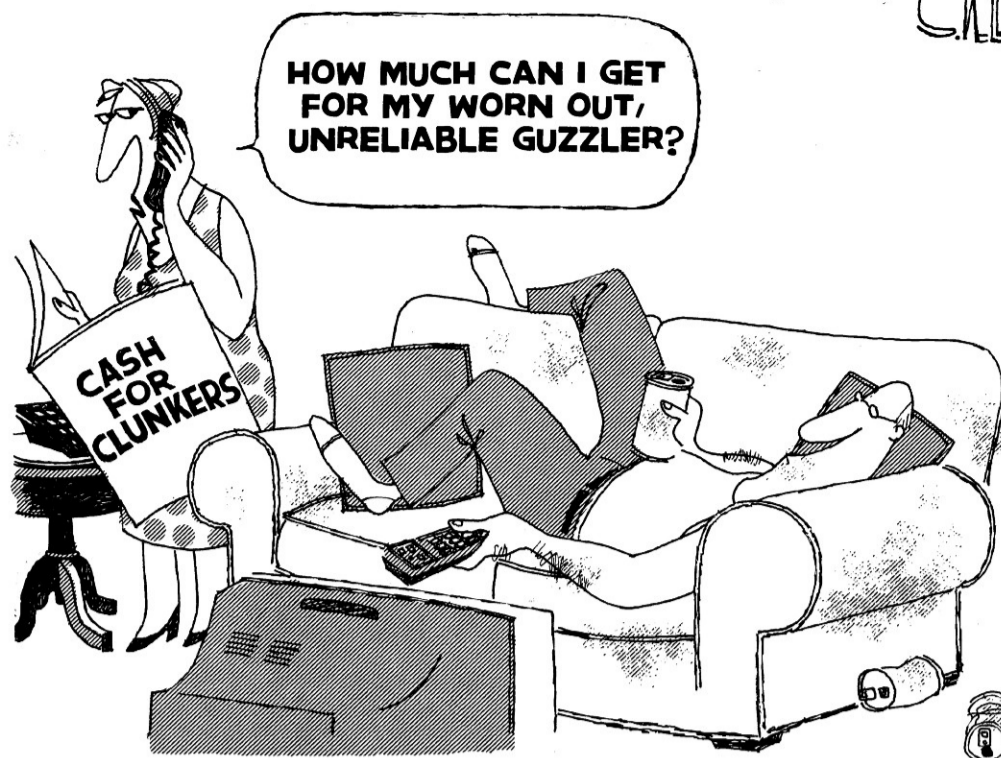


The Philadelphia Inquirer
EDITORIALS

Founded in 1829

SKELLY



STEVE KELLEY / New Orleans Times-Picayune (Tony Auth has the day off.)

Waterfront's new start

Mayor Nutter's appointment of Tom Corcoran to remake the city's waterfront is a solid choice for a crucial job.

For the past 25 years, Corcoran has worked just across the river in Camden, where he played a central role in transforming that distressed city's abandoned riverfront into a desired destination.

Corcoran founded the Coopers Ferry Development Association, helping to lure attractions such as the Adventure Aquarium, Campbell's Field, and a performing-arts center. In a city known more for corruption and street crime, his work in Camden has been nothing short of miraculous.

Now he will lead the Delaware River Waterfront Corp., the non-profit agency that Nutter created to take over management of the riverfront from the former Penn's Landing Corp. The former agency was plagued by inconsistent planning and corruption scandals linked to private developers. Its legacy is a largely inaccessible, disjointed, concrete-laden riverfront that doesn't draw visitors and residents as well as it should.

Nutter pledges that the city's approach to remaking the waterfront will be through a master plan, rather than choosing a large developer to build a single large-scale project.

Nutter is putting the city on course to develop a world-class waterfront along the four-mile stretch near its heart. Now, he, Corcoran, and the DRWC board must build momentum with short-term successes on the waterfront, while preserving the long-range vision of an accessible, sustainable, thriving public space.

"It's going to need strong leadership," said Harris Steinberg, executive director of Penn Praxis, the agency that developed a comprehensive plan that would connect the waterfront to the city's street grid. "The fight against special interests and special projects is not over."

Corcoran praises the Penn Praxis plan as "a great foundation from which to take off." He said he wants to "set the table for future park development as well as private development," as long as it's consistent with the city's mas-

Tom Corcoran spent 25 years helping to develop the Camden side of the Delaware. Now, he's coming over to Phila.



ALEJANDRO A. ALVAREZ / Staff Photographer
The new president of the Delaware River Waterfront Corp. speaks to reporters at Pier 11, at the base of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge.

ter plan. One short-term improvement already begun is a plan to create a one-acre park at Pier 11, at the base of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge. It will be completed by next summer. Corcoran said he also wants to raise money to fix up Penn Treaty Park, near Delaware Avenue and Beach Street.

Corcoran's experience in Camden also should bring a useful perspective to Philadelphia: The waterfront encompasses both states. Each side should be more open to opportunities to collaborate. "The more we look at the concept of 'one waterfront, two states,' the more opportunities we're going to find," Corcoran said.

A sensible and comprehensive remake of the waterfront has eluded the city for decades. With Corcoran's hiring, this new phase of planning is off to a better start.

Walking targets

New Jersey's tragic rise in pedestrian fatalities has motivated authorities to begin undercover "stings" at crosswalks in towns across South Jersey. That's welcome news.

The recent deaths of two young women, in Seaside Heights and Ocean City, were the latest examples in what has become an unacceptable and preventable epidemic in the Garden State. Of course, pedestrian accidents also are a chronic problem in Philadelphia.

On July 17, Casey Feldman, 21, a Fordham University student from Springfield, Delaware County, was struck and killed in Ocean City. On July 25, former *American Idol* contestant Alexis Cohen, 25, of Allentown, was killed in a hit-and-run in Seaside Heights.

Overall, 21 percent of highway fatalities in New Jersey involve pedestrians, about twice the national average. At least 102 pedestrians have been killed on New Jersey roads this year. At this same time last year, there were 78 fatalities.

Even one death is too many, but this trend is going in the wrong direction. So the state Division of Highway Traffic Safety last week unveiled a monthlong decoy program to catch drivers who don't stop for pedestrians.

The operations will take place in Burlington City, Cherry Hill, Collingswood, Linwood, Longport, Northfield, North Woodford, Pennsauken, Pleasantville, Sea Isle City, Somers Point, Vineland, Ventnor, Ocean City, and at Rowan University in Gloucester County. The state is providing law-enforcement agencies with \$4,000 federal grants to conduct the program.

An increase in pedestrian deaths in New Jersey has spurred a crackdown on drivers who ignore crosswalks.

pedestrians will be at crosswalks in these communities. Drivers who fail to yield to officers crossing the street will be stopped and either warned or ticketed by uniformed officers nearby.

State law requires drivers to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks. Violations carry a \$100 fine, plus costs and fees, and two points on your driving record.

The danger is especially prevalent in Shore towns in summer, where the signs and crossings are not always consistent.

This educational sting should serve as a valuable lesson; but the public would have been better served if it began earlier in the season. Summer is when Shore towns are inundated with pedestrians, and summer is almost over.

By the way, while drivers bear responsibility for safety in crosswalks, so do pedestrians. Too many people take it for granted that cars will stop, or they don't give drivers enough time to yield.

Pedestrians should always make eye contact with motorists, cross only at corners, refrain from using cell phones, and wear brightly colored clothing, especially at night. This undercover operation should help to educate drivers and pedestrians about their responsibilities.

Spend time with abused animals

The Inquirer Editorial Board members are very forgiving folks indeed. You refer to many outraged animal supporters' reaction to Michael Vick's new limelight as "mean-spirited" and "wrongheaded," indicating Vick paid his debt to society ("Vick earned a second chance," Sunday).

Are you for real? I challenge the board members to spend a week working in a local animal shelter. Learn what cruelty to animals is firsthand. Those of us who have volunteered or worked within these shelters have witnessed the results of cruelty and have been physically sickened and emotionally devastated at the results of the actions of people such as Vick.

Jan Jaffe
 Philadelphia

Placing value on lives

Cleveland Browns receiver Donte Stallworth gets wasted at a bar, drives, kills a human being, and is sentenced to 30 days in jail. Michael Vick kills some dogs, and gets 23 months.

Shawn Kellogg
 Philadelphia

Overstated government role

Your editorial "A healthier debate" on Monday states that Congress must provide Americans with sensible health-care options.

Your point inaccurately summarizes the role of Congress. It no more has an obligation to provide sensible or any other kind of health care than it does to provide all citizens with big-screen TVs.

Read the Constitution. The U.S. government is responsible only for protecting our borders, maintaining roads, and providing oversight in various ways that protect our freedoms.

That you want a government that provides for its citizenry in a more socialistic way is OK, but it's not what the U.S. government was ever meant to be.

Barry Levine
 Philadelphia

Profit system doesn't work

Many of the problems in our current health-care system, as well as those forecast for a reformed system, are related, in the main, to the role of profit in the health industry.

Human health care is a process not well-suited to the profit-making system. The reasons should be obvious (rationing, spiraling costs, conflicts of interest). Like law enforcement, the military, and firefighting, the health industry cannot be effectively or morally run for a profit — it simply doesn't work well (think



TOM GRALISH / Staff Photographer
Health-reform protesters shouted at Sen. Arlen Specter (D., Pa.) as he left a town-hall meeting on Aug. 11.

Blackwater and Haliburton). Eisenhower today may well have warned us to "beware the health-financial-industrial complex."

With the public option put out to pasture, I wonder whether this administration has sufficient political will and strategic intelligence to truly challenge those whose hefty profits are at risk.

If not, we may get more regulation of a flawed for-profit system, making that flawed system even more complex, thereby unintentionally making the case for those who opposed reform.

Kathryn M. Jakabcin
 Wilmington

Keep the focus on children, families

Unfortunately, much of the media attention is being paid to the folks

with the most extreme points of view on health care. Throughout this process, it is important that we keep fighting to ensure that health-care reform addresses the needs of children and families. Sadly, the reality is that more than 48,000 of Southeastern Pennsylvania's children remain uninsured — especially children in low-wage, working families. With more than one million uninsured people throughout our commonwealth, we must focus on solutions, not distractions.

Joshua Cohen
 Health strategist
 Public Citizens for
 Children and Youth
 Philadelphia

Medicare set to implode

Medicare is socialized medicine, in all its glory. When it was created in 1965, it was projected to cost no more than a few billion dollars a year, a tiny budget add-on.

Today, Medicare (with its sister program, Medicaid) is the single largest expenditure in the budget. With the baby boomers retiring, Medicare's budget will swell further; its own trustees project unfunded obligations to be \$40 trillion to \$50 trillion (the current federal budget is \$3.6 trillion).

And despite its size (45 million beneficiaries), Medicare seems powerless to control its own costs.

Today's politicians will be gone when Medicare implodes, and there will be nothing left but a huge bill for our children. Adding in another hundred million beneficiaries or so will only make those problems worse.

If politicians want to show how government can do medicine correctly, they should fix Medicare first.

John Rogers
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FURTHERMORE...

Home renovation serves working families

Inga Saffron correctly notes that we often lose when we tear historic buildings down. But it is even more devastating to allow perfectly good buildings to fall into disrepair when they could easily, and affordably, be renovated to provide a chance at stability — physical, emotional, and financial — for working families right here in our own community ("The waste of razing fine old buildings," Friday).

In fact, on West Stiles Street, Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia is nearing completion on a green renovation of seven row homes. Not only do these renovated buildings provide a healthier environment for the homeowners, but because of the materials and technologies used, they also are less expensive to operate in the long run. In addition, they help to revitalize neighborhoods by returning the backbone of our economy — hardworking, taxpaying homeowners — to our city.

There is an enormous number of homes ripe for renovation in every neighborhood in Philadelphia. Let's take our neighborhoods back by picking the low-hanging fruit, and invest in healthy home-ownership opportunities for Philadelphians.

Frank Monaghan
 Board president
 Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia

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