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CONTACT: Carol Wood contact@NycCarAccident.net

New Web Site to Serve as Destination for Crash Victims

Provides Information on Crash Victims' Rights

WHAT: The first comprehensive published resource for New York pedestrians and bicyclists who are hit by motorists, and for the public wishing to prepare for the possibility of a crash.

WHEN: Web site launches Wed., Feb. 28, 2012.

WHERE: <http://NycCarAccident.net>

WHO: Created by Carol A. Wood; Web design by Anna Buzzelli; legal consultation by Adam D. White, Esq., and Robin Ridless, Esq., Attorney at Law.

New York, NY (Feb. 28, 2012): A new public-interest Web site launched today will inform pedestrians and bicyclists of their options after being involved in a car crash. The site, NycCarAccident.net, aggregates and explains guidelines from public and private sources that are difficult to locate and comprehend.

“Too many crash victims don’t know they are entitled to free medical care,” said Carol A. Wood, the site’s creator. “New York’s No-Fault and Motor Vehicle Accident Indemnification Corporation (MVAIC) insurance programs are among the state’s best-kept secrets. These programs need to be better publicized and explained to accomplish their purposes—protecting people from the financial and physical harm that can arise from automobile crashes.”

In New York State, No-Fault insurance is the portion of each driver’s required insurance that pays for bodily injury claims, regardless of fault, up to \$25,000 per person and \$50,000 per incident. The MVAIC, an industry-supported corporation, pays the medical claims of victims of hit-and-run and uninsured motorists. But crucially, victims must take immediate steps to ensure their eligibility, as the site explains.

A car crash occurs approximately every seven minutes in New York City’s five boroughs, and nearly 12,000 pedestrians and 3,500 bicyclists are injured from these crashes each year. Many more go unreported. In her research, Wood found that many people involved in crashes don’t realize that they were hurt at the scene—or simply don’t know what to do—and later face mounting medical problems and bills.

Victims, already suffering from physical injuries, must contend with police, insurers, and hospitals with little to no guidance about their rights. These harms can be mitigated through public education. NycCarAccident.net takes an important first step toward providing that education.

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“If these insurance programs were better known and utilized, the true costs of automobile use could be more accurately accounted for,” Wood asserted. “The information on our Web site will support the City’s work to reduce traffic casualties through street redesign, increased NYPD traffic enforcement, and improved investigation policies.”

Serving as the go-to resource for crash victims, NycCarAccident.net will provide information on: responding at the scene of the crash; how to report the crash to the police or state authorities; understanding insurance available for pedestrians and bicyclists hit by drivers; getting legal assistance; filing a claim with insurance carriers; and learning something about how to dispute claims with insurers. Resources include a bibliography; a list of agencies related to car crashes; and a downloadable wallet card with guidance for victims and witnesses at the scene of the crash. (<http://nyccaraccident.net/wp-content/assets/wallet-card.pdf>)

Built with the help of volunteer labor as a public-interest project, NycCarAccident.net grew out of research and interviews that Wood conducted in satisfaction for the requirements for a Master’s degree in business journalism at Baruch College—The City University of New York. Wood’s investigative report, “Adding Insult to Injury: Automobile Accident Claims in New York City” is also published on the site.

About the contributors: Carol A. Wood, a freelance writer and editor, was a financial journalist with Standard & Poor’s Equity Information Services for 11 years. She was co-creator, with Elizabeth Stuelke, of the 2007 exhibition and catalogue, “[Why I Ride: The Art of Bicycling in New York.](#)” [Anna Buzzelli](#) is a Pittsburgh-area graphic designer with extensive freelance and agency experience for commercial clients around the region. Buzzelli is known for her creative print design projects, and more recently for digital designs that impart both clarity and charm.

Legal consultation was provided by Adam D. White, a personal-injury attorney who specializes in protecting the rights of bicyclists and other accident victims, and by Robin Ridless, a solo practitioner in New York City specializing in contract, Internet, intellectual property, and other commercial and corporate law. Michael J. Smith, co-founder of the pedestrian and cyclist advocacy group Right of Way and political blogger, suggested factual and style corrections. Andrea Savoy, a printing professional, contributed proofreading. Joseph Ferris and Lindsey Ganson of Transportation Alternatives, New York’s advocate for biking, walking, and mass transit, advised on media communications.

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