



Monthly Report -- November 2013 -- Vol. 1, No. 11

Can Condolences For Crash Victims Turn Tragedy Into Safety?

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Dear Care for Crash Victims Community Members:

Clarence Ditlow, head of the Center for Auto Safety (founded by Ralph Nader and Consumers Union), has called my attention to an important article on a tragic fatal crash that I had missed. It was buried at the bottom of p. B4 of the Wednesday, Oct. 9, 2013 Washington Post.

"Jacqueline Badger Mars, who has been ranked as one of the world's richest people, was driving the SUV that was involved in a fatal two-vehicle crash in Loudoun County on Friday, the county sheriff's office confirmed.

Mars, with a net worth estimated in the billions, is an owner of Mars Inc., the McLean-based candy, food and beverage firm, which has had annual sales of more than \$30 billion. She is a resident of The Plains and has received awards for philanthropy. She will be 74 on Thursday.

The crash occurred about 2:30 p.m. on Route 50 near Briar Patch Lane in the Aldie area, the sheriff's office said. Mars was driving a 2004 Porsche SUV that was traveling west when, "for unknown reasons," it crossed the center line and struck an eastbound 2013 Chrysler minivan, the sheriff's office said.

A back-seat passenger in the minivan, Irene C. Ellisor, 86, of Huntsville Tex., died at the scene. She was not wearing a seat belt. Others in the minivan were injured. They were in Virginia for a family wedding."

See excellent Washington Post article that reports this tragic fatal crash and provides comments by readers at:

http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/mars-company-co-owner-was-driver-in-fatal-loudoun-county-accident/2013/10/08/1f5b12c2-3073-11e3-9ccc-2252bdb14df5_story.html

Our readers know that we are all crash victims -- especially those of us

directly involved in work to prevent fatal crashes. So how can we express our condolences to all crash victims – famous, rich and poor? Perhaps the sincerest form of condolences that we can offer to all crash victims is our knowledge, creativity, and persistent dedication to the prevention of future tragedies -- including the treatment and rehabilitation of the seriously injured.

Clarence has worked to save crash victims for more than 40 years. He was frustrated, as we are, that safety innovations were not being recognized and applied in new vehicles as rapidly as possible. He noted that in this crash had the driver of the 2004 Porsche SUV been driving a new vehicle equipped with the latest crash avoidance technologies such as lane departure warning and automatic braking this multi-family tragedy might have been prevented or mitigated. See more about crash avoidance technologies at:

<http://www.iihs.org/iihs/news/desktopnews/iihs-issues-first-crash-avoidance-ratings-under-new-test-program-7-midsize-vehicles-earn-top-marks-for-front-crash-prevention>

<http://www.iihs.org/iihs/news/desktopnews/crash-avoidance-features-reduce-crashes-insurance-claims-study-shows-autonomous-braking-and-adaptive-headlights-yield-biggest-benefits>

Clarence said that in his years of safety advocacy many famous people have suffered crash tragedies. See one list at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_people_who_died_in_road_accidents

Clarence suggested that we should think creatively about how to prevent such tragedies. We all owe Clarence thanks for all his life saving work and also because this is a worthy challenge for our community.

Condolences of, by, and for Crash Victims -- Give Crash Victims a Voice

I have long wondered why as a society we don't do more to help crash victims express their grief better than the temporary roadside flowers, crosses, and signs that briefly mark the tragic spot. See attached exemplar.

At www.careforcrashvictims.com I have created a dashboard with active data on crash fatalities and injuries. Click on U.S.A. Crash Death Clock. This year we exceeded 3,600,000 crash deaths. The current rate of crash fatalities is about 100 per day.

On the dashboard there also are Crash Death – O – Meters in the form of gauges with needles indicating the daily average total number crash

deaths. One meter is for deaths occurring at the scene = 56/day. A second meter is for the number occurring after transport to some (not necessarily a trauma center) medical facility = 44/day. And a third meter indicates the average daily dollar losses valued by DOT = \$1 Billion/day. The meters are not active but adjusted annually as new data becomes available.

What if crash victims had a voice using modern technologies? What if we could crowd source ideas for progress in greater safety? Imagine a place in cyberspace where crash victims could tell their stories. A place where they can express their views on how to better prevent, treat, and rehabilitate crash injuries. For example, people paste photos and stories now using Facebook.

Imagine NHTSA posting FARS data on each fatal crash and then allowing families to add their human stories (if they wish to on a voluntary basis without government violating privacy). NHTSA can post an electronic pin on a map showing the location of each of the more than 400,000 fatal crashes since 2002. Visualize clicking on the Crash Fatality Pin so that the case file can be easily accessed and FARS queried. See <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/departments/nrd-30/ncsa/STSI/USA%20WEB%20REPORT.HTM>

Imagine the power of family members to add to the NHTSA record on cases. Family members could add videos (such as news videos) that amplify the nature and scope of the crash record.

Imagine the human dimensions of stories: Photos of people killed or seriously injured, videos, descriptions of their lives, and consequences on families and friends. Stories can help people understand. Stories teach lessons. Stories enable people to connect and gain emotional and intellectual support from each other. Such stories could educate the public.

One message that needs wider and deeper understanding is that people are human and make mistakes (alcohol, distraction, failure to buckle up, speed in excess of conditions). The important societal question is how do we build a transportation system that when people make mistakes, they need not pay for it with their lives. Automatic crash protection is based on the principle of forgiveness of human error. To err is human. To forgive is to show human understanding that should lead to civic foresight and actions for the prevention and mitigation of tragedies.

Stories can be the building blocks of both physical and political scientific advances. It is now possible with 21st Century technologies to build a Safer America with vehicles that are **Safe at Any Speed**. If Volvo (now owned by the Chinese) can do it...

"Last year Volvo announced that by 2020, no one will be killed or seriously injured in one of the automaker's new vehicles." See <http://www.thedetroitbureau.com/2013/07/volvo-seeks-to-regain-safety-leadership-throne/>

Think of all the crash avoidance and crash mitigation technologies that are now available – but too often only as expensive options.

As Citizens We Can Do A Lot of Good

Nader, in a recent book, wrote *"Of all the ideas presented in The Seventeen Solutions, none is more important more ignored, and less expensive than the need to shift power back to the people, to give every American the tools of democracy and access to justice."*

As citizens we have the duty and the powers to 1) set safety goals, 2) specify steps to achieve the goals, and 3) measure progress meeting the goals.

To help us all get to a Safer America we can create citizen Memorials -- not just marble Monument Memorials on the mall? Electronic Monument Memorials can have a permanence and impact that outlasts marble, metal and stone. When built by citizens, story - by - story, such memorials can grow into an ever more effective electronic March for Freedom from Harm -- until we achieve Zero deaths and serious injuries in many crashes.

Washington is talking about the U.S. Debt Ceiling. What we need is a U.S. Crash Death Ceiling.

Imagine the U.S.A. Crash Death Clock that currently reads 3,611,931 set with a Ceiling of 4,000,000 U.S. Crash Deaths by the year 2024. A 10% reduction in crash fatalities in each of the next 10 years would get us there.

A worthy and achievable goal for the U.S. is to aim to turn the tragedies of all crash victims into Safety for All. We can do it. Yes, we can.

