

# Plane makes emergency landing on Hwy. 24

BY RICK SOUTAR

The Rockwood Miller

Saturday morning saw a rare sight on Hwy. 24, just outside of Guelph.

Arthur Mitchell of Guelph, was forced to land his Zenith Zodiac ultra-light airplane on Hwy. 24, near Guelph Lake, in the midst of busy morning traffic after it ran out of gas.

He safely landed the plane, refueled, and took off again after Guelph OPP cordoned off a make-shift runway along the highway. He was airborne less than an hour after landing.

"There are certain procedures that we use," said Mitchell, "and though I've never had an engine fail in over 4,000 hours of flying, I think about it all the time."

Mitchell, who built the plane himself from a Zenith Zodiac kit, says he had secured a loose fuel gauge for safety reasons, but he had accidentally tilted the gauge on a slight angle. The sight gauge read that he had a third of a tank left, but in fact, the engine was bone dry.

"I was a little frustrated because I was indicating fuel and every-

thing was indicating mechanically that I was out of fuel. (The frustration) was trying to figure what on earth was wrong with this plane!"

Mitchell, 51, has been flying for 19 years so it was second nature for him to coolly follow training procedures when the engine first started to sputter: checking gauges, stalling and trying to re-start the engine, sending out a Mayday signal and finally looking for a safe place to land. The whole incident took place in about a minute and a half.

"Quite frankly, I was just very

busy; I wasn't all that nervous.

Mitchell says there were a lot of cars on the road but they knew he was in trouble and gave him room to land. Most of them pulled over to the side and he was able to glide in for a landing.

"They saw that I wasn't just playing around," he said.

The OPP were notified of the emergency and were on the scene within minutes, along with firefighters and other rescue vehicles.

"The OPP were absolutely terrific," Mitchell said. "Of course they're not handling this sort of

thing every day so they had to wait for clearance. Transport Canada gave them that."

Mitchell has taken a little bit of ribbing from his fellow pilots, but they are very understanding. Any one of them could easily find himself in the same situation.

Mitchell will continue to fly his ultra-light, and plans to give training lessons this summer to other light plane enthusiasts. He still thinks it is a great plane and is very safe, but laughingly agreed that people should be careful when messing with the fuel gauges.

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## Rubber Ducky race is next Saturday

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK

The Rockwood Miller

The Eramosa River will resemble a bath tub on Saturday, June 11 as 300 rubber ducks are launched in the fourth annual Rockwood Rubber Ducky Race.

Race organizer Jan Osbourne predicts the fund-raiser and Pioneer Days event will be a 'swimming' success and explained how it works.

"You buy a ticket with a number on it and each duck has a necklace with a corresponding number," Osbourne explained in an interview on Thursday.

"We throw the ducks in the water and wait for the first one to cross the finish line."

Osbourne laughingly remembers the first duck race.

"That first year the wind was stronger than the current so the duckies paddled backwards. Thank heavens we had thrown in a timing duck to see how long it would take the ducks to cross the finish line and where able to change the race route," Harris said.

First prize for the fastest duck is a wall mirror, made by Dan Benham of Daniel's Dovetails in Rockwood. Second prize is a duck motif crib blanket, handmade by Rockwood's Joanne Blomberg. Third prize is a duck dinner donated by La Vieille Auberge and the fourth prize is a chocolate duck.

Tickets are \$3 dollars and can be purchased at Sandra's Variety, Saunder's Bakery, Buddie's Restaurant, Rockwood Hardware and Rockwood Gas Bar.

Proceeds from the race are earmarked for the renovation of the Rockwood Town Hall.

"All of the work that has been done to the hall has been paid for my fund-raisers like this duck race," Osbourne said.

"There hasn't been one penny of government money used for the renovations."

The ducks will be launched at 10 am Saturday at Riverside Park.



**MANY THANKS!** Colin Langridge, president of Rockwood minor baseball, received a \$1,000 cheque Thursday from Kelly Dunlop, left, vice-president of the Rockwood-Eramosa Firefighters, and Tony Van Dam, right, co-chair of fund-raising. The money, which will go toward sponsorship of a ball team was raised from Nevada ticket sales. (Doug Harrison photo)

## Miller celebrates Pioneer Day

Watch for our Pioneer Day special section in next Wednesday's edition of *The Rockwood Miller-Acton Tamer*.

The special section will contain a schedule of events planned for the exciting weekend, June 10 to June 12, including a report on the village's 145th reunion.

If you wish to contribute any ideas call us at 853-5100.

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