

9-8-1981

## **Carroll Wheeler Emergency Landing Letter**

Rogene Goodge

*This copy letter I wrote to send  
to Keplingers and Miss C.*

*Sept. 8, 1981*

*Dear de Wayne,*

Well I am long overdue with this letter. Things have been just a little bit on the very busy side. Of course I am sure that you have heard that we moved into the new building. That was some operation. My what a time we had about it all. We wanted to get in before school began. They were having an awful time getting the fire doors. We had called about them and they had been sent according to the company who was making them. They did not come so we called again and they said they would ship them such and such a day and still they did not come. Then we called again and a man told them that they were on the dock and he would see that they were put on a truck and we should get them on Monday August 24. Well that day came and went and still no doors. Finally we called up again and found out that they had not even made them let alone ship them. What a mess. Mr. Lewis told them they had better get to making them because he was coming up to get them. He got there on Wednesday a.m. and they fed him this story about the doors were not finished because there had been a fire in the plant. They finally admitted that it was a Mickey Mouse deal and he told them he was waiting for them to finish the doors. At about noon on Wednesday he got them. (He had driven up to South Bend, Indiana.) He got home with them about 11:00 Wednesday evening. First thing on Thursday a.m. they were handing doors which was no small deal. By noon they had things done pretty well. They had called the man out to do the inspection. About 2:30 they called and told me that they were going to move and needed all hands on deck. I went over and got all the dishes in the kitchen washed and everyone was working hard. By 5:00 they had all but what they were using to serve supper moved to the new kitchen. By 6:00 it was all moved. All this time the nurses and some of the patient's families were carrying their things over. About 6:30 they started to bring the patients. It was something else. We had an adult and a couple of kids on each wheel chair. They had 5 that had to be brought over on the rolling stretcher. They had about 4 or 5 people with them. Of course a nurse was there too. Poor little things. Some were very confused and others did not know the difference of course. They are beginning to get used to things over there now. They are using the dining room for dinner for those who wish to come out and eat. Right now we have a little man who is up and about and I guess he is quite an attraction in the dining room. Ha! Was something when they put them in the whirlpool for the first time. Some of them really love it and others don't.

Now for some really wild news. Sunday evening about 11:05 I got a phone call. It was from Jon Larrabee at S.M.C. I asked him what in the world he was calling me at that hour of the night for. He said he wanted to find out what was going on up here. I asked what he meant by that. Then he told me that Glen Van had been talking to his folks on the phone and that Kenny Straw had come in and asked Bruce Van and Albert Heidinger to come and help him. Carroll Wheeler had crashed 28T on Middlebrook Pike. He wanted me to find out what was going on. I called Sharon and she said that Carroll had called Kenny and told him that he had run out of gas and the only really good place he could find to land was a lighted stretch of Middlebrook Pike. He dodged power lines and trees and made it in. I guess there was one car going east and he blinked his lights at the car when he was about 5 feet off the ground. He said that car really got out of there. Carroll left the plane in the edge of the woods as far off the road as he and a passing motorist could get it and ran to a phone to call Kenny. He said when he got back there were blue lights as far as he could see. We drove over to see what in the world was going on and by that time a man who has a little land there had opened his gate and they had pulled the plane in there and gotten it off the road far enough so that everyone was not stopping. Albert and Carroll spent the night with the plane. They had a tent and sleeping bags. The police wanted someone to stay with it.



I was driven crazy yesterday by all the T.V. stations and newspapers etc. They even called from Collegedale and wanted to tape a phone interview with Carroll for their news. Kevin Shaw was the one that called and I could not convince him that he could not talk with Carroll from the pasture where he was with the plane. Kenny and Albert went over to get some fuel at Smokey Mountain Aero about 10:00. I guess the guys over there laughed at them since they had heard about the plane. It hit the news immediately of course. Sunday night all the fire engines, police, rescue squad and all such were there and of course they all came back again Monday a.m. It was so foggy that they could not fly out until about noon. I had called Marty and told him where they were and it was not far from his house and since he was off Labor Day he had gone over and spent the morning with the guys. All the T.V. reporters were there about 10:00. They were not going to miss a good story. I was glad when they all went there instead of called me every five minutes to ask when they were going to fly out. Somehow Carroll had his license stolen a few weeks ago and did not have them with him so the police would not let him fly it out of course. Kenny was the one. We watched it on the news twice last evening 6:00 and 11:00. Boy did they had good pictures of Carroll from Sunday evening. He was scared Sunday evening of course and he told them that he gave God the credit for his bringing it in safely. He told them that he learned to fly while a student at Little Creek Academy but that his instructor had not taught them to do what he had just done--admitting that he knew better I guess. Monday a.m. they got pictures of the police talking to Kenny and they took him in their car up to figure out which was the best way for him to get out. Showed Kenny, Carroll, Albert and Marty pulling the plane out onto the road for take off. They had the road blocked for about 15 minutes while it all took place. You could see Kenny get in and call "Prop clear" and start the engine. He was grinning like crazy. Nothing like becoming a movie star over night. Showed him taking off and pulling up out of the wires and trees. Needless to say it was a lot of excitement. We are just thankful that both the plane and Carroll are o.k. By the way Carroll stopped at Campbell County to try and get fuel. For 1½ hours he tried to get someone to come and let him have some. Then he figured that he would be close but that he probably had enough to come in on. He was about 4 miles short. I think he will really think twice before he tried flying without enough gas from now on. I am not sure that I can manage much more of this wild stuff. Makes me nervous!

You can see that we don't have many dull moments around here. Sometimes I think that things will never settle down.

Miss C has had a pace maker put in. The Doctors told her that the reason she had been having black outs was that her heart was actually stopping. She was much encouraged as the doctor had told her that she could drive again. She has to get her license this week.

I just thought that you might be interested in some of the wild happenings around here.

Hope that all is well with you. You may have heard that Jeanine got a job teaching in New York State. I have not heard how it is going yet. I hope o.k. She needed to get a job and get out on her own.

I wrote to Brenda and Royce but I don't know what is going on. They do not answer and Jeanine and I think they are really fed up with things. He did not get hired and it is just a mess. I hope that sometime they will break down and write. I will try and get a card off to Brenda for her birthday and maybe I will hear sometime. If you should hear anything do let me know.

I will close this and mail it. I need to get a couple of other letters out. I must say that I am behind on things.

*Be good -  
Sincerely,  
Rogene*