

# Ingenuity Reigns in Raft Race

1975

## Deep River

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DEEP RIVER — It looked as though a chapter from Huckleberry Finn sprang to life Saturday as area residents banded together for a six-mile river raft race starting at the town landing here and proceeding to Notts Island in Essex.

Although only four rafts competed in the race, conducted for the benefit of the American Cancer Society, the scene was rich with country flavor and enthusiasm. An audience of about 30 onlookers watched men and women in straw hats, tattered bluejean cutoffs and sneakers join forces to propel imaginatively constructed, comical-looking barges down the Connecticut River.

One raft, a 15-foot one skippered by Charlie Hosmer, was powered by a plastic

makeshift sail and four ten-speed bikes in tandem which ingeniously propelled two paddlewheels strapped to the front.

### 'Just Lashed Together'

The raft's biggest virtue was that it "cost no money to make," said the skipper. He said that the eight-man crew had "just lashed pieces of scrap wood together" during a two-week construction period.

Stan Baxter skippered a smaller raft, a short fat one primarily by paddle power. "For two nights everything has been ignored" while Baxter and his crew threw together his raft, Mrs. Baxter said. Wives especially were ignored, she said.

"He got up at 6:30 this morning, made himself breakfast, and even fed the animals for the first time," she said, shaking her head in disbelief.

Gary Pipkin and Richard Hepp took less time to build their craft which was put together in one day. When asked whether they would win the race, they said, "no way." Still, piped Pipkin optimistically, "We're in great shape. All we need now is a motor."