

Loss Didn't Dampen Their Enthusiasm

By LINDA DEAN

"We knew all was lost from the beginning, once we saw the other rafts, but we had a terrific time anyway," said Tom Carta of Durham. He was evaluating his team's efforts at the Third Annual Great Connecticut River Raft Race.

With Tom as captain, eight other men formed the team of their sailing vessel, called simply "Raft." The race took place last Saturday despite the inclement weather and problems with the Coast Guard, who claimed that the chairman of the event, Frank Burton, had failed to apply for a regatta permit.

Carta and his crew spent about a month building their

raft. "Ours was a true raft," Carta explained. The craft was a wooden containment frame, holding 384 Cumberland Farms gallon milk containers. The frame was covered with a flat deck. For propulsion, the crew attached a bicycle at the rear of the raft, altered to drive a paddlewheel. A sail at the front and canoe paddles provided additional power.

"The other rafts at the race were more like a catamaran, with elaborate sails and paddlewheels. One of the rafts at the event had a treadmill which revolved when four people stood on top of it and walked to power their raft down the river."

The idea for using the milk containers "just kind of came to me," Carta said. He remarked that he'd often seen milk containers floating very efficiently in lakes and rivers, and thought he'd give it a shot.

The vessel had great floatation, Carta said, but the surface area was too great and provided "too much drag." The raft was eight feet by twelve feet.

"The raft looked huge in the backyard, but it looked like a cork drifting in the ocean when we took our place in the armada," Carta joked.

But, he was "tickled to see the rest of the rafts. We looked at them in awe, and learned a lot for next year's race."

The winner, Morningstar II that managed the six and a half mile course in an hour and six minutes, "was a very sophisticated rig," according to Captain Carta. "A lot of thought went into it...Without a doubt, it was the best engineered of all. When the starting gun sounded, the Morningstar was 400 yards ahead of us. That group left us in the dust."

"But, we'll be more prepared for next year's race," Carta said. The race begins at the Deep River Town Landing, with rafts rowing, paddling, and sailing the distance to Knott Island at Essex. The crew members pay \$5 apiece for the chance to participate in the event, with a \$1 raft registration fee for the better than fifty rafts that took part. Proceeds from the race are divided equally between the Newington Children's Hospital and the Valley Shore Big Brothers.

Carta, who is a "tinkerer," said that the Raft Race was his first experience on the water. "I'm a landlubber by nature, but I love the outdoors, and this was a good chance to get into the outdoors and take some engineering with you."

The "Raft" completed three-quarters of the race, but accepted a tow for the last part of the competition, realizing their efforts were futile, since the winners had been announced.

The crew, which promises to be back even bigger and better next year, was: Captain Tom Carta, Bob Carta, Tony Carangelo, Joe Otfinoski, Bud Fallon, John Barone, Bill Guida, Duane Seemes, and Lou Aresco.

Well, back to the proverbial drawing board...

Old Saybrook

Lions Club

Car Wash

Set Sunday

OLD SAYBROOK — The Lions Club will hold a car wash on Sunday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. by Hardee's Restaurant on the Boston Post Road. The \$1 donation for each car will help in raising funds for the construction of the gazebo band stand to be placed on Main Street near the Old Saybrook Town Hall.

Jack Watson, Lions Club president, reports the club's hot dog and refreshment stand at the recent outdoor art show was a success and proceeds will also go to the club's community activities.

There will be a directors' meeting after the president's picnic at the home of Dick Trott on Thursday, Aug. 18, at 7:30 p.m.

Aug. 7 draws to a close this year's Lions' youth exchange program when Connecticut

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