
EDITORIAL



The Great Raft Race

Five years ago, few people would have guessed that the Connecticut River Raft Race would draw more than passing notice.

After all, how many people want to spend time and money building a vessel, if that word applies, which might float long enough to get a group of people down from Deep River to Essex. What possible prestige could these haphazard yachtsmen get from racing each other - with the tide, no less. It didn't make sense.

But as Mark Twain said, and we paraphrase, "There's something nice about life on a raft. It's free and easy and there's no one to tell you what to do or when to do it. You just take it nice and easy." That explanation apparently still holds as the growth of the raft race here proves.

It is a good life - even if for a few hours. People make goofy-looking crafts and then have to decide whether to try to come in first or shoot for the just as prestigious "last-to-finish" honor. The rafts are not the only goofy things out on that river.

Unlike other forms of transportation these days, in raft racing, getting there is all the fun - well, almost all.

The post-race fun caused some problems last year in Essex. Some were celebrating coming in first or second, but most crews were happy just to be 53rd or 79th. Celebrating can get out of hand when everyone wins.

We do not minimize the concerns of some Essex officials, residents and business people. Their voices have been heard, and race organizers have promised to do better this year in controlling the post-event impact on Essex.

We think they will be successful. After all, they know a good thing when they float on it.