



5th Annual Conn. River Raft Race

THE GREAT RACE....Some 90 rafts turned out for the Fifth Annual Connecticut River Raft Race on Saturday. The homemade rafts ranged from highly sophisticated double-pontoon vessels to slapdash contraptions consisting of anything that would float. More photos on pages 12A and 13A.

Photo by Anne Biernacki

Raft Racers Make Record Time 1979

By Gary L. Robbins & Virginia Wright

From a distance, it appeared as if Monty Python's Flying Circus had collaborated with Hogan's Heroes in one of the most slap happy offensives in the history of nautical warfare.

Indeed, many of the rafts (some called them ships) that were sloshing about near the Deep River Town Landing Saturday seemed as though they'd been assembled by Col. Hogan's band of misfits. People who, as the saying goes, usually aren't playing with a full deck.

One raft, for example, was comprised almost entirely of plastic milk bottles. Another had been constructed of oil drums stolen earlier in the week from an Old Saybrook manufacturer. And a third, as far as we could discern, was made of warped lumber and the sort of foam padding that is usually obtained only by ripping apart the upholstery of abandoned automobiles.

Although they may not have looked the part, the 90 or so rafts which assembled in Deep River Saturday morning were custom made racing vessels, built especially for the Fifth Annual Connecticut River Raft Race. To describe the event as serious competition would be a mistake, however, for, as one participant explained, it is "less a race than a damned good excuse for a party."

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