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## EDITORIAL

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# Good Rafting

Congratulations are due the Connecticut River Raft Race Organization for actually improving on last year's good showing.

The Sixth Annual Connecticut River Raft Race was launched Saturday and, with the exception of a few minor incidents, it went off without a hitch. The smooth sailing is no doubt due to efforts by the race organization to keep things under control by way of some new regulations. Among them was a decision not to sell alcoholic beverages on Nott's Island, a move which apparently encouraged rafters to leave the area at a reasonable time and kept the island cleaner.

Compliments on how the race was handled even come openly this year from Essex officials, some of whom tried to stop the event last year. Their concerns were understandable: having seen the race grow tremendously in popularity (beginning with only a handful of rafts in 1974 and jumping to 100, with thousands of spectators, in more recent years), the town one summer found itself unable to handle the crowd, the size of which apparently had not been anticipated by the race organizers either. Even last year when all went well, Essex officials gave post-race approval cautiously, saying that the rain did a lot to dampen the spirited crowd.

It appears clear, however, that the growth of the race has leveled off, and that the organization now has a good handle on how many people the event will attract and what need to be done to maintain some order without losing the fun.

Topping off this year's good rafting is the money that was made. About \$15,000 was grossed and after expenses, all of it will go to local charities. That is nearly twice the amount collected last year.

So all in all, it was an exceptional year for the raft race. Here's to many more of the same.