

## *Raft Race Plans Advance; New Date Set*

Plans are proceeding for the Connecticut River Raft Race between Middletown and Haddam, whose date has been shifted to August 1.

The race committee's chairman, Kenneth Fischburg, said yesterday that planning and applications for the race were "99.9 percent complete."

The only remaining hurdles are to get written authorization from the state department of environmental protection for use of the Haddam Meadows state park and permission from the city to start the race in the river off Harborpark, Fischburg said.

He said he had been asked to check back with city officials when the other approvals for the race had been granted.

The race date was shifted by one week to enable members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary, who plan a weekend outing on the original July 25 race date, to attend the raft race as well, he said.

The race application has received positive response from DEP officials, Fischburg said, but approval awaits a written authorization by a foundation which shares control over the Haddam Meadows state park.

The race organizers have also received okays from Cromwell First Selectman Paul Harrington and from Haddam First Selectman Larry Conti, he said.

The planned race course, which organizers hope to shift upriver after running from Deep River to Essex during the past six years, runs from Harborpark to Haddam Meadows, and the rafts will be put in the water at the Cromwell Outboard Motor Club's dock in Cromwell.

The rafts would be put in the river three days before the race date, and will be kept at the Outboard Motor Club's dock until Saturday, August 1.

Members of the Outboard Motor Club have also offered to act as starters for the race, Fischburg said.

Organizers have also notified state police of their plans, and are arranging for availability of emergency medical technicians along the race course, and security patrols of the race course and the state park, he said.

Post-race festivities are planned to run from the race's end until dusk at the state park and organizers are scheduling a band to play there, Fischburg said.

The race committee charges a \$30 entry fee per boat, and \$5 per crew-member.

In spite of expenses, organizers cleared about \$2,000 from last year's race, which was donated to several children's charities, Fischburg said.

He said that he had begun sending out applications from his Norwich home.

The race will still need approval of the Mayor and the city harbormaster, Charles Snow, Recreation Department Director Bernie O'Rourke said.