





L to R front row: Len Berg (R), Fred Opperman (5), Bruce Williams (3), Peter Leuzinger (2); 2nd Row: Julius Albaugh (2), John Jackman (5), Tom Nestor (2), Mike Hessineius (R), Joel Purpur (4), Steve Tedhams (R), Al Fierst (3), Steve Stewart (3), Jim? (R), Dave Blomquist (2), Dave Fisher (2). R = Rookies and #'s = number of trips.

"Whitewater Revisited"

by Al Fierst, Oak Park C.C.

An intrepid group of fifteen recently survived another edition of "The Gauley". As has been the custom of past years, a group of Chicagoland and Midwest Golf Course superintendents journeyed to West Virginia to experience some of the finest and most intense Class V whitewater to be found. The river is named the "Gauley" and is regarded as among the top rivers in the world for whitewater. It's Class V designation refers to the difficulty and danger factor of the whitewater — a class I river is placid and a class VI river is too dangerous for any human passage. It is intense.

Day one on the river presents the most imposing sight many will likely encounter, the sight of over 3300 cubic feet of water per second being released at the base of the Summersville Dam. We launch our rafts directly in front of this water torrent and begin the 28 mile trip on the river. Directed by our experienced river guides, the river rafters (having been briefed on river technique and safety) begin to negotiate a series of dramatic and widely variant rapids. Names such as Lost Paddle, Iron Ring, Sweets Falls, Pure Screaming Hell, and Insignificant tell of past experiences and river "subtleties".

After an enjoyable and intense day of rafting, camp is made at the raft company campground along the river. Food (gourmet) is prepared, participants relax (ask Pete "Hiccups" Leuzinger about this), or try to relax (ask Lenny "No Sleep" Berg) and recount the days adventures.

Day two brings more of the same type adventure with wild whitewater and very intense river action. Al "Iron Ring" Fierst and Dave "Howdy Doody" Blomquist can testify to the rocket-like action of the rapids when it comes to launching a person from the raft. We start with an early voluntary swim after throwing ourselves from a 30' ledge called "Jump Rock" and then it's on to a second day of great river action. It's all over too soon and back on the road to our hotel and preparations to hit the early road back to Chicago.

Plans are being formulated for next years trip. Ask any of the veteran river runners about the trip or contact Joel Purpur and Al Fierst about reservations.

You don't know what you're missing!!!