

# 1991 Gauley White Water Rafting Trip

by Pete Leuzinger  
St. Charles C.C.



*Standing, left to right — John Lebedevs, Dave Ward (R), Marty (River Guide), Steve Crow, Trent Bradford (R), Renny Jacobson, Byron Wilkins (R), Mike Hessenius, John Gurke, Dave Blomquist, Tom Murphy, Al Fierst, Bruce Williams, Don Cross, Len Berg, Ken Kinka, Wally Fuchs (R), and Pete Leuzinger. Kneeling, left to right — Rick Uthe (R), Don Spier, Fred Opperman, Joel Purpur, Steve Stewart, Julius Albaugh and River Guide Al. (R=Rookie)*

For several years now a group of golf course superintendents and friends have organized a trip to the Gauley River in West Virginia for the purpose of white water rafting. This year is no exception as 23 area nuts, wet heads, or white water freaks met this past September 22 and 23 for a two day trip down the famous Gauley River Gorge. The trip was not without it's memorable moments. The Chamber of Commerce couldn't have ordered better weather the first day. The second day was cloudy and the only ones sweating it out were those who stayed glued to their seats. Those who were hooked by the white water action enjoyed all the surprises on the river. There was plenty of time for small talk in between rapids, especially for nervous rookies on the trip. It takes a while to learn how to handle one's self on the river. Everything from getting your wet suit on right side out to keeping in cadence with the other seven paddlers eventually gets worked out. No one can deny the rush of excitement we all got while flying through the air, hear the roar of the rapids, while the water rushes by you and/or over your head.

That's why the camp sight is such a welcome place to land. Cold refreshments, good food, and warm dry clothing were waiting for us. Once everyone was settled in the camp sight, the hardest thing left to do was not to have fun. Unless of course, you stood next to the camp fire too long and couldn't remember where your tent was pitched.

Every year has its memorable moments. I know we will have our stories to tell. The excitement on the Gauley is next to none east of the Mississippi. Al Fierst, Bruce Williams, Joel Purpur, Fred Opperman, John Lebedevs, Don Spier, Walter Fuchs, Julius Albaugh, Steve Stewart, John Gurke, Dave Blomquist,

Peter F. Leuzinger, Ken Kinka, Steve Crow, Renny Jacobson, Trent Bradford, Dave Ward, Len Berg, Mike Hessenius, Don Cross, Rick Uthe, Tom Murphy, and Brian Wilkins all had a blast.

"In quest of too much fun" is the motto of Class VI, our rafting company. Our guides: Robin, Marty, and Al were happy to see us again. They had a great time too. We were all made to feel very welcome. For my money it is a great way to wind up a golf season.

Anyone interested in the trip can contact Joel Purpur, our group leader. The trip down there is about 550 miles from the center of Chicago. It is 27 miles and we do camp overnight on the banks of the Gauley. The guides are very professional. It's safety first, then fun and excitement. Did I mention that the food is great too? Come join us!

Addendum to Peter's report—by Fred "Pucker Butt" Opperman

As the senior member of the rafting trips, I feel it somewhat falls into my lap to also bring up the various "nick names" that have been tagged onto the guys that have made this adventure to the white waters of the Gauley River. Of course some of these names are only going to make sense to the participants. Joel "Shooter" Purpur, Dave "Missile Scientist" Blomquist, Wally "No Small Talk" Fuchs, Peter "ing" Leuzinger, Steve "Crocodile Dundee" Stewart, Lenny "Do the Lenny" Berg, Steve "Slinky" Crow, Bruce "BWB" Williams, Julius "Sleep Under the Stars" Albaugh, Don "Wave Eater" Cross, John "Wild Pants" Gurke, Dave "Gortex" Ward, and Al "Lead Foot" Fierst. I'd also like to mention the participants in the "Sitting Golden Shower Contest" and they were Joel Purpur, John Gurke, Dave Blomquist and the river guide Marty, who won it. Details of this contest really can't be discussed in this newsletter, but one of the requirements of this contest is to drink a lot of beer. Pete Leuzinger not only shot the rapids on the Gauley River, but also shot thru one of the New River — but without a raft. Pete was taking pictures of a rapid on the New River and decided to step a little closer for a better picture, the next thing, he was flying thru the air and rocks and water. He fell about 10 feet off the slippery rocks thru the falls and landed on the bottom in a puddle. Only thing hurt was his ego and some bruises on his butt.

## "Autumn Glory"

The Leaves will tell the story,  
Another Year's gone by.  
As they flaunt their Glory,  
Beneath Fall's delightful sky.  
Dancing and tumbling in Fall's happy breeze,  
Gathering in piles, almost to the knees.  
While We mulch, burn and hope they blow away,  
Squirrel's line Their winter nest,  
Finding time to romp and play.

**Kenneth R. Zanzig**