

## Canoeists get tips for race

Novice races will be held April 19. Professionals will race April 20.

04/07/2003

By ALEX PESHKOV  
Staff writer

HUNTINGTON - Hannah E. Long of Huntington has never raced a canoe down a river.

Long, 13, doesn't have her own canoe yet, but, probably, she will.

She is going to participate in the 50th Westfield River Wildwater Races, which is sponsored by The Republican. The novice races will be held April 19, and professionals will race April 20.

Long paddled up the river for the first time yesterday after receiving safety and equipment tips during the second of three clinics prior to the 50th anniversary race by the Westfield River Canoe Club.

The tours of the eight-mile course, run since 1983 by race organizers and instructors Jeffrey DeFeo and Jurgen Igel, attracted about 30 people.

"There is no registration for clinics, but typically they attract up to four dozen people. We just try to help people have a good time and make adventure safe," Igel said, adding that DeFeo "is doing, actually, 90 percent of the job."

DeFeo said, "The weather is much better today for the clinic than last Sunday except the wind that is pretty strong."

Instructors spent about half an hour talking to the crowd near the Route 112 bridge in the center of Huntington. They talked about equipment, how to steer a canoe, how to avoid tipping over and what to do if it does tip.

Jerry R. Long, Hannah's father, who came to support his daughter, said he was just a little nervous.

"Her paddling partner is one of the most experienced paddlers here, and she is a strong girl, so she is doing well," Long said as he watched Hannah spend her first minutes in the canoe.

Shawn C. McIntire, 27, of Ware came to broaden his experience. This year's races will be his third.

"This is fun," he said. "The main problem of paddling is keeping the vessel moving in a straight line, and, of course, staying afloat."

"It's easier than doing a flat water," McIntire said.

Another clinic will be held next Sunday at 1 p.m. near the Route 112 bridge in the center of Huntington. Alex Peshkov can be reached at [apeshkov@repub.com](mailto:apeshkov@repub.com)