

RAID FINLAND 2008

by Ed McGuire

*Raid: small open sailboat cruising-racing,
point-to-point, sail when you can,
row when you can't!*

Mary and Ed McGuire had signed on to crew Norm Wolfe's brand new 24 foot Jim Michalak designed **Raider**. To give you the flavor of a Raid, let me jump right to the end of the first day's sail. Close reach, wind about 10 meters per second (I'll explain later) when the lug sail boom made a vicious crack. Understand that this boom, along with the rest of **Raider** had been built by two Estonian carpenters, not boat builders. I am sure they build fine houses, but this was their first time building something intended to float - and the plans, although metric, were in English, not Estonian.

We quickly doused the sail and shipped the oars! The laminated boom with joints that lined up perfectly was obviously not up to close reaching. The Captain and crew thought that sistering the boom with some battens and line might make it through the week. Soon after we arrived at the day's destination, a community center in Tallbacka, the other boat captains looked it over and decided a spruce tree would do the trick as a new boom. A hand saw and two wood block planes materialized. Half an hour later **Raider** had a neatly cut and planed boom lashed to the foot of the lug sail. A little sticky with all the bark stripped off, but strong and flexible and good for many years to come.

Our modified Raid had started the middle of July in the small coastal city of Loviisa about 40 miles east of Helsinki. Modified because this year was just a cruise among prior participants, not a full blown race. We spent the first evening launching our four boats (one more joined us the next day) while watching the annual "small ships race" made up of several traditionally built wooden sailboats all under 20 feet.

Raider and Seppo's Haven 12 1/2 (keel/centerboard version of a Herreshof 12 1/2) spent

that night before the Raid in the flooded foundation of an ancient boathouse right by our campground. I want to mention here that Seppo, the only Finn in our little fleet, was sailing with his two children. His boat was the only one with a keel and weathered the mostly strong breezes handily. In fact Seppo took on the role of safety boat, constantly circling back to make sure we were all OK. Thanks Seppo.

Next morning we had a breeze, a little rain, and a pleasant sail to the mouth of the Loviisa Gulf where we stopped for lunch at the island fortress of Svartholm built by Catherine the Great. The fish chowder was wonderful.

From the Fort to Tallbacka, we were sailing buoyed channels across mostly open water sprinkled with boulders, tiny islands, and fishing nets. At this point it bears talking about the Finnish buoy system. "Red-right-returning" is reversed. In a channel that actually points inland from the Baltic, red is on the left and green on the right. But in those numerous places where no channel is being marked, only a rock or shoal, the buoys (there are 4 of them) tell you which way to leave them. I may have this backwards, but Seppo tried to teach us the way to remember it. Picture pencil-thin, 2 meter tall, black and white horizontally stripped markers. If it is white over black over white, which sort of looks like a western woman with a waist, then pass it on the west side. If it is black over white over black, sort of like an eastern woman thick in the waist, then pass it to the east. If it is just black over white, then pass it on the north side, and vice versa if it is white over black, pass on the south side. Got that? On the chart (which we didn't get until the second day) the buoys show as very, very thin marks. Make no mistake, there are plenty of them everywhere, along with huge, lighted ranges, and lighthouses used by the merchant ships which ply these constricted waters as well.

We rolled on down with a blustery southwester, 9 to 10 m/sec, and waves of about a meter or more. Quick passage until we headed inshore which is when the boom made the tell tale cracking sound.

Next day we all headed back out with **Raider** in the lead with her sticky but strong boom. Some

crew juggling had been negotiated and Ed went in with Michael Hanyi in his beautiful, authentic, hand built, Herreshof "Riviera", a 17 foot sloop. Although last out of Tallbacca, Mike and Ed overtook everyone and flew between the offshore islands in the 11 to 13 m/s winds. **Raider** still had no charts and headed off to wait for someone to help with directions. Eventually all 4 boats sailed into the cove at the very plush resort of Swethomen.

We had to row the last 75 meters, through a narrow passage in the sea grass, into an ideal SWS anchorage.

We enjoyed a few beers while watching Seppo's videos of the day's sailing, a late supper and an all-hands meeting about weather and routes. The original plan included a run offshore (half way to Estonia) to a resort island, but the weather was forecast to be as bad or worse than today. We elected to drop the far island, take a lay day where we were, and enjoy the sauna, and bicycling around the island.

So, the 4th day looked pretty good. Peter had finally caught up to us with his boat (he had missed the ferry from Sweden). Peter also brought charts for **Raider**. But the wind was projected to be moderate compared to the previous two days. By noon we were underway out of the cove next to the sauna and headed almost due south. We headed for the delightful island of Kounessarii, only about 6 miles out in the Gulf of Finland. **Raider** had a small problem leaving the cove---she rowed out just fine, but setting the lug sail with 2 reefs in it got messy. The sail and halyard and boom and gaff flew off to leeward into the drink. Eventually we were underway, moving briskly at about 5 or 6 knots even with two reefs tied in. A 24 x 6 foot boat can really go when it has the wind.

By the way, am I confusing you with all these different units? Thing is, a minute of latitude is a nautical mile the world over, so the chart gave me distances in nautical miles. Norm's GPS was set to read speed in miles per hour. Seppo's anemometer read wind speed in meters per second. Peter helped clear things up, kind of like currency conversions: 1 m/sec is about 2 knots. So the day we had 11 to 13 m/s, that's a blustery 22 to 26 knots. **Raider**, by the

way, had 3 sets of reef points and we used all of them at various times.

Raider caught up to the fleet about 2 miles out where everyone had stopped for a snack and a walk on a barren rocky island that had a sandy beach on the lee side. Perfect. Wind is getting up, so **Raider** took off first for Kounessarii. Boiled right along on a beam reach with a reef making 6 to 7 knots. Clearly **Raider**'s best point of sail.

Unbeknownst to us, Peter and his crew, Wojtek from Warsaw, had managed to dump their boat about 100 yards off the beach. Seems neither was watching the wind and both were stowing things when a puff caught them broadside.

Raider sailed down the whole length of Kaunessarii to its only harbor on the southern tip. There is regular ferry service to the island from Kotka which brings loads of tourists to this still active fishing village. It has one restaurant, a tiny whimsical museum, a full marina, and our B&B (except it was only a B), with a wood-fired sauna, outhouse (2-holer), and the sun staying up until 2230. Had dinner together, sang songs, and wished we could sail a lot longer.

The last day we had a very lazy breakfast in the garden, collected all of Peter and Wojtek's gear which had dried pretty well, and set off for Kotka. Two boats headed directly for the main ship channel into Kotka; three of us, **Raider**, Seppo and Peter, headed for a 5 star campground a little west of Kotka. After so many days of big waves and reefed sails, this was almost dull sailing, but very relaxing. Norm tended the sheet and made notes of all the changes he would make over the winter to **Raider**. Ed navigated, and Mary was on the helm where she was almost all week. She has a clear eye and a steady hand even when it was blowing 13 m/sec.

Most of us did join up one last time when we visited Mike at his work place in Kotka, The Kotka Wooden Boat center --a huge hangar-like building with glass ends. Tom Sopwith's 12 meter, a rum runner, and a 6 meter were on the floor next to each other in various stages of repair. (Google will provide some links) Michael---you do nice work.

Next day **Raider** and Norm headed for Estonia on the Helsinki to Tallinn ferry. Misha returned to Moscow, leaving his boat in Finland for next year. Wojtek flew home to Warsaw. Peter (did I mention is an Aussie who teaches veterinary radiology at the U of Uppsalla and is married to a Swede) headed for Stockholm. Seppo and kids headed for his home about 120 km NE of Helsinki. Mary and Ed got a very much appreciated ride to Helsinki and boarded the overnight ferry to Stockholm to continue their adventures in Sweden and the Norwegian fjords before flying home to Vermont from Oslo.



Wind, Direction, and Longitude

by Ken Murphy

In the last SWS issue Paul Breeding suggested the following book:

Defining the Wind, The Beaufort Scale, and How a 19th-Century Admiral turned science into poetry, by Scott Huler.

So I went right to our library and got the book out. It is all that Paul wrote it was, and I enjoyed the author's investigative approach.

At the moment I have another library book that caught my eye, concerning another aspect of sailing – the importance of knowing direction, that starts out discussing some frightening events when sailors lose direction:

Compass, A story of Exploration and Innovation, by Alan Gurney.

In the first chapter Gurney tells a chilling story of four ships of the Royal Navy fleet that were pounded to pieces on a rocky coast because of poor dead reckoning on October 23, 1707 with the loss of over 2000 men. Though I'm only part way through the book it appears to be another interesting read.

SHALLOW WATER SAILOR

Published for the SWS membership.

ISSN 1935 - 200X

Editor : Kenneth G Murphy
20931 Lochaven Court
Gaithersburg, MD 20882
301-330-4983
kgmurphy@comcast.net
www.shallowwatersailor.us

The purpose of the SWS is to share members' sailing experiences and know-how. It is through this sharing that sailors are made and friendships gained. With such skills and relationships, sailing becomes more than a past-time, it becomes a life-long pursuit, a source of joy and rich memories.

© 2008 Shallow Water Sailor. No part of this publication may be reproduced without permission from the Editor or contributing author.

Knowing where you are and how to get back to an unfamiliar ramp, especially for the adventurous SWSer, should always be a priority as the history of sailing suggests. Another must read is:

Longitude: The True Story of a Lone Genius Who Solved the Greatest Scientific Problem of His Time, by Dava Sobel.

To bring us into modern times I suggest the following:

Fundamentals of Kayak Navigation by David Burch

The navigation approach in this book focuses on the practical navigation for the single hander.

