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# The Shallow Water Sailor

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*Number 176     A simple boat, a bit of marsh, a redwing's song, and a friend or two     September 2012*

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*Here is an extract of the September 2012 issue of the Shallow Water Sailor*

## Finland RAID 2012

by Ed McGuire

*This race was attended by Norm Wolfe,  
with crew members Ed & Mary McGuire*

Captain Norm to Crew: "Lower the leeboards. Set the sail. Take in the mooring lines. Stow the wine and beer in the forward locker. Let's get her underway!"

Crew: "Aye aye Sir!"

And so began Raid 2012 in Dalsbruk on the southwest coast of Finland in the Archipelago National Park. Captain Norm reported the start of his part of Raid Finland in the July issue of SWS. Crew Ed and Mary McGuire now begin their report.

It was a truly gorgeous New England day (10 July) flying out of Logan Airport on Icelandic Air's 777 which is named for one of Iceland's many (130 to be more exact) volcanoes. I love the 777's flight tracker computer in the seat back which showed flight conditions and distance along the track which took us over Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Greenland.

We landed in Keflavik just shy of midnight with the sun and the moon both still up; the sun was up for another hour before barely dipping under the NNW horizon for two hours.

Retired fishing captain and grandfather turned cab driver Bjarni Jonsson took us sightseeing among the lava fields and steam vents that riddle much of the country. About 0100 we stopped to stand on a bridge over a dry ravine which is the landward extension of the mid-Atlantic Ridge – One foot on the North American Plate, the other on the European Plate which are separating at about 4 cm per year!

Airport reopened at 0330, quick nap, breakfast then at 0750, on to Helsinki. At this point I should mention we had a 48 pound rolling duffel containing tent, pads, sleeping bags, pillows, binocs, extra clothes, and gifts from Vermont. We also each carried a many-zippered backpack with enough clothes, books,

toiletries, and snacks to get us through the first day or two. Captain Norm assured us there would be, and there was, a safety/luggage power boat accompanying the 8 sailboats.

1430 local we cruised through entry and boarded the bus for downtown. Our immediate destination was Tallinn, Estonia which meant walking from the downtown ferry ticket office to the docks, mostly down hill thank you.

Tiiu and Norm met us in Tallinn and we crashed at their wonderful apartment after nearly 36 hours with little sleep. A high point of this whole adventure was a walking tour of the Old Town of Tallinn with Tiiu whose parents fled Estonia near the end of WWII when the Soviets were pushing the Germans out of the USSR. About a fourth of all the Baltic peoples fled to the West.

Our last full day in Tallinn ended with a wonderful tour and dinner at the Seaplane Hangar museum hosted by Captain Norm's good friends Andres and Merle Krigel.

Tiiu calls Andres the 'Godfather' of Raider since he got it built. Norm and Tiiu are godparents of Andres' kids.

Captain Norm, Mary and Ed are now joined up. Early on the 13th, Andres, with 'Raider' (she still has no better name because the Captain feels she is unfinished and can't be named) in tow collects us and we head for the morning ferry back across the Baltic Sea to Helsinki.

1530 and Raider is in the water tucked into the cattails of East Harbor in Dalsbruk for the night. She is rigged and ready to row or sail. Couple of beers and dinner and her crew is down for the count. One by one all boats arrive at the start point. Each has a story to tell.

The Russians, father Misha from Moscow and son Greg from Arizona, launch their brand new Ian-Kotic designed 22' sloop 'White Fang' which is christened with champagne as she slips into the water.

Wojtek and his two Museum colleagues, Marta and Conrad, from Warsaw have towed their cat ketch from Poland, across Lithuania, Latvia, and into Estonia where we met them for the ferry to Finland.

Yves and his grandson have towed their little sloop from Switzerland. Another very skilled sailing couple, Bertrand and Anne, have towed their sloop from Brittany, France.

The Seller-Hausmans drive from Germany via a ferry to Sweden and rent a 20' catboat at the marina in Dalsbruk. They

take on a local Swede-Finn named Fredrik as crew. Fredrik, as it happens, is a distiller-farmer. At the duty free shop on the way home we bought a bottle of his very excellent Liquor Cerasorum, "an alcohol extract of ecologically produced cherries."

Seppo's two young friends bring one of Seppo's boats from central Finland to sail with us. And Peter Lord, the Raid organizer, and his crew Marian from Rumania, sail Peter's cat ketch which is homeported north of Stockholm, Sweden. Mike, the other organizer and originator of Raid Finland, moves around from boat to boat as the week progresses.

Including our Estonian 'Raider', we are 8 boats from 8 countries. At 26' long, Raider is by far the biggest. The language we speak most of the time is English but a great deal of French and Russian sprinkled occasionally with Finn and Swedish are heard.

Day 1. Bastille Day! 14 July. Sun and scattered clouds with a strong breeze: Raider, with a double-reef, heads south. Destination Hogsbra.

Unlike in 2008, we have really good charts of the area we are sailing. Mike and Peter worked out a great track line. Six of the seven days in the Archipelago we spent the night at a new port town. Half of us will tent camp. The other half will have a room in a cottage, a small ship, or a Viking Chieftans lodge. We will make new friends, visit a new sauna, eat new foods, see lots of islands and narrow waterways, and enjoy wonderful sailing.

Close reach into rain and a stiff breeze and Raider sails right onto the swimming beach of a marina-resort at Hogsbra. The Baltic Trader INGA arrives right after us. All our meals are served in the saloon of INGA and many of us enjoy the tiny sauna-girls first then the boys.

Day 2. Vano lay to the southwest. Off we went on a flying reach with a double reef. GPS reported our max speed of 6.2 knots across some open water flying by the strangely marked buoys and lights.

Vano – a dock, bistro, ferry landing, couple of houses, 15 permanent residents, a community center (inside of which 5 tents were pitched), and 20 to 30 visiting boats per day in the summer. Finland has a short summer and the Helsinkians make the most of it getting out to these remote islands.

Fredrik, Mary and I took a walk after supper at about 2300 to a small Viking style church on the far end of the island.

In 2008 Mary was the only woman among the crews of the five boats. 2012 there were five women. To honor and celebrate the distaff crew members, Here in Vano Mary made a tin foil "foul-weather-tiara" which was bestowed on each woman during dinner each day.

Day 3. Rosala lays about south east of Vano. We prayed for a westerly on the 16th and got more than we asked for. We waited until lunch then took off--again double-reefed, out from behind an island, through a 10' gap, between submerged rocks, on a rollicking 7 mile run with seas building all the way. Squall lines chased us and the rain made more noise hitting the

water's surface than I can remember. Through a narrow channel, easy right to the SE, wind abated, rain dribbled out, and we had a nice down hill sail between wooded hilly islands into the ancient Viking town of Rosalla.

By the way the Baltic has only about a two inch tide and virtually no current except those generated by steady winds from one direction. What little tide we saw is caused by air pressure changes. So, as we often did, we pulled out boats up onto the sloping shore and tied off to a tree.

A short distance from the pull out is the Viking Museum, a re-creation of a typical Viking village that had been there in 1000AD. Fantastic supper in the Chieftins Hall by candlelight, wearing mantles, drinking mead and eating reindeer on square wooden plates with wood spoons.

Day 4. On the south coast of the island of Rosalla is the small cottage-campground of Bole where we spent the next night. However we made a lunch stop enroute about 10 miles out in the Baltic on a very small island called Traskon. To get there we had to snake our way from Rosalla between many many islands which got steadily smaller the further south we sailed. Winds on the broad Baltic were a whole lot stronger than inshore and it took some hard sailing to get all 8 boats and Villa's luggage power boat safely harbored on the leeward side of the island.

Grilled sausage and spectacular views of the rock-dotted Baltic made it a great place to stop. And our final arrival that evening at the Bole campground was delightful.

Did I mention the saunas? Every stop – a sauna usually large enough for 8 to 10 people. Girls always first. Oh – and it is not a real sauna unless it is wood fired, and right next to a lake or river to jump into. Bole had a nice one next to a sandy beach.

Day 5. The 18th, was our longest sail and the most intense. Started slow with one boat grounding in a narrow channel as we sailed out of Bole. White Fang draws the most water but she also has an outboard in a well. We worked our way between hundreds of islands, most of which have nothing on them but spruce trees.

At about noon we crossed what is called the 'super highway'---a heavily traveled and well marked channel that connects Helsinki with Tarku and Stockholm inshore. It is intended for small boats, not the 700 foot car ferries that connect Helsinki and Stockholm. As we sailed across we could see a dozen or more boats in each direction, some sailing, but most motoring.

Time to eat the delicious lunch which the owner back in Bole had made for us. Raider was lead boat at this point and off to port we could see a network of coves carved into a rocky, tree-covered island. Wonderful lunch stop. Some went swimming. As I look at the pictures of this quiet gathering, off to the north are clearly visible black fast-moving clouds.

Underway and around to the north side of the island, we had a 7 or 8 mile reach to our campground for the night which on the chart is clearly marked 534 but its actual name is Skata.

Up to this point in the Raid, Captain Norm's team of three had resisted efforts to, sort of, mix crews for part of a day. We three have sailed together for a long time. We knew each other well. We had our jobs: Norm on the sheet, rowed when needed, used the GPS, and tended things amidships. Ed was bowman, navigated and helped row. Mary was the helmsman. But this day we were prevailed on to mix it up. Marian, came into Raider, and Norm crewed for Peter.

As it turned out, Marian's long experience on the Danube and the Black Sea in fishing and recreation boats was helpful. We noticed those black clouds and took a reef. About 40 minutes later a black squall hit us with maybe 40 knots of wind and tearing rain. Marian let the sheet go just in time to keep us upright. We limped slowly into a island cove where we took another reef. Then we sailed without any problem to 534/Skarta.

However the big catboat, despite reefing, capsized in the squall. The crew righted her but she was swamped. With Ville's help, she was towed to a shoaling island, bailed out, and set on her way arriving only about an hour after the rest of us.

Thankfully no boats were damaged and no one hurt.

The campground, bistro, sauna, beach, everything at 534 were wonderful. The dinner talk, the wine, the food, and the passing of the foul-weather tiara were fitting ends to a very full day. All together we had sailed over 20 miles.

Day 6. Next to the last day! Clear. Sunny. This was planned to be a rest day. No breaking camp. Just a lunch sail. Off we went due north from 534. Most of the boats went east of the island just above 534. Raider went between two islands, through water less than 2 feet deep, bounced off a few rocks, up popped the leeboards and the rudder blade. Had to row when the wind died for a little while. Joined up and sailed into the good sized industrial town of Fobbey with a huge marina. Big restaurant where we pushed the tables together for all 20 of us to sit.

The wind that wafted us north now had to be used to tack back to 534. Along the way the catboat had tiller problems which Marian cured with some line and a screwdriver.

Last supper that evening back at 534. Most of us hit the rack early. It was a long sail back to Dalsbruk the next day and we wanted to start early, catch what was left of the predicted north wind for a reach to the west.

Day 7. Once again Raider was first out and we enjoyed a slow but restful sail all the way to the lunch stop at Yves summer cottage on an island just 6 miles east of Dalsbruk. The final sail was an uphill slug fest---tack, tack, tack working our way into a stiff westerly that blew right at us from the harbor.

So we all made it except for Seppo's boat which had to leave us after the lunch stop on Traskon. We all helped each other trailer the boats, bag the sails, and pack luggage.

Seppo, our good friend from the 2008 Raid, joined us for supper. Then, like a flock of birds, we went our separate ways. Raid 2013 is all ready being discussed for the islands between Hanko and Helsinki.

Seppo had invited Mary and Ed to visit with his family in their home in Karkku, for a few days before returning home. Those 3 days were a perfect delight getting to know his wife and son in their tiny Viking era village almost 120 miles north of Dalsbruk. Our visit with the Narinens will be the subject of a separate article for the SWS.

Our flight back to the US included a 19 hour layover in Iceland. First stop was the 'Blue Lagoon' hot mineral baths for a long soak. Mary planned ahead and got us a room in Reykjavik. Dinner and strolling the streets of the capitol at midnight was a treat, and a fitting end to our Raid Finland adventure for 2012.



*See color photos on next page*



Top left - Every day started with a meeting of the navigating minds and perusing the charts.

Middle left - *Raider* has 3 rowing spots. Here Ed is in position #1 and Norm in #2.

Bottom left - Ed in position #2 and Mary at the tiller in position #3

Top right - In fore ground, the catboat which was rented by the couple from Germany.