

ON WATCH

Wye Island Electric Boat Marathon



DENNIS WOLFE PHOTOS

Marathon veteran Paul Kydd finished third aboard Prologue, his 23' Elliot Bay fantail launch.

St. Michaels, Maryland Electric boat enthusiasts can be split into two groups—those who enjoy quiet peaceful cruising and those who enjoy the technology for its own sake. Both groups were represented October 5th at the seventh annual Wye Island Electric Boat Marathon, a 24 mile race open to any electric boat.



Dennis Wolfe's 25' Sparky

Tom Hesselink, owner of electric boat manufacturer Budsin Woodcraft, started the event in 2001. His monohull speed record of 6.44 mph set in 2002 with his elegant 22' wooden launch *Phantom* stood until 2007.

Set on the upper Chesapeake's scenic Eastern Shore, the 24-mile race

The 7th annual race saw more variety and boat speed than ever



was a nice boat ride this year under warm, sunny skies and light winds. It started at the Miles River Yacht Club in St. Michaels, ran 3 miles across Eastern Bay to the Wye River entrance, then wound through 18 miles of bucolic creeks and rivers surrounding Wye Island and returned to the start in the Miles River.

The technology enthusiasts predictably finished first and last. The overall winner was Charles Iliff in a 58' (17.7m) retired eight oar sculling boat. Powered by an Epic Whisper electric outboard and 11 six-volt golf cart batteries, Charlie's extreme machine beat the old coaching boat record by 40 min-

utes by averaging 9.93 mph over the 24 mile course.

Lou Madonia, an electrical engineer by profession, installed a drive system of his own design into a worn out 21' Sea Ray deep V hull to use as a test bed for the



PRISM POLISH

**APHRODITE'S CHOICE!!
WHY NOT YOUR'S??**

"We have tried them all and none compare to Prism Polish."

Captain Kirk Reynolds
M/V Aphrodite



Order online www.mppros.com / Toll Free 877 - 377 - 5112

ON WATCH

*Charles Iliff's
extreme machine*



motor and controller. He really did not expect to run the 24 miles in the heavy old fiberglass boat but accompanied the racers to the starting line and then reported a most enjoyable afternoon quietly cruising around St. Michaels harbor.

The quiet, peaceful cruising group included four boats ranging in size from a newly built 25' (7.6m) one-off wooden launch designed

in 1907 to a 14' (4.3m) production fiberglass catboat with a specially modified trolling motor and a kort nozzle. *Sparky*, a 25' cedar/composite launch built by Den-



Dennis Wolfe's 25' launch Sparky won first place in the Traditional design/Contemporary construction class.



nis Wolfe, finished second overall and set a new monohull record of 7.54 mph (see more about *Sparky* in the Sep/Oct 2007 issue of *Classic Yacht Magazine*).

Paul Kydd, the only Wye Island Marathon veteran, finished third at 6.26 mph in his 23' Elliot Bay fantail launch *Prologue*. Paul was the only competitor stalwart (crazy?) enough to run the course last year in cold 40 mph driving rain. Fourth place went to Todd Sims, East Coast Dealer for Lear Boats. His 20' Lear 204 *Sound of Silence* averaged 5.56 mph while carrying all the comforts of home including head, refrigerator and an electrically operated surray top. Joe Drew made a good showing in his 14' ElectraCat from Wilcoxon Marine, as far as the Wye River mouth but de-

ecided to turn back over concerns about battery capacity. This was a prototype for a new line of electric boats and had only been launched a few days earlier.

This loosely organized, just-for-fun race is held the day before the Traditional Small Craft Association's Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival held in St. Michaels, MD. Since the electric boats are often traditionally styled they can then be exhibited at the MASCF after the race. This year two of the electric boats were award winners. Joe Drew took 3rd place in the Contemporary class with his ElectraCat. Dennis Wolfe's 25' launch *Sparky* won first place in the Traditional design/Contemporary construction class.