

The C & D Canal DELAWARE and MARYLAND

The Gateway



REEDY POINT, DELAWARE CITY • BEAR, DE ON THE CANAL • CHESAPEAKE CITY TOWN POINT • WELCH POINT

YOU HAVE A CHOICE...take the long, arduous outside route around Cape Charles, Virginia to head up the Chesapeake Bay, or hop a ride on the fast-moving currents of the C&D to the headwaters of the bay.

The 19.1 official miles of the man-made C&D Canal were governed by locks from the early 1800s until the 1920s when the Army Corps of Engineers took over from the canal's private ownership. They improved upon the hand-dug ditch by 1927 and again in the 1940s, creating a 450-foot-wide, 35-foot deep and easy passage to and from industrial ports north and south.

The idea of a shortcut between Baltimore and ports east became a reality in 1802 when the private C&D Canal Company was formed, and over 2,000 men were hired to dig the ditch with picks and shovels. Giant waterwheels, powered by steam engines, filled the 100-foot long locks that gave early commercial shipping enough depth to proceed through the canal. Today, at the C&D Canal Museum, you can see the original wheel that fed the Chesapeake City locks, with all its operating paraphernalia— including one of the largest and oldest steam engines in captivity.

While the C&D is currently the busiest canal in the United States, and the third most-used canal in the world, it remains one of the best kept secrets to the general population. Tugs and barges, freighters, cargo ships, tankers, cruise ships, tall ships, and recreational boaters from around the globe all travel together to ride its 2- to 5-knot currents. Commercial shipping and cruise ships come from Baltimore to head for the ports of Wilmington and Philadelphia, or down the Delaware Bay to New York, the

Hudson, and the Northeast Atlantic coast. But ask a non-boater about the C & D, and they will mostly say, "Never heard of it."

Quaint harbor villages, inhabit each end of the canal: Delaware City, which fronts on the Delaware Bay, and Chesapeake City, which sits on both sides of the canal in Maryland.

Each was a major center of commerce and stopping place along the first version of the canal, and both suffered economically as the canal was improved and boats became bigger and faster. Today, these pocket-sized towns have come back to life welcoming visitors to artsy boutiques, galleries, antique shops, restaurants, Victorian B&Bs and a wealth of history to discover.

FYI: Seafaring tales tend to grow in magnitude when they are retold in boaters' watering holes. And jaw-clenching stories about transiting the C&D can get to be as good as any. If you plan ahead and approach the canal armed with navigational research and good seamanship skills, your trip should be a pleasure. Remember you're sharing the waters with humongous vessels that neither have the stopping power or maneuverability of your small craft. Anchoring is only allowed in Chesapeake City.

GO ONLINE to

<http://chartmaker.ncd.noaa.gov/nsd/coastpilot.html> and download

Chapter 7 which explains all the regulations that govern both you and major shipping in the canal.

CURRENT FACTS coming from the Delaware:

- The current flows WEST during the first half of an ebbing current in the Delaware River. The current flows EAST during the last half of the ebbing current in the Delaware.
- The current flows EAST in the first half of the flood and it flows WEST in the last half of the flood.
- Current changes time and direction at times of high and low tides at Chesapeake City: from low to high tide, the current flows EAST from Chesapeake City, and from high to low tide, the current flows WEST from Chesapeake City.

CURRENT VELOCITY:

2.1 knots on the ebb and 2.6 knots on the flood at Reedy Point.

2 knots in Chesapeake City. Storms, wind and moon can increase the currents up to 5 knots.

CHART 12277. Timing your departure just right, you can count on six hours of favorable current when leaving the Cape May Canal on route to the C&D. For sailboaters, that's not near enough, so sooner or later you'll have to buck the current. Ideally, you'll want to start off heading west in the C&D at the beginning of the first half of an ebbing current in the Delaware.

RED AND GREEN TRAFFIC LIGHTS are located at each end of the canal. One set on the north bank at REEDY POINT and another at OLD TOWN POINT WHARF on Town Point Neck at the Chesapeake Bay entrance. Don't make the mistake of thinking these lights are just for the big ships. Red means "stay out until traffic passes."

Getting ready to enter the canal, make sure your radio is on and monitoring both VHF 16 and 13. The canal is not straight so you need to know what's going on around the bend. Only transmit on VHF 13 if there is a serious problem.

Pay close attention at the helm when entering the canal and passing between the jetties on the Delaware Bay side. Currents can cause you to side-slip off course.

Commercial shipping always has the right of way. Big ships heading west are escorted by a Delaware River Pilot up to a point just before Chesapeake City where the transfer of pilot services is turned over to one of the Chesapeake pilots.

Concerning right of way between recreational vessels: "all vessels proceeding with the current shall have right of way over those proceeding against the current." Yelling "STARBOARD" doesn't work here.

The actual length of the canal itself is approximately 12 miles. It's maintained, and closely monitored and managed by a dispatcher at the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) canal headquarters in Chesapeake City. Traffic through the entire canal is visually monitored with rotating fiber-optic cameras on a bank of large screens in a glass enclosed room at ACOE headquarters.

NOTE: Buoys read "red right" from either entrance and reverse at Chesapeake City. Each bend in the canal is marked with a blinking amber light. Both banks of the canal have poles spaced 250 feet apart with every other pole having a mercury vapor luminary, at a height of 25 feet above mean high water, lighting the banks at night, as another aid to navigation for large shipping.

Thou shalt not Sail!

Transiting the canal under sail between Reedy Point and Welch Point is prohibited, however, motor sailing is allowed.

You'll deal with SIX BRIDGES in the canal and all but one are fixed bridges with clearances high enough for the cargo ships and car carriers. The bridge clearances listed on the chart are for the center of the canal and that's where the big ships will be. At mile 7.5, is a railroad bridge which is a vertical lift bridge with a vertical clearance of 45 feet MHW when down, and 138 feet MHW when up. This bridge is mostly open.

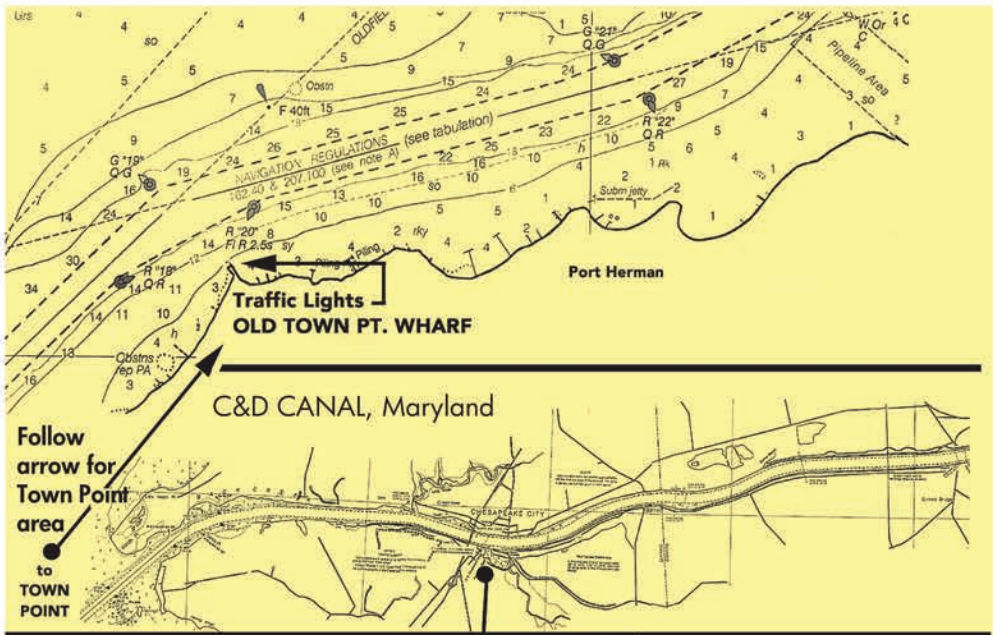
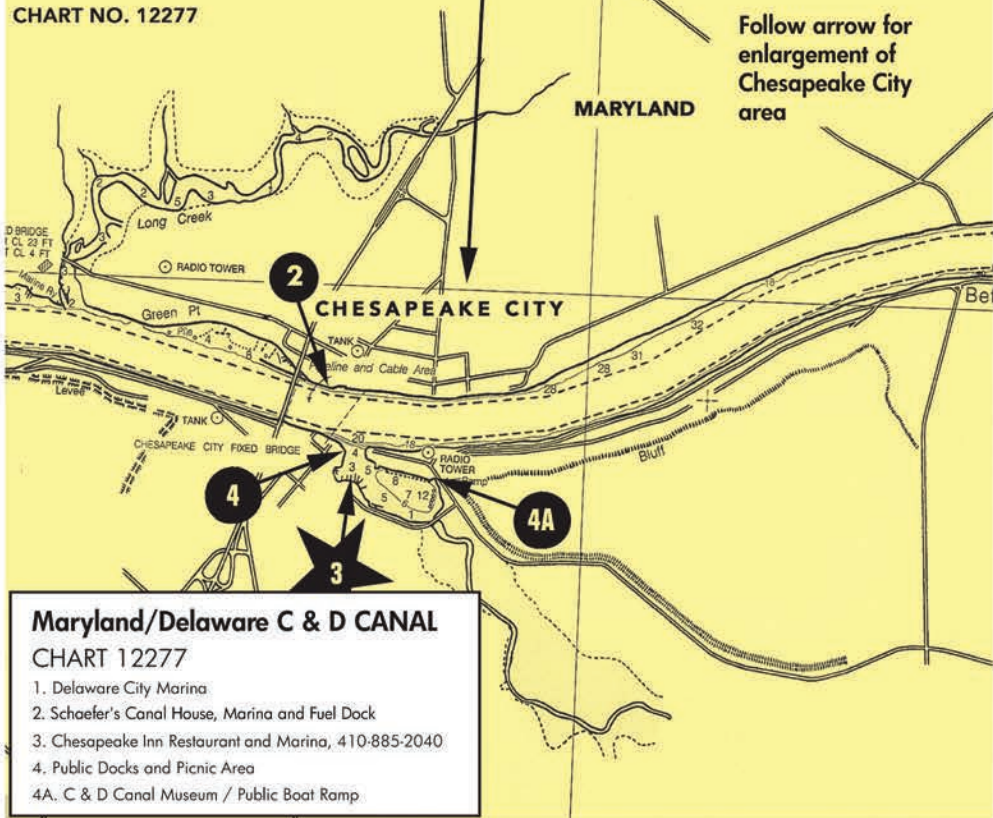


CHART NO. 12277



Maryland/Delaware C & D CANAL

CHART 12277

1. Delaware City Marina
2. Schaefer's Canal House, Marina and Fuel Dock
3. Chesapeake Inn Restaurant and Marina, 410-885-2040
4. Public Docks and Picnic Area
- 4A. C & D Canal Museum / Public Boat Ramp

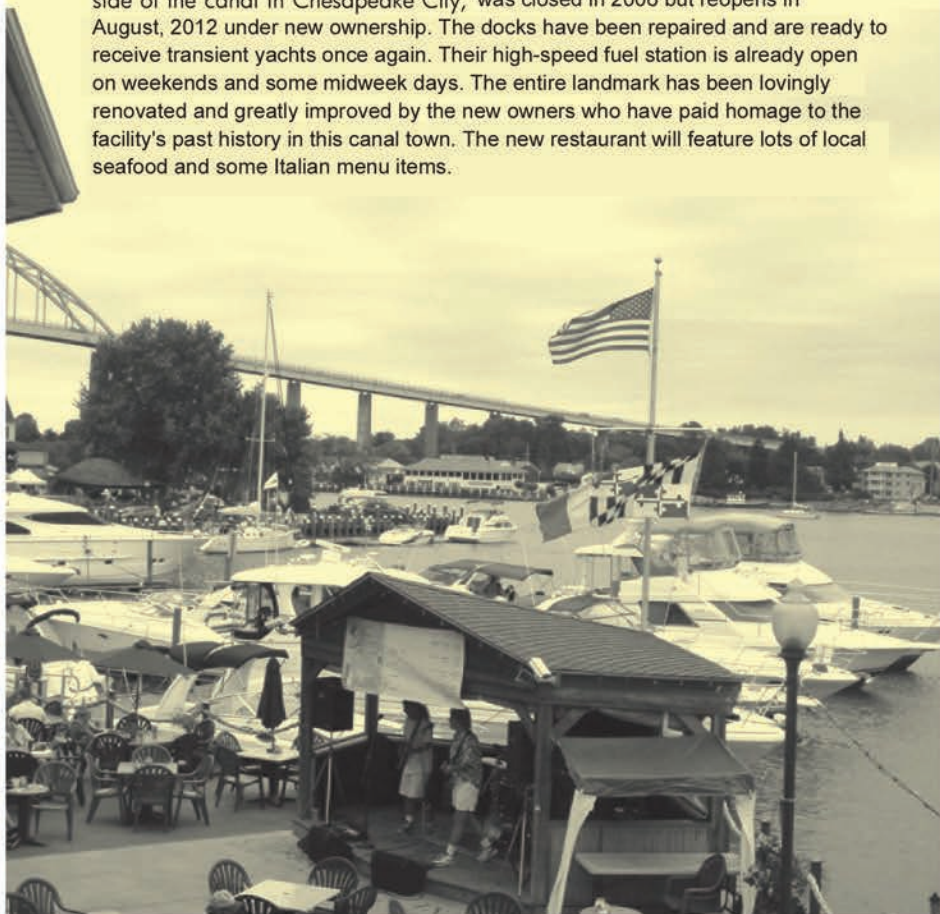
CANAL UPDATE

Deeper draft boats transiting the C&D Canal can now stop for a layover on the South Side of quaint Chesapeake City.

The basin on the South Side of the canal was dredged to depths of 10-feet or more recently.

In the past, boats with drafts deeper than 3 feet would find it hard not to run aground when entering the basin due to years of shoaling. That fact is now history and the larger ocean-going yachts, which could only dock on Chesapeake City's North Side, can easily make a smooth passage into the marina at the Chesapeake Inn, or to the anchorage, or to this mini-city's town dock and boardwalk area.

The long-time C&D landmark, Schaefer's Canal House, located on the north side of the canal in Chesapeake City, was closed in 2006 but reopens in August, 2012 under new ownership. The docks have been repaired and are ready to receive transient yachts once again. Their high-speed fuel station is already open on weekends and some midweek days. The entire landmark has been lovingly renovated and greatly improved by the new owners who have paid homage to the facility's past history in this canal town. The new restaurant will feature lots of local seafood and some Italian menu items.



NIGHTLY LIVE ENTERTAINMENT, DOCKSIDE BARS AND OUTDOOR DINING HAVE LONG MADE THE CHESAPEAKE INN A FAVORITE BOATERS' PARTY STOP. BISTRO-STYLE FOOD OUTSIDE. FINE DINING WITH TUXEDO-CLAD WAIT STAFF INSIDE.