

Chemputing a Mare usque ad Mare

Marvin D. Silbert, FCIC

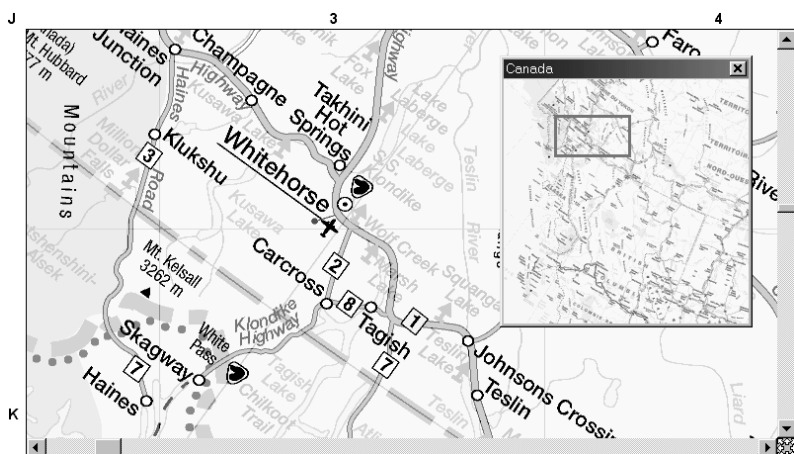
In the July/Aug 1999 issue, Chemputing looked at the MapArt CD-ROM maps book for Ontario. Those of you in the ROC (rest of Canada) can now enjoy a newly expanded package that brings you into the world of computer mapping. This package includes a collection of provincial and territorial maps plus city maps for all cities with populations greater than 25,000.

As with most windows software today, the program is essentially self-installing and the manual is an Adobe PDF file. I installed it on both my desktop which runs Windows ME and my notebook which runs Windows 95 and only ran into one minor problem. Some of the maps are Adobe PDFs and it failed to recognize that I had Adobe installed until I told it where to find it. Unfortunately, I had to tell it again each time I started and this is the third program that's done that. The problem arises from my having the full version of Acrobat installed while most people have only the free Acrobat Reader. The two files have

different names. I sent MapArt an e-mail and they responded very quickly with a patch to correct the problem. That's now probably part of the latest release.

Somehow, I thought it would be inappropriate to review this program from my home base in Toronto. My notebook computer likes to travel and recently accompanied me on a trip to Edmonton. It likes Edmonton as it gets a chance to log on at 53k rather than the slow 44.0 it has to be satisfied with in Toronto. With this MapArt CD-ROM loaded, I had full access to maps for anywhere in Canada. As a start, I have to find where I'm going in Edmonton. This city is a bit different than Toronto. The streets are numbered and it appears that you should be able to figure how to get anywhere just by counting. It's not that simple. My hotel is on a street called Bellamy Hill and when I go down the hill and head east on 97th Avenue, I suddenly find that it gains one and becomes 98th and then 101st by the time I'm out by the refineries. It took only a couple minutes and I had a set of detailed city maps and knew how to get to the plant where I would be working and the quickest route to the airport when it's time to get out of town.

It didn't take too long before I decided to look up some other locations across the country. Let's find that nice square we once found in Sorel, Portage and Main or that

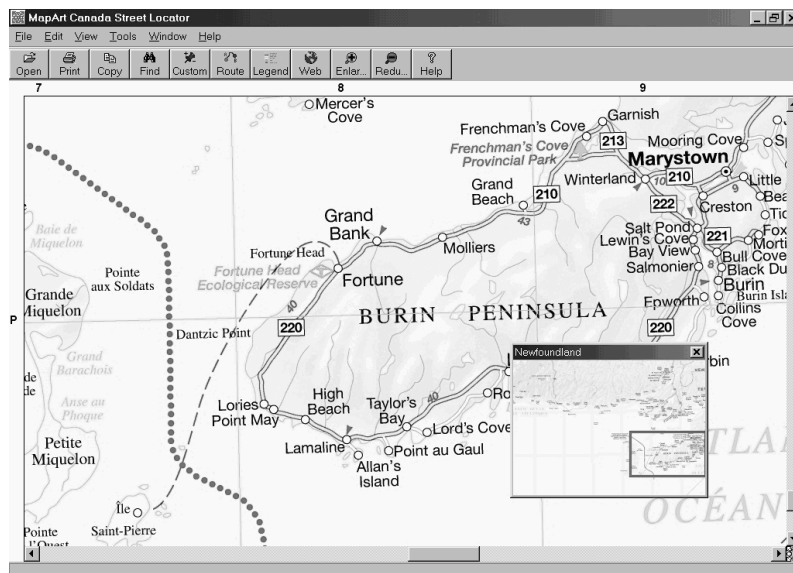


*'There are strange things done in the midnight sun
By the men who toil for gold;
The Arctic trails have their secret tales
That would make your blood run cold;
The Northern Lights have seen queer sights
But the queerest they ever did see
Was on the night on the marge of Lake Lebarge
I cremated Sam McGee.'*

It's actually Lake Leberge, but Robert Service found that little change made things rhyme better. Somehow the merge of Lake Leberge doesn't have it. The lake isn't in the data base, but Whitehorse is. The screen shows the resulting map with the locator and navigating rectangle. There are no large communities in the Yukon and this map comes from a map of Canada. Here's a useful snippet. Head south from Whitehorse and you will find the smallest desert in the world near Carcross.

*'Oh, catch-a-hold this one, catch-a-hold that one
Swing around this one, swing around she;
Dance around this one, dance around that one
Diddle-dum this one, diddle-dum dee.'*

This map shows the Burin Peninsula in Newfoundland and is taken from a map of Newfoundland with a little bit of France. I went into an art gallery in Grand Bank and had the feeling I had been in the building before. I had, it was one of the buildings from Expo 67 in Montréal. If you like seafood, the best seafood dinner I ever had was in Fortune.



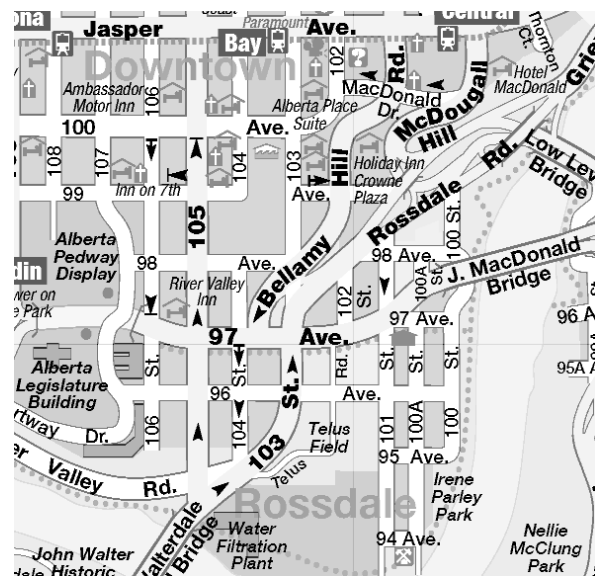
street I kept hearing about in TV adverts by the Newfoundland tourist people. Where is Jelly Bean Row? I couldn't find that one, but I was chatting with someone in the departure lounge in Toronto who said he lived near there it was part of the Battery in St. John's. I found the Battery okay, but no Jelly Beans. (I hope a good Newfoundlander reading this will sort out this guy from 'away'.) As well as the city maps, there is also a complete collection of provincial, territorial and regional maps. Every map I produced looked great when printed in colour. While the maps obtained on the web from sites such as MapQuest may be capable of locating some addresses and placing a red star at your destination, they don't have anywhere near the detail nor accuracy these maps have.

There are a couple of screens that let you search the data base for the street, region or map that you want. Once you've made your choice, the initial map comes up with a red square showing the region that includes the street or town you requested. A smaller 'locator' screen shows a wider area with the section being displayed on screen defined within a red rectangle. You can navigate to get to the region you want by dragging that red rectangle or by using the scroll bars. There are also buttons to expand or reduce the scale. While you can zero in on any region you want and adjust the display on the screen, the actual printout is highly likely to be somewhat different. The maps are printed on a grid and you can only get whole numbers of grid lines. Sometimes, you might be required to print out two pages to get the entire region you want. Others may include too much. There is a provision to select a region from the screen and then copy it to any graphics program for printing. While this works and gets you exactly the region you want, the sharpness of the printed image is limited by the screen resolution. I found the best way to get around these limitations was by printing to Adobe Acrobat and then cropping the map to include only what I want and then expand it to full page. This route requires that you have the full version of Adobe Acrobat installed. (See ACCN, Sept and Oct 1999.)

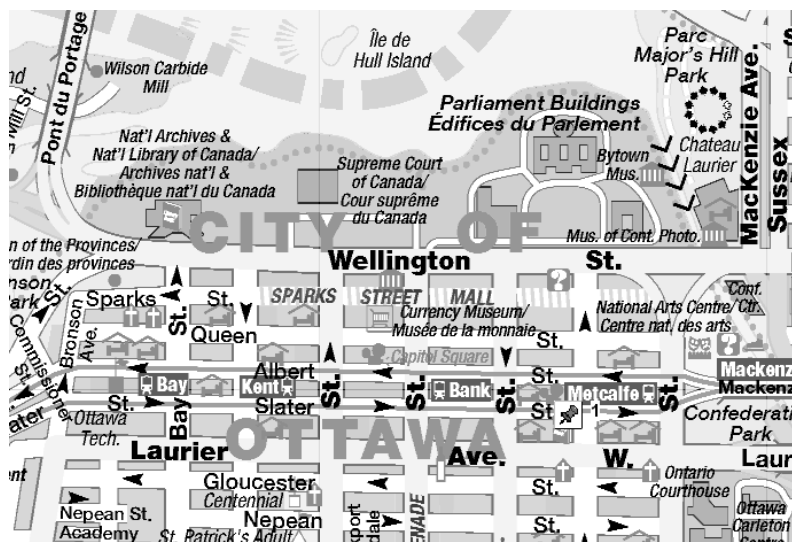
I find these maps particularly useful when I'm going anywhere I've never been before and now that means almost anywhere in Canada. All I have to do is print out a map or two and take them with me. I can add pins or other symbols to mark specific locations. These pins can be saved within a database which can include details about the location such as name, address or telephone number. You can then select to have this information appear on the printout. As a further aid to finding the place, the route can be drawn by clicking the mouse first at the starting point and then at other points along the way. As you do this, it also calculates the distance. When I get home and remember that I forgot to set the trip odometer, I can just reload the map and trace out the route. A minor improvement that would make this feature even better would be a provision to set the width and colour of the line to make it stand out more when you're trying to find your way. Someone in sales might find it useful to add a map to each client's file. I would expect that all of us would find it useful if we were going to a conference in another city, visiting friends across the country or going on

a holiday trip. Unlike the traditional road maps, these are on standard sized pages that fit in a file folder or binder and you don't go crazy trying to fold them up again after you use them. If you crumple them up, either toss them when you're finished or just print another copy.

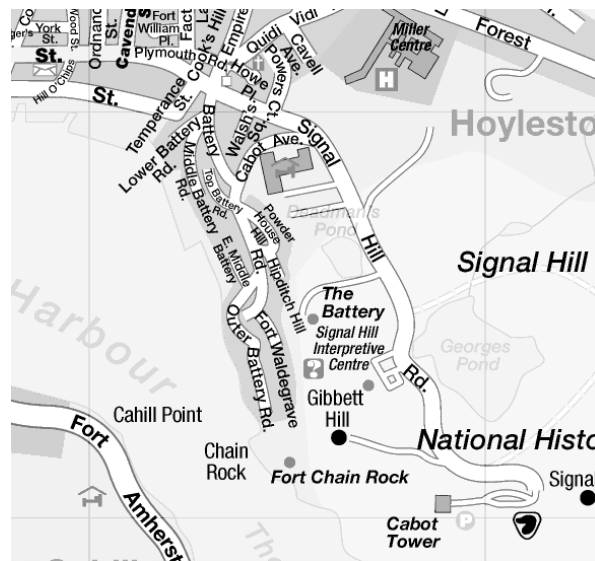
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The region near my hotel in Edmonton. There seem to be lots of streets with names instead of numbers.



Where or where does our money go? It goes to Ottawa. The Parliament Buildings are shown in detail and a pin shows the location of the CIC on Slater Street. Isn't it interesting that there is a money museum between the two!



This map of the Battery in St. John's looks great in colour to someone from away, but you really need a 3D display to show how these streets are carved into the side of Signal Hill and there is absolutely no way to give them the character they deserve.