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- **INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL MAPS AND BOOKS**
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AXIS OF EVIL MAPPING NEWSLETTER #10 OF 2016 – Late September/early October New Titles – Belgium (and Luxembourg), Pyrenees & Andorra, Slovakia (and Hungary) - see below for details

INTRODUCTION

Every year, around the beginning of October, the world of book and map publishing wends its way towards Germany for the annual Frankfurt Book Fair. This year is no exception and we look forward to meeting as many of our colleagues as possible at our stand 3.1 H 93. For those of you who have not yet made the pilgrimage to book heaven, do so at least once in your life. I have been attending FBF for each of the past 33 years without fail and it is a trek made willingly each October. FBF is where the publishing world meets; of course, the map side is a miniscule part of the travel information industry, but is the one time each year where one can meet face-to-face with the senior representatives of firms that one sees on a daily basis. We go to meet with paper manufacturers, printers, lines for which ITMB acts as a distributor and, most importantly, to show new titles to our existing customers around the world. We sincerely hope to meet as many as possible October 19th to 23rd at the Messe in Frankfurt.

TRAVELS AROUND BRITISH COLUMBIA

ITMB is well-known for its international range of travel maps. It is perhaps less well-known that we also publish an extensive range of regional maps for BC, separately from the provincial and city maps. This month, we drove about 2,000 kms, checking the accuracy of our data against satellite imagery while visiting several of our local retailers in various towns. For those of you who haven't yet had the opportunity to see Beautiful BC, as we call it, the province is about the size of Europe excluding Russia. We have only about four million people living in this vast area, most of whom are concentrated in the environs of Vancouver and Victoria. Take that away and you end up with somewhere around a million people living in an area where some 250,000,000 live in Europe. Needless to say, one tends to drive for long distances without seeing a single person, let alone a town, in British Columbia.

We drove north to Whistler, then on to Pemberton before heading northeast along a reasonably-newly-paved highway through the Joffre Peaks mountain region to Lillooet, where we couch surfed for two nights with a First Nations family. We had grandson Johnny in tow for the trip and he tried to convince the family's dog to play fetch, but the animal, trained to guard against bears and coyotes, wasn't having any of it. We did see white-tailed deer, however, within a kilometer of the house. When checking roads for accuracy, one tends to drive for hours on end; in our case, this allowed us to discover a newly paved secondary road to the First Nations reserve of Fountain and to follow a dirt road over the mountain near Pavilion to Kelly Lake and Clinton. We visited the museum there and Johnny enjoyed meeting a real cowboy and sitting on a real saddle (no horse, though). I tried explain what a wash bucket was and how I'd help my mother when I was his age to pound the clothes being washed with a large mallet, then hand-wring them through the mangle to get the surplus water out before hanging them on a clothesline to dry. I might as well have saved my breath; such concepts were so alien to him as to go in one ear and out the other. He did enjoy the 1940s tow truck and the hand-operated drill press, and was blown away by a manual typewriter. Much of what was in the museum dates from the time of my early life, and even Lan's (such as a honey separator), but was impossible for a six-year-old to fathom such an antiquated lifestyle.

We also enjoyed seeing Lillooet, a small town along the CN rail line to the 'interior' (as we call the rest of Canada). This is the Jade Capital of Canada, with huge slabs of polished green just set down in front of the local visitor's information centre for display; worth a fortune in China! This must be the only town in Canada to have a Chinese restaurant called the Totem Pole! The old railway hotel still has rooms for rent and the local saloon doubles as a restaurant and grocery outlet. Nearby Lake Seton (actually a dam) generates much of BC's electricity.

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Further north, we drove to 90 Mile House before heading east. When the 1858 gold rush was opening up BC for a horde of prospectors, way stations were set up every ten miles or so to serve the needs of those heading north to try their luck. Most stations merely had a number for a name, based on how far north it was of Yale (the end of riverboat travel and the start of the long hike up the Fraser Canyon). Some of these numbered towns eventually gained names (Clinton used to be 37 Mile House), but others still keep their original names and are fair-sized towns. 150 Mile House is the largest urban community between Hope and Prince George, for example. We headed east along Hwy 24 to Lone Pine (three guesses as to how that place got its name, and the first two don't count!) before heading south on the Yellowhead Pass highway joining Edmonton to Vancouver. For hours, we drove through trees, stopping every couple of hours at a wayside campsite so Johnny could run off steam by throwing stones into a lake and explore the concept of wilderness.

The reason I'm writing so much about this trip is because we were re-familiarizing ourselves with a part of our business that includes our ITMB map of British Columbia, our maps of BC South, Whistler and Region, Cariboo Chilcotin, Okanagan, and Manning Park. We visited Kamloops, Spence's Bridge, Merritt, Princeton, and Hope along the way – names that won't mean much to people who've never been here, but my point is that everywhere we went, we met people from other parts of the world – China, and Australia, and the USA. Why? Well, this is one of the most scenic and attractive regions of Canada. Whether you're selling maps for others to use while travelling, or thinking of a trip for yourself, it would be hard to beat the clean air and wide open spaces of the mountainous interior of British Columbia. Everywhere we went, we met people hungry for a map, but it is extremely difficult to market maps in a part of the world with relatively few people. Still it was a pleasant, if somewhat tiring, experience and Johnny survived his first research trip. Now he wants to go on ALL our trips!

COUNTRY REGION IN THE NEWSLETTER FOR THIS MONTH:

I'm torn between Cuba, Mexico, and the USA for this month's travel 'hot' country. I'll start with Cuba, where relations with the USA are continuing to return to normal. The first commercial flight in 55 years between the two countries recently landed in Cuba this month; the harbinger of many more to come. Some 200 flights per week are scheduled initially. Americans travelling to Cuba are expected to triple in number this year over last, to 300,000, and I suspect that many more will follow in the coming years. Combine this with cruise ships that are now able to include Cuba in their itineraries and a car ferry that is slated to start service in the near future and life will gradually become more prosperous for Cubans and develop Cuba's true tourism potential. Keep your ITMB maps of the country in mind! Our map of Cuba is the best, by far, of anything on the market, as is our map of Havana, and our newly-released map of Cuba West is selling quite well. Cuba East is in production.

I'm including Mexico in this month's newsletter mostly to counter the negatively vitriolic tenor of comments being put forward repeatedly by the Republican Party's candidate for the presidency of the USA. Visiting Mexico and reading out a prepared text at a public session in the presence of the President of Mexico is one thing; making an inflammatory and derogatory speech against Mexicans a few hours later is not only stupid, it is incendiary. Needless to say, Mexicans everywhere are insulted, demeaned, and humiliated, and none more so than the President of Mexico, who extended an invitation in good faith to Trump. Mexico is a wonderful country, and the vast majority of Mexicans are decent, hard-working, law-abiding people, open and friendly. The country has a wealth of interesting venues to see and does not deserve to be treated as contemptuously as Trump has done and continues to do. The Big Lie is to say something so often that people start to accept it as being true; in this case, that Mexicans are rapists and criminals. Millions of Americans are starting to believe this hate-mongering and this bodes ill for the future of democracy in America as well as for sound diplomatic relations between the USA and a proud and valued ally. ITMB has mapped Mexico extensively. Our map of Mexico is one of our best-sellers, followed by Southern Mexico, then Mexico City. Altogether, we have ten different maps of Mexico so keep us in mind when stocking that country!

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Finally, I have to note that an interesting statistic has recently come to my attention. Only 9% of Americans participated in the 50 different primary campaigns that eventually selected Clinton and Trump as candidates, as well as a host of Senate and House candidates for both parties. In one sense, this is a significant number. In any country, only a small percentage of any population is so wrapped up in politics as to be actively involved. However, 9% is still only a very small percentage of the voting public.

It is important for all of us to keep a sense of perspective. American election campaign rhetoric tends to be somewhat 'over the top' at the best of times. This campaign has raised the level of racial and immigrant tension extremely high, and is frightening in its expressed vitriolic hatred. Here's my message: this does NOT represent the mainstream thinking of America and never has. Americans are the most generous people on earth, kind and willing to be friends and show an interest in the views of others. The USA is the land of vision and the economic mainstay of the entire world. It is a wonderful country. Keep a sense of perspective.

STUPID CRIME OF THE MONTH AWARD

This gem came to my attention at breakfast recently and is a real howler of a tale. Enjoy it. This happened in Nanaimo, a town on the east coast of BC's Vancouver Island, on September 13th. A man decided to hijack a truck, so donned a mask and acquired a fake gun, then drove his car beside the truck, which was parked in a driveway at a house. As it happened, the owner was in the truck, about to leave for work. The crook thrust his imitation gun at the driver, and demanded the truck. What he was planning to do with his car, which was parked beside the truck, is unknown, but doesn't matter. The owner of the truck wasn't co-operative; in fact, he attacked the perp. The two men struggled, and the would-be criminal tried to escape in his car, having lost his mask and his gun during the scuffle. Rattled, he put the car into drive instead of reverse and smashed his car into the house in his haste to escape. He then changed into reverse and left the scene, with the front of his car severely damaged. The victim immediately called the RCMP, who spotted the damaged car while on the way to the house. They gave a lights and siren chase. The driver/cum/hijacker pulled into a supermarket parking lot and decided to run like crazy, only to discover that the police car contained a very large Alsatian dog itching for some exercise. The dog could run considerably faster than the man and soon brought him down by biting him and landing on top of the crook, who was seriously winded by this and terrified of the snarling dog a few inches away from his head. The RCMP dog handler reached the pair in due course and arrested the man, who is apparently fairly well known to local authorities. The crook is in custody awaiting trial, and is apparently finding it difficult to sit down. He's had a bad day!

GUANTANAMERA

The song Guajira Guantanamera means the country girl from Guantanamo, a region of eastern Cuba. It was first performed in the 1930s and had such a catchy 'beat' that it has proved to be the type of song that can be adapted for just about any purpose. It is a folk song, a political protest song, and in Sweden, a song to promote recycling. In Britain, it is the most-favoured song used in football chants. The Soviets even recorded a version where the 'country girl' was a prisoner held by Americans. Pete Seeger played it at Carnegie Hall. The Sandpipers recorded it (as have hundreds of other artists) to make the song one of the best-known tunes in the world. It is well-known around the world and is almost always sung more or less as originally written, in Spanish, but it translates to just about any language. Lan's Vietnamese cultural group regularly entertains audiences with it at performances in the Vancouver area. There is, apparently, a Vietnamese version, but the chorus is all that most people know. Wags say it is Cuba's most successful export ever, but then, it is now so international that few people even realize that its origins are Cuban – and, no, the song has nothing to do with politics or American relations. It is just a catchy tune that has become an international sensation!

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THE GROWTH OF TOURISM FROM ASIA, PARTICULARLY CHINA

Take note; the driving force for travel in the next decade will be China, not America and not Europe. Despite the country having enormous problems, wealth is accumulating in China at a great rate and the middle class now represents a significant portion of that country's population. There is an enormous pent-up desire to travel. China's international airline industry is expanding rapidly, adding routes almost daily from somewhere in China to somewhere Chinese wish to go. Vancouver is now served by no fewer than six different Chinese airlines, and the Canadian government is actively seeking ways to ease visa restrictions on Chinese tourists wanting to come here. It has just signed an agreement promising to double the number of Chinese citizens coming to Canada over the next five years. I'm sure that many other countries are seeing the same changes. The cruise industry, now initiating cruises originating in China, has experienced explosive growth over the past two years, going from virtually zero in 2013 to just shy of 700,000 passengers in 2015. China is now the seventh largest cruise market in the world, and is expected to become number one within five years – a truly amazing growth rate! Cruise companies are scrambling to move under-used ships out of the stagnant European market in particular to develop ports of call in Asia. Several new ships are currently being constructed specifically to meet Asian expected demand as it continues to grow enormously quickly.

How does this affect us? Well, the map industry won't be particularly affected, but the tour bus industry, all airline manufacturers and operating companies, the train systems of Europe, the hotel component, and the food industry are going to be severely altered. China is already demanding that Canada open ownership of touristic properties to Chinese entrepreneurs in an unprecedented manner and wants to bring thousands of Chinese nationals here to serve the needs of Chinese visitors. Other countries will experience the same pressures. This will pose grave emotional reactions from Caucasian-oriented nationalists. Just imagine the American reaction to seeing Hilton fall under Asian ownership!

What is the plus side? There are ten million Chinese nationals right now with the wealth and the desire to travel internationally. That will grow to 100,000,000 within five years, and 500,000,000 within ten years – more than the rest of the world put together. That's a LOT of potential tourists with money to spend! Many cities around the world are already experiencing severe accommodation price increases as a result of billions of dollars flowing out of China looking for a place to invest. How long will it be before major hotel chains are owned by, and catering to, a Chinese clientele? This doesn't alarm me, any more than the expansion of McDonald's or Starbucks into China alarms me; it just reflects changing economic realities, but the future of the travel industry rests on Asia; that's the point we all have to accept.

A LAST STAB AT AMERICAN REALITY AT A TIME WHEN THINGS SEEM TO BE VERY UNCERTAIN

The latest NBC/Wall Street Journal poll asked Americans not only for their opinions on the presidential candidates, but also their opinions of their neighbours – Canada and Mexico. 75% of those polled expressed a positive view of Canada, with just 3% holding a negative view. Neither presidential candidate fared as well; Trump received only 28% favourable as opposed to 61% negative, and Clinton was at 37% positive and 51% negative (with 12% undecided). Canadians don't tend to hold polls on how we regard America or Americans, but each presidential campaign sees at least one poll asking "If you could vote, who would you support?" I already know that a poll in this particular campaign would heavily favour the Democrats, but Canada experiences most of the concerns and fears of Americans, and this year's poll might show a surprising number agreeing that we need a more restricted approach to such issues as border control and immigration. Who knows; if a poll is held, I'll let you know!

ITMB CURRENT PROJECTS AND OUT OF STOCK ITEMS

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Antarctica has fewer than 60 copies left in stock. We are working on a new edition.

Armenia/Azerbaijan is almost out of copies. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Banff National Park is out of copies. A new edition is being developed to portray both Banff and Jasper on one double-sided sheet; no ETA.

Bhutan/Northern India is almost out of copies. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Bolivia is out of stock. A new edition is at press and expected in December.

Cayman Islands/Jamaica is almost out of stock. A new edition is at press, to be called Jamaica and Cayman Islands; no ETA.

Edinburgh/Scotland is down to 76 copies. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Lima and Central Peru is down to 3 copies. A new edition is being prepared. No ETA

Madagascar is down to 40 copies. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Mexico Pacific Region/Guadalajara is almost down to 24 copies. A new edition is being prepared, no ETA.

New Guinea is out of stock. A new edition is at press; due in December.

QCI, or the Queen Charlotte Islands, is down to 82 copies. We are re-naming this map Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotte Is. to reflect the more current practice used in BC. The new edition will be available next spring.

South Korea/Seoul is almost out of copies. A new edition is being prepared, no ETA.

USA Southwest is out of copies. A new edition is at press and expected in December.

Vancouver City ran out of copies unexpectedly quickly. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Vancouver Island is getting close to running out of copies; a new edition is being prepared.

NEW TITLES FOR SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 2016

Andorra and Pyrenees Travel Reference Map 1:40,000 – See Pyrenees for description

Belgium and Luxembourg Travel Reference Map 1st Ed. 2016 1:250,000 ISBN 978177120814 UPC 817712908148 \$12.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – Belgium consists of two nation states, the Belge (speaking French) and the Flems (speaking Flemish). The two nations co-exist without particularly liking each other, but both agree that Belgium is one of the nicest countries in Europe. Luxembourg gets tacked on to this map simply because it is nestled into a corner of Belgium and the map would look funny if it were omitted. The Lux (I'll bet no one calls them that!) are much more 'French' in their speech and customs. I like both countries. Belgium has marvelous historic sites, such as the central market square of Brussels, the historic university town of Leuven, and the grand cathedral at Liege (called, with typical European craziness, Luttich ten kilometers to the east and Luik ten kilometers to the west). The map is divided into west half (coast to Leuven and Breda south to Charleroi) and east half (Brussels to Aachen and Eindhoven south to the French border with Luxembourg. Considering the small size of the entities being mapped, we were able to provide a lot of road information as well as town names, parks, camping areas, even some hotels outside of major urban areas and, of course, places of touristic interest. Luxembourg is more hilly and the Ardennes are a treat to drive through. Bastogne has a major museum dedicated to the WW2 Battle of the Bulge. **AVAILABLE**

Luxembourg (and Belgium) Travel Reference Map – See Belgium for description

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Pyrenees and Andorra Travel Reference Map 1st/2nd Ed. 2017 1:450,000/1:40,000 ISBN 9781771290104 UPC 817712901040 \$12.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – We have transformed our specialized map of Andorra into a more practical map covering the Pyrenees mountain chain straddling the border between France and Spain on one side, with historic Andorra on the other side. As is normal with ITMB maps combining two areas at different scales, the map has two covers, so can be marketed equally well as Andorra or as Pyrenees! Our coverage of the Pyrenees goes from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean coastlines and from Toulouse to Barcelona, so includes Pamplona in Basque Country, Huesca, Catalunya, and Girona in Spain, as well as Beziers and lovely Carcassonne in France. The other side is a completely redesigned map of the Principality of Andorra and is the only map of this interesting mini-state available today. This side also includes an excellent inset map of the only city in the country, Andorra La Vella. Andorra is known as a winter ski area par excellence, but is also a huge duty-free area year round. It has survived political turmoil for centuries by playing off France against Spain and wriggling between the cracks of big-power maneuvering. Perched at the summit of the Pyrenees chain, Andorra is well-worth visiting. **AVAILABLE**

Slovakia and Hungary Travel Reference Map 2nd Ed. 2017 on waterproof paper ISBN 9781771296984 UPC 817712969842 \$12.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – We are pleased that, at long last, we re-introduce a travel map for Slovakia. This country was created out of the former Czechoslovakia when the two entities agreed to separate following the demise of the Soviet empire in the early 1990s. It is perhaps not as well-known as it should be, but it is a very attractive travel destination. We had cause to visit it on several occasions and have very fond memories of the country itself. Bratislava has emerged as a thriving and interesting city, the road network of the country is steadily improving, its crucial position bordering Ukraine gives it strategic advantages, and the rustic nature of much of the countryside provides a charm that is hard to beat. We have combined the map with a separate map of Hungary on the other side, in the belief that the two countries constitute an excellent joint travel experience. We have a separate map for Hungary and Budapest, which will continue, but we wanted to give the Slovakia map a wider marketing appeal than just the country itself. Both maps provide excellent detail for roads and urban areas, and for points of interest, parks, rail lines, and historic sites. **AVAILABLE**

NEW TITLES FOR AUGUST, 2016

Alaska Travel Reference Map 7th Ed. 2016 1:1,500,000 ISBN 9781771290036 UPC 817712900364 \$11.95cdn/us E8.50 7.99GBP – AVAILABLE

Austria and Salzburg Travel Reference Map 2nd/1st Ed. 2016 1:500,000/1:15,000 on plastic paper ISBN 9781771290043 PC 817712900432 \$12.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP - AVAILABLE

Bermuda Travel Reference Map 5th Ed. 2016 1:14,500 ISBN 9781771290821 UPC 817712908216 \$12.95cdn/us E9.50 8.50GBP – AVAILABLE

Namibia Travel Reference Map 7th Ed. 2016 on waterproof paper 9781771295611 UPC 817712956118 \$12.95cdn/us E9.50 8.50GBP –AVAILABLE.

Prague and Western Czech Republic Travel Reference Map 3rd Ed. 2016 on waterproof paper 1:7,000/1:360,000 ISBN 9781771296168 UPC 817712961686 \$10.95cdn/us E8.50 7.95GBP – AVAILABLE

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