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- **INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL MAPS AND BOOKS**
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AXIS OF EVIL MAPPING NEWSLETTER #5 OF 2019 – May – New Titles: see below for details

INTRODUCTION

This month, we have been here for most of the month, but will be flying to Beijing in late May to catch a train – to the border of Mongolia. Apparently, one cannot book a rail ticket all the way from Beijing to Ulaan Baatar from outside of China, and the process inside of China is pretty cumbersome as well. A Chinese friend suggested that we do the trip in segments – Beijing to the border, then from the border to Ulaan. We'll let you know next month how feasible this plan proves to be!

AND THE WORLD MOVES ON

I regret having to inject some not-very-nice commentary at this point. Lan and I visited Sri Lanka in March. It is a very nice country and we enjoyed our time there. Touristically, the country was looking good; safe, peaceful, and recommended by Lonely Planet. Then the Easter bombings happened and everything changed. As I write this, police have tracked down those responsible, and it does appear that this was a large and well-coordinated local bunch of extremists. They happen to be Muslim, which unfortunately reinforces a stereotype, in a country that is predominately non-Muslim and definitely non-extremist. The short-term damage to tourism will be severe. Travellers tend not to go to places subject to random bombing. However, if the country's security forces effectively deal with those perpetrating one of the worst terror attacks in modern times, tourism should not be affected in the longer term, Think of New Zealand and the atrocities committed there. The government acted swiftly and contained the problem and, as a result, tourism hasn't been affected. It is too soon to say definitively that Sri Lankan authorities are on top of their situation, but one advantage they share with New Zealand is being an island nation. It's hard to get off the island; the perpetrators can hide, but escape is difficult, as they are discovering. Events of this nature are tragic for those involved and their families, and damaging to the reputation of the country. We in the tourism trade deplore extremist behaviour of course, and all I can say from a business point of view is that Sri Lanka is still a very nice country to visit and I hope that tourists will continue to enjoy its hospitality.

GMJ MAPS

We are pleased to announce the three most recent releases from Guy Johnson Maps. Guy is the supplier of maps to both the AAA in the USA and CAA in Canada, as well as to Rand McNally. His line now covers almost 400 titles and continues to expand as demand increases. Those who think paper maps are no longer in demand had better talk with either Guy or myself, because the map trade is very much alive and well. The three new titles that Guy dropped off to me recently are all available for ITMB:

Kamloops/Salmon Arm, with insets of Revelstoke, Golden, and Merritt, as well as a very good regional map of Central BC Scale varies ISBN 9781770666373 \$5.95cdn/us E5.95

Kelowna/Vernon/Penticton, with insets of Cranbrook, Nelson, and Armstrong, and a regional map of Southern BC scale varies ISBN 9781770686380 \$5.95cdn/us E5.95

Prince George/Ft. St. John/Williams Lake, with insets of Dawson Creek, Kitimat, Quesnel, Smithers, and Terrace, and a regional map of Northern BC Scale varies ISBN 9781770686403 \$5.95cdn/us E5.95

These are all secondary-level cities within British Columbia, but they cover the waterfront, as we say on the coast, for coverage of the BC interior. ITMB publishes very good maps of Vancouver and Victoria for the international market, but for this level of mapping one needs local distribution. We don't have that, but BCAA, our provincial automobile association, does. These titles, and hundreds of others, are available from ITMB to distributors, retailers, and individuals around the world.

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THE MOST UNUSUAL STARBUCKS IN THE WORLD

We all know about Starbucks, the coffee retailer based in Seattle that has franchises all over the world (well, seemingly so). Not being a coffee drinker, I've never patronized any of their shops, but I've marveled at the way patrons will line up and patiently wait for whatever version of the brown bean that meets their innermost needs. Recently, Linh and Phuong were in Japan, and in Kyoto they discovered a Starbucks franchise that was a tad different. Situated in the historic centre, the outside had to resemble the wooden house it was in an earlier life. Authorities permitted a discrete sign, but the interior was formatted in a traditional teahouse design, where patrons would sit on tatami mats of the floor and imbibe at leisure. The picture below is of the next generation of ITMB owners/explorers getting right into the flavour of Japan, wearing locally-rented kimonos in order to 'steep' themselves (pun intended) in how life would have been like in early Japan. Note, however, the Starbucks cup!



TOO MUCH SOAP

A village in China, close to Nanning City, recently experienced a massive bubble bath. Apparently, a villager was washing plastic bottles and poured far too much detergent into the sink. Realizing his error, he flushed the liquid soap out of the sink via the drain. Unfortunately, the village did not have a waste water treatment plant capable of dealing with gallons of liquid soap. All would have worked itself out in time if it didn't rain, which it did. The rain converted to liquid soap into soap bubbles, which erupted from storm sewers all over town and created a mountain of suds. According to the account I read, the entire village disappeared under a soapy bubble extremis! Of course, the rain washed it away eventually, but that just made life difficult for villagers living further downstream, who had to curtail using river water until huge islands of suds passed by.

DUMB DECISIONS

We all make decisions that seem to make sense at the time, but prove to be bad decisions. Marriages often fall apart simply because the couple rushed into a relationship without giving enough time to see if they are compatible in the long term, but let's limit our consideration of decisions made that proved to be regrettable to the world of business. Here's a classic: Harry Cohn, head of Columbia Pictures, dumped a young actress because she had, in his opinion, no star potential. This was in 1949. The actress was Marilyn Monroe. Bad decision. Here's another: Eric Easton helped put together a rock band in 1963, but insisted that the singer had to go. The band was the Rolling Stones and the singer, of course, was Mick Jagger, who still can't sing worth a damn, but the band would have gone nowhere without him. Movie critic Russell Maloney slammed *The Wizard of Oz* when it was released in 1939 as having no trace of imagination, good taste, or ingenuity. Really! Alec Guinness won an Oscar for his role in *Bridge on the River Kwai*, but the movie company mis-spelled his name in the movie credits. That's like mis-spelling Donald Tump!

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An anti-drug campaign in New York City thought it would be a good idea to distribute pencils to school kids labelled with the message "Too Cool to Do Drugs". As the pencils wore down and were re-sharpened, the message change to "Cool to Use Drugs", then to "Use Drugs". Very Bad decision. Here's another: the US Consumer Products Commission bought 80,000 buttons to promote safe toys. They were all coated with lead paint and had un-securable pins. Think about that for a moment. Then, in 1975, Congress retrofitted all the elevators in the Capitol building at great expense. Good decision, but they then continued to have them operated by salaried operators even though they operated automatically. In another instance of Oops, the US post office commemorated the Grand Canyon with a special stamp in 1999, labelled "Grand Canyon, Colorado". If I need to explain that one, you're in the wrong trade!

Finally, here's the dumbest law ever proposed. In the late 1800s, the Pennsylvania Anti-Automobile Society (yes, it really did exist) drafted a regulation for the state legislature stating that, if a horse refused to pass a car, the car owner had to dismantle his car and conceal the pieces in nearby bushes, then re-assemble it once the horse had passed. At night, they proposed, cars had to send up a rocket once every mile, then wait for ten minutes for the road to clear of non-motorized traffic. Fortunately, the state legislature did not pass these proposed regulations into law. The mind boggles at the image of thousands of cars setting off rocket flares simultaneously!

GEYSIRS OR GEYSERS

This is an odd, though well-known word, transferred into English from Norse Icelandic, meaning a spout of hot water gushing into the air from an underground vent. The original geysir is northeast of Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, but recent reports I've received indicates that it is not as active or dramatic as it was when I saw it in 2004. However, the largest geyser field in North America, or at least the one with the most geysers, is in Yellowstone National Park, in the USA. It is also the most-visited geyser area in the world. The largest field in South America is El Tatio, in northern Chile, with more than 80 geysers, along with steam vents, steaming soil, boiling water fountains, and mud pots. Not mentioned in the article I used to note this information is a not very well-known geyser field in the Kamchatka Peninsula of the far east of Russia, noted on our ITMB map of Kamchatka. All are well worth visiting. Remember, this is why we are in business. We help people explore our wonderful world!

SOUTH AFRICA'S CAPE TOWN

When I first visited Africa, half a century ago now, I discovered a sign in Goulimine, Morocco, pointing south and indicating that a road, of sorts, existed to Dakar, in Senegal. That enticed me and I decided to drive to Cape Town, at the southern tip of Africa, as part of a 'grand design' trip of returning to Canada via South America. That trip through the wilds of Africa took one year to get as far as Rhodesia, where I ran out of money, energy, and a car and occupies 630 pages of typed paper. It took me three years, but I eventually reached Cape Town, which at that time was a lovely place and the summer capital of South Africa. I didn't care very much for then-apartheid South Africa circa 1973, but I enjoyed the scenery and the Garden Route through vineyards and the lovely Cape Dutch architecture. Lan and I visited Cape Town again many years later, and found it to be still a nice place, but much changed in post-apartheid South Africa. Geographically, the city is quite a wonder to behold. Table Mountain, its defining feature, is a large flat-topped land formation that anchors the southern end of the African continent. The city rests at the base of the mountain, and its natural harbour has created a centuries-old supply centre for ships plying the South Atlantic. The capital has since moved to Pretoria full-time, and the historic centre has seen better days, but the city is still a vibrant touristic destination. One can reach the top of Table Mountain by a series of trails, or by taking the cable car to the tea house on top. There isn't much to see on top of the mountain, but the view of the city is magnificent on a clear day. One can also drive around the base of the mountain to Simonstown, the vast naval base, or eastward into the historic area of early European settlement. The southernmost point of Africa is, however, not Cape Town itself, but nearby Cape Agulhas. By the way, I never did reach South America at that time, but spent seven years in Africa and had many memorable episodes of mayhem and adventure!

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TRIVIA

1. The Eiffel Tower, in Paris, when being built, was very controversial and not greatly appreciated. It was completed in 1889, in time for the Exposition Universelle and was the tallest structure in the world until the Chrysler Building was completed in 1930.
2. Although llamas and alpacas are commonly found in Peru, and are assumed to be the national animal of the country, this is not so. The Vicuna, a smaller version of the alpaca family, is actually the national animal of Peru. Remember to introduce this at the dinner table this evening. Everyone will either think you are a brilliant conversationalist or a complete idiot!
3. The biggest bathtub race in the world is held each summer in Nanaimo, British Columbia. Contestants attach boat motors to actual bathtubs and race around the harbour. They used to race all the way to Vancouver, but Search and Rescue had to rescue so many swamped and sinking bathtubs that for safety's sake they limited the festivities to the calmer waters of the harbour.
4. Have you ever heard about the axolotl? This is a fish-like salamander native to the Xochimilco lakes near Mexico City. They normally live in water and have gills, like fish, but they also have four legs and can walk for short distances on land. They grow to about twelve inches in length, and I have no idea what they eat or whether they attack little children.

WORK IN PROGRESS ON CURRENT PROJECTS

Chile South & Patagonia is out of inventory. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Europe Rail/Road Map is almost out of print. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Guadeloupe/Martinique is almost out of print. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Honduras is almost out of print. We have combined the country with Nicaragua in a new double-sided edition ; no ETA.

Laos/Cambodia is almost out of print. This is being discontinued as we now have separate maps of each country.

Madagascar new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Malta/Goza is almost out of print. A new edition is at press and expected in August.

Nicaragua/El Salvador is almost out of print. It is being replaced by a new title Honduras & Nicaragua ; no ETA.

Oman & Yemen is almost out of print. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Paraguay is out of stock. A new edition is underway and expected in August.

Russia has unexpectedly almost run out of copies. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Seattle, Shanghai, and Slovakia are all close to running out of inventory. New editions are being prepared.

Somalia is almost out of print. We are preparing a new title called Somalia and the Horn of Africa for release in mid-2019; no ETA.

South Africa is out of inventory. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Sri Lanka is almost out of copies. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Surinam and Guyana is out of print. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Vancouver Island is almost out of inventory. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

West Coast Trail (BC) is almost out of stock. A new edition is not imminent.

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NEW EDITIONS MAY, 2019

Santiago & Northern Chile Travel Reference Map 5th Ed. 2019 1:12,500/1:1,770,000 ISBN 9781771297127 UPC 817712971272 \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – The capital of Chile dominates the country. As locals, tell it, Santiago is Chile; modern, cosmopolitan, and the main entry point for most visitors to Chile. The central banking and shopping district is well-served by four separate rapid transit lines and the map includes such attractions as parks, the railway station, the funicular, and the gondola ride. The reverse side of the map is an innovation for this title. The northern half of Chile is shown in two detailed portion maps, side by side. The far north, from the Peruvian border near Arica to Vina del Mar is shown on the first map, along with all crossings into neighbouring countries. The other map continues south from Vina del Mar/ Valparaiso to well south of Puerto Mont. This map would include Santiago, Talca, Concepcion, Temuco, and the Austral Highway as far south as Cochrane, which is close to the famous Laguna San Rafael National Park and its ice fields. Truly, a useful map! **AVAILABLE**

Togo and Benin Travel Reference Map 3rd Ed, 2019 1:530,000 ISBN 9781771290913 UPC 817712909138 \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – The two small countries squeezed between Ghana on the west and Nigeria on the east developed out of the European colonialization of most of Africa. Germany, under Kaiser Bill, was determined to create an empire to rival that of Britain, and seized a portion of the coastline close to the British-held area of Ghana and held on to it until WW1 ended Germany's colonial aspirations. Britain and France jointly governed Togo briefly, but the territory was ceded to France until independence was granted in the 1960s. Neighbouring Benin (formerly the French colony of Dahomey) was all that the French colonial office could obtain of the rich coastal plain until the German defeat in WW1, which gained it Togo and German Cameroun, further to the east. Both countries have their points of interest, but to this day have little to do with each other. There is one border crossing on the coast, and a couple of others much farther inland, but each country operates on a north-south basis, not an east-west one. The map includes inset maps of Lome, the capital of Togo, and Porto Novo, in Benin, which is now the capital. Togo's best sites are noted in a red inset box, with a separate box for Benin. **AVAILABLE**

NEW EDITIONS IN APRIL, 2019

Anguilla & St. Martin/St. Maarten Travel Reference Map 1st Ed. 2019 1:23,000/1:20,000 ISBN 9781771297103 UPC 817712971036 \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – We visited these islands in 2018 and this is the result – an expansion of three separate political entities in the Caribbean. The first of the main islands is Anguilla, a popular cruise ship destination. This occupies all of side one, with inset maps of Dog Island, Prickley Pear Cays, and aptly-named Scrub Island. Anguilla enjoys several sandy beaches, only some of which have been developed for resort use, and those 'resorts' that do exist tend to be modest operations. The west end Village area seems to have the most beaches, with resorts on Barnes Bay and Maunday's Bay, but the best beach is a bit further east, at Rendezvous Bay. Crocus Hill, in the centre of the island, contains most of the shopping facilities for the island, and Shoal Bay, on the northern coast has another lovely beach resort area. The other side of the map is devoted to what must be the most unusual aspect of the Caribbean – a relatively small island shared by two European powers, France and Netherlands. The island is Saint Martin (it's French as well as its English name) or Sint Maarten (its Dutch name). The Dutch occupy the south half of the island, with the cruise ship terminal at Philipsburg, the capital. The town is located along a stretch of beach and is only three streets wide. On the other side of town is Great Salt Pond, so the town has no place in which to expand, so is very congested. Touristic attractions tend to spread out from the town along the south coast. If one rents a car, as we did, it is a very enjoyable trip to the north half (the French part) of the island. There is no border, so the only difference is language. Both halves of the island use the Euro as their currency. The northern half has two well-developed beach resort beaches at Orient Bay and at Baie de Grand Case. The capital, Marigot, contains most of the shops. The highest point of land on the island is Pic Paradis (424m) in the French portion. Inset maps of Philipsburg and Marigot are included. **AVAILABLE**

St. Martin/St. Maarten & Anguilla Travel Reference Map 1st Ed. 2019 1:20,000/1:23,000 ISBN 9781771297103 UPC 817712971036 \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – see Anguilla for description.

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Vietnam Travel Reference Map 8th Ed. 2019 on waterproof paper 1:920,000 ISBN 9781771298704 UPC 817712987044 \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – The Viet people are friendly and the country is both scenic and safe. These are essential ingredients to having a successful touristic industry, and Vietnam certainly has worked very hard to create a travel experience that is enjoyable and affordable. This is an excellent map of the country, printed on plastic for durability, but also to cope with the high humidity experienced in VN for much of the year. With this edition, we are trying something very different; the cover picture is of women in the salt pans, piling millions of crystals of salt from evaporation pans. This is hardly a 'normal' cover pic, but it is very graphic and, somehow, very Vietnamese. This is the 9th updating of this country since 1993. **AVAILABLE**

NEW RELEASES IN MARCH, 2019

British Columbia Wall Map 2nd Ed. 2019 1:1,250,000 on paper, available flat only ISBN 9781553410157 UPC 815534101570 \$35.00cdn/us Euro price on demand – AVAILABLE

France Railway & Road Travel Reference Map 3rd Ed. 2019 1:1,000,000 on waterproof paper ISBN 9781771292832 UPC 817712928320 \$12.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – AVAILABLE

Korea North and South Travel Reference Map 1st Ed. 2019 1:830,000/1:550,000 on stone paper ISBN 9781771294119 UPC 817712941190 \$13.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – AVAILABLE

Rio de Janeiro & Brasil East Coast Travel Reference Map 3rd Ed. 2019 on waterproof paper 1:1,200,000/1:2,200,000 ISBN 9781771296663 UPC 817712966636 \$11.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP - AVAILABLE

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