



## **ITMB PUBLISHING LTD.**

- **INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL MAPS AND BOOKS**
- **ITM DISTRIBUTION**

**12300 Bridgeport Road  
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**AXIS OF EVIL MAPPING NEWSLETTER #1 OF 2018 – January – New Titles: see below for details**

### **INTRODUCTION**

We start 2018 by welcoming back Linh and Phuong from their extended break in Vietnam. Our adult children and grandchildren enjoyed an extended visit with the other set of grandparents. Lan and I were left running ITMB, so blame us for anything that has gone wrong! By the time readers receive this Axis newsletter, it will be the end of the first month of 2018, so a tad tardy to be wishing everyone a Happy New Year, but this introduction is being prepared on January 1<sup>st</sup>, so the greeting has to be seen in that light. I regret to advise that we have been hit hard by flu this month, which has affected our ability to get orders out in a timely fashion. Linh is now back at work, so things should improve rapidly. Apologies for any delays/inconveniences.

### **A SMALL REVOLUTION IN THE MAPPING INDUSTRY**

I can't think of a better way to begin 2018 than by noting a remarkable new series of Canadian maps appearing on the market. G.M Johnson and Associates has been publishing maps of American cities for many years, mostly under contract to firms such as Rand McNally or various specialist distributors as wish them, and has become quite successful. During 2017, he bid for a contract to supply AAA and CAA (automobile clubs) with a variety of maps of Canadian destinations, some 48 titles in all, and won the five-year contract. These new maps will be used as giveaway maps by the automobile clubs. Guy retains the right to publish these same titles under his own cover and market them commercially. ITMB is handling his international (i.e. non-North American) sales, but can also supply within North America in conjunction with Guy.

It isn't very often that a new publishing line appears related to any country. This expansion propels Guy into being one of the largest publishers of paper maps in the world. Few people realize that most American cities are mapped in Canada, Vancouver specifically, but Rand McNally survived the Great Recession by selling down their inventory of 1,100 titles to end with 100 titles and demand from firms like Wal-Mart and Barnes & Noble for maps they couldn't supply. They contracted with Guy to prepare a number of city maps for them, to be published under the Rand cover. This arrangement worked to both parties' benefit and has been renewed and extended, growing the G.M. Johnson line significantly in the process. I believe that he has about 600 city maps published for the USA.

The Canadian deal is significant, since the Canadian marketplace for maps is limited. The artwork is produced by a co-operative venture between Guy's firm and the former MapArt artwork makers. I have to go back into a bit of history here to explain what I mean by MapArt artwork. There is a Canadian map publisher called MapArt, based in Oshawa, Ontario. It used to use the artwork designed and prepared by Art Schwartz in Toronto. He called his firm MapArt, and his artwork was widely known and respected and called MapArt artwork. For reasons I don't want to get into, he lost control of the name to someone called Peter Heiler, who continued using the name and the artwork until such time as Heiler acquired Rand McNally Canada from Rand USA and switched his production to their artwork. He continued to use the marketing name of MapArt, as well as a new name - CCC. The person who had developed the design style of the artwork known for many years as MapArt artwork was essentially driven to the brink of bankruptcy, as there seemed to be no one willing to sell his designs to in the limited Canadian market. Eventually, a firm called Route Master was formed and tried to develop market demand for MapArt artwork under their covers, but had limited success, as most major firms marketing maps had signed exclusive agreements with Heiler to use him and nobody else – Chapters, Indigo, and Canadian Tire being examples. Heiler also had the contract to supply AAA and CAA with hundreds of thousands of maps each year. This is the contract won by G.M. Johnson.

ITMB will be issuing press releases for new titles as they are released. Most will be of limited interest internationally, but obviously, some will be of interest. I will also be noting new releases in the Axis newsletter. This is about as exciting a development as ever happens in the arcane world of mapping, so please applaud.

### **NOW FOR AN UNFORTUNATE MAPPING STORY**

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I received word from an American colleague over the Christmas break that a well-known map retailer with five outlets in the states of Idaho and Utah is in the process of shutting down. I am not personally familiar with the Utah-Idaho Map Supply Company, but my colleague supplied them for many years and found them to be a good customer. It is a sad reality of our times that specialist map stores sometimes fall on hard times or, when the owners decide to sell, find little to no demand from entrepreneurs to acquire significant business ventures. Face it, any company with five outlets is a significant business. I'm sorry to see something like this happen, because there is still a steady demand for maps, but all I can do is report what appears to be an accurate situation.

### **NOW FOR A LIGHTER TOUCH: SILLY 911 CALLS**

Within North America, 911 is the emergency number used to contact police, fire, or ambulance services for emergency situations. It is not a number to be used lightly, but I'm afraid that some people do not understand the meaning of the word 'EMERGENCY!!!'. Here are some examples recently provided to me by a colleague as prepared by the RCMP during 2017 (in no particular order of silliness):

1. A frustrated mother whose kids wouldn't listen to her called 911 to have the police order them to listen to her. As the dispatcher advised her, the RCMP isn't very good at persuading people to be good.
2. A man called the RCMP to complain that his friend had 'stolen' his cigarettes and beer.
3. A man called 911 to complain about being given a parking ticket.
4. How about the person who called to ask whether or not they were supposed to be in jail?
5. A number of people called the RCMP 911 line to complain that certain roads were icy and needed to be closed. This is not exactly an emergency, so callers were referred to the appropriate roads number.
6. Then there was the householder who discovered a fox in her back yard and called 911 because the confused animal did not know how to find the exit gate, at least according to the caller. Police will respond to bear calls if lives are at risk, but only to shoo Bruno back into the wild; foxes, nah!
7. A frustrated video game player was upset that he had to call X-box to sign up for and pay for activation. He wanted the Mounties to come and set up his equipment.
8. One caller wanted the RCMP to recommend someone to give her a pedicure.
9. Another caller couldn't find his car keys and was late for work, so wanted the RCMP to come and jump-start his car. Needless to say, this is not the type of 'emergency' service provided by any police force.

I used to be an ambulance dispatcher in a previous life before maps, and had to deal with some unusual situations, such as the frantic immigrant lady who was so upset she forgot all her English and was urging us in what sounded like Portuguese for assistance. Fortunately, I understood basic Spanish, which everyone knows has little to do with Portuguese, but she was so upset that she didn't care. Once someone was speaking to her in a language somewhat recognizable, she calmed down and we were able to send an ambulance to an address she was able to give in English. The bottom line is that she was an emergency, the individuals noted above weren't.

### **HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU'RE GETTING OLD?**

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Mickey and Minnie Mouse are now 87. If you can remember the earliest cartoons, you're old! Goofy is 83, Donald Duck is 81, and Daisy Duck a gentele 75. Most of the cartoon characters most of us grew up with are now well into their theoretical retirement years. Bugs Bunny featured in his first cartoon 77 years ago; Tom and Jerry are both 75 and still chasing after each other, albeit with walking canes. Wily E. Coyote is still trying to catch the Road Runner, but at 66 human years since first being created in 1949, both find the exercise rather tiring. Porky Pig, first featured in 1935, and has lived in retirement since his voice, Mel Blanc, passed away. Today's cartoon characters tend to be either action figures or sappy nobodies. I spend a lot of Saturday mornings watching an inordinate amount of television time with wide-awake grandchildren needing someone to be with them while watching Disney channel.

### **AN APOLOGY IF YOUR SHIPMENTS HAVE TAKEN LONGER THAN USUAL TO ARRIVE**

ITMB was hit hard by the flu epidemic going the rounds of North America, and no doubt other parts of the world, this winter. Linh and Phuong both contracted it while in China, and one of our cartographers has been off for more than a week now. At times, I found myself the only one on my feet and able to run the business, but it isn't the same business that it was when I was doing so as a normal activity, so I found it quite stressful. We still have a retail store as part of our complex, and I simply could not pick orders in our warehouse with customers pressing me in retail. As a result of staff shortfalls due to flu, a couple of large orders took longer to process than is the norm. Sorry about that, but these things happen. Linh and Phuong are both back at work, and neither Johnny nor Kenzie appear to have been badly affected by flu, so are back at school. We hope to see Mark back at his computer, updating artwork, by the beginning on next week.

### **THE REASON WE KEEP MAKING MAPS**

We are asked on a regular basis how we can make money selling paper maps; alternatively the question is why bother, as the world is mapped on-line. Well, the truth of the matter is that paper maps continue to sell quite nicely, so we do make money, but we don't publish because we want to make money – we publish because we love making maps. Yes, electronic maps are popular for certain mapping matters. We use them ourselves when travelling, but we find that paper often trumps (if I can use that word in a non-political sense) electronics in most parts of the world, due to electronic maps not being available. We also receive letters from map users. Some are noting things needing improvement, which is great, and some are just complimentary. Here's an example of the latter:

“Visited Martinique and Guadeloupe---Rented a car with GPS---we were so lucky to have this map (ITMB Map of Martinique & Guadeloupe). Martinique and Guadeloupe may not seem very big from the US but unless you stay in the resorts, you are going to need a map. Martinique roads especially lack signs. We drove a lot and the GPS does not work outside of the main roads--- where you don't need it”.

Letters like that are like gold to me. We invest an incredible amount of time and energy (and yes, money as well) researching map destinations, preparing original artwork, and keeping it up to date. Each map represents an investment of about \$20,000 by the time it reaches our warehouse (most of which is due to labour costs). We have, right now, 535 maps – figure out how much we've invested in ITMB! At last count (end of December), we had 7,900 cartons of maps in our warehouse, each carton representing on average 200 copies of something. That's a LOT of paper. We know without a doubt that there is a steady demand for our product line because we receive on-line orders every day and replenishment orders from retailers and distributors on a regular basis. This is why, despite changing political realities in varying parts of the world, we keep making maps, updating maps, printing maps, and selling maps. People need maps, but more than that, they need accurate, up-to-date, informative maps that prove to be useful when travelling. As we start 2018, we feel rejuvenated by the support of our thousands of customers and have plans afoot for many more new titles throughout the coming months.

### **PRICE CHANGES**

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Periodically, we need to review prices and make adjustments for various lines and titles. The last such review was two years ago, and most of our Canadian dollar prices have not changed for at least the last five years. Being located in Canada, most of ITMB's expenses are calculated in Canadian dollars. However, most of our printing is charged in USD, as are the bulk of our shipments, so it is the American greenback that is important to us, more so than the Canadian loonie. Most of the inventory that we import from publishers worldwide is invoiced to us in USD. Thus, for most purposes, the US list price is our guideline to items we sell in Canada, after adjusting exchange rates. As an example, we import almost all of our globes from Replogle, in the USA. The Canadian dollar has dropped fairly significantly against the US dollar over the past year and now hovers around 80 cents us (a 25% difference). Replogle has raised its prices to us in US\$ and ships using international shipping rates in US dollars, so the landed cost to ITMB for globes made in the USA has risen dramatically, especially after converting all the expenses into \$CDN. We have had no choice until recently except to continue adjusting prices upwards. This has inevitably led to market resistance to prices that are now much higher than previously, and has resulted in a drop-off in terms of numbers of globes sold and consequent lower sales (last December's being 100 fewer globes sold than during the same time period in 2016). We accept that this is inevitable, but we cannot justify importing stock that becomes so expensive in the process that we find it very difficult to sell it. As a result, we are discontinuing stocking the more expensive globes. Replogle loses, we lose, and the customer loses, but we see no alternative except to discontinue items that aren't selling. The same situation applies to maps.

Maps are much lower priced items, but even if the US price doesn't change (and few do), the Canadian price has to change to reflect exchange rates. Effective immediately, within Canada, all Marco Polo country maps are \$14.95, and city maps are \$9.95, cdn. Michelin country maps are \$15.95cdn, and sectional maps vary between \$12.95 and \$14.95cdn (US prices are unchanged for both lines). National Geographic maps are pre-priced at \$12.95cdn, but we are charged \$11.95us. We will be raising the Canadian prices of all NatGeo maps to reflect realistic exchange rates. Gizi maps will increase in price to \$16.95cdn. A-Z and Ordnance Survey maps will be adjusted where applicable. I wish to emphasize, all of these changes affect Canadian sales only, and are only being made if the exchange rates need adjustment. ITMB maps are pre-priced at time of printing and it is too difficult for us to change them manually, even though we should. However, some new country maps will be priced at \$13.95cdn/us, effective upon being available for sale, as they are printed later this year. This will only affect those titles being released later in 2018; not those titles committed to press in 2017 or before. No price changes are being made to Euro or UK prices.

We regret the necessity that requires us to raise prices for the first time in a decade, but rising costs (exchange rates being as much a cost as shipping or printing) have gradually eaten into our margins to the extent that we have to adjust prices to stay in business. Generally speaking, changes are a dollar, but in some cases, items were accidentally underpriced in Canadian funds, and as a result, some titles will see a larger increase. In a perfect world (in my opinion) prices would never change because costs of production wouldn't change. Unfortunately, property taxes in Richmond, BC, where we are located, have gone up by 20% in one year, and have doubled over the past five years. Our new provincial government, being socialistically oriented, is intending a dramatic increase to the minimum wage and, while I do not begrudge individuals a fair wage for a fair day's work, wages and taxes are my business's two largest expenses. As it is, Lan and I took ourselves off payroll a number of years ago to reduce the payroll expenses, but we can't expect others to work for nothing. As well, Canada's Federal government is imposing an unpopular carbon tax that further raises production costs. We all experience rent increases, tax increases, higher labour charges, and rising utility fees. We have tried every cost-cutting measure we can think of to reduce expenses and increase productivity, but we need to increase prices by what I hope most people will see as a moderate alteration to be able to stay in business and continue to supply high quality maps at a reasonable price.

**WORK IN PROGRESS ON CURRENT PROJECTS**

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As promised, we have quite a few new releases for January (see the New Titles section below). Ian and I spent much of 2017 travelling, gathering information to enhance already excellent maps and this research is starting to appear in newly-released titles. Much of our research only comes to light gradually, as either existing titles deplete in inventory to zero or we find the resources to invest in brand new titles. Ian advises me that we now have a dozen titles at press. These are expected to arrive during February and March, so readers will enjoy seeing new product arriving each month throughout 2018. As well, several current titles are approaching the end of their print runs, so we have a busy year ahead of us. We are working on the following projects at the moment:

Lesotho is now almost out of print. We are working on a new map, combining Lesotho and Swaziland into a double-sided map; Swaziland is also getting low on inventory (see below).

Ontario suddenly ran out of copies while we weren't looking. We're updating, but can't say when it will be back.

Swaziland is close to depletion (27 copies). While this is not a fast-selling map, we are working on a new map, combining this very nice country with Lesotho as a double-sided map. We will not, however, be releasing the new map until about three months after our inventory is depleted to zero. This is to enable our distributors enough time to sell through inventory that they may have on their shelves.

Uruguay & Montevideo is out of print, and is in the process of being updated. We do not know how long this will take, so are unable to advise when the new edition might be available.

### **NEW TITLES RELEASED IN JANUARY, 2018**

**Brasil South and East Coast Travel Reference Map 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 2018 1:2,200,000 ISBN 9781771290876 UPC 817712908766 \$12.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP** – Brasil is such a large country that it needs two maps to cover it adequately. This map covers the country from the southernmost point to Sao Luis on the northern coast and inland as far as Brasilia. This is where 80% of the country lives and where 95% of the tourists visit. The interior and Amazon region will be covered separately. This map includes separate inset maps of both Rio and Sao Paulo and shows the extensive motorway network of Brasil to good advantage. The top attractions of the region are noted, such as Iguazu Falls, Sugar Loaf, Brasilia, and Salvador. **AVAILABLE**

**Eritrea – a small quantity of ITMB's separate map of Eritrea have unexpectedly been found as a result of tidying up the warehouse. Stock is very limited, but this title will not be re-done, so it is recommended that possible customers take advantage of a unique opportunity to buy a few copies while they're still available; \$12,95cdn/us or E9.50 less appropriate discounts.**

**Ireland, with Dublin and Belfast, Travel Reference Map 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. 2018 1:550,000/1:12,500 on waterproof paper ISBN 9781771293617 UPC 817712936172 \$12.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP** - At last! ITMB had a very successful map of Ireland and a separate map of Dublin, using artwork from other companies. The Great Recession ended the two companies and ITMB was left floundering. We eventually ran out of copies of these maps, along with maps of most of Europe. We have been re-building our range of maps of European destinations as quickly as we could afford and finally Ireland returns to the ITMB fold, using our own artwork. Our approach has been to combine the island on one side with detailed city maps of Belfast and Dublin on the reverse side. The island of Eire is divided into two parts: Ulster, or Northern Ireland being part of the United Kingdom (Britain) and the larger southern portion forming the independent Republic of Ireland. Both portions have very interesting points of interest and as far as mapping goes, form one entity. The road network for the island is excellent, with motorways radiating out from Dublin and Belfast to ensure easy access to cities such as Cork, Waterford, or Portadown. Scenic A-level and secondary roads make driving a pleasure. Ireland is an island that evokes strong passions, and the largest tourism market is descendants of those who emigrated to various parts of the world. The reverse side of the sheet has two equally large inset maps, one of Dublin and the other of Belfast. Both are interesting cities. I prefer Belfast, but Dublin is prettier. Each city map covers a goodly portion of each city, not just the centre; Dublin, for example, is framed by the Grand Canal as much as by the River Liffey, and Belfast by its extensive pedestrian walkways. This is a map for the visitor wanting to spend a week touring the island. Everything is shown and, most importantly, it is on waterproof paper, so can be opened up and used as protection in case of rain. Did I mention that it rains a bit in Ireland? **AVAILABLE**

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**Japan West & Central Railway & Road Travel Reference Map 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 2018 1:670,000 ISBN 9781771293860 UPC 817712938602 \$12.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP** – Japan, like Brasil, is too large and densely populated a country to show effectively on one map while showing all the attractions and smaller towns of the country. With this map, we are attempting to concentrate on the way the vast majority of visitors travel around Japan – by rail. The road network is still shown in excellent detail, but the rail routes that connect Tokyo to Osaka, Kyoto, and Hiroshima, and to the northern coastal cities of Nigata and Kanazawa are the way most visitors to Japan explore the country. The map also includes an excellent inset map of central Tokyo on one side and another of Osaka on the other side. The map extends from Fukoka in the west to Tokyo in the east and to Sendai in the north, and includes many of the most popularly-visited cities of Japan, showing all the Shinkansen ‘bullet’ train routes as well as the non-express regular lines. Japan has the most advanced rail network in the world, and this map captures its essence. **Available**

**Tel Aviv/Jaffa & Central Israel Travel Reference Map 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 2018 on waterproof paper 1:12,000/1:220,000 ISBN 9781771297967 UPC 817712979674 \$12.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP** – This map resulted from our visit to Israel a couple of years ago. We got lost in Tel Aviv and wasted a lot of time trying to find our way to where we were staying. Although quite good maps of Tel Aviv exist, most are in Hebrew and are very “Israeli”. We decided to do a map that combined the newish city of Tel Aviv with its older and more exotic neighbour, Jaffa, which is currently dominated by those of a non-Jewish orientation. Jaffa is the ancient port used by Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, and traders plying the Silk Road to China. Its old town is quite compact and a treat to explore. Tel Aviv is the practical capital of Israel, despite Trump’s attempt to inflame passions by saying he will move the US embassy to Jerusalem. Israel is always a high-explosives-on-a-short-fuse kind of country; lovely to visit, but stressful. Tel Aviv is a cultured and sensible Mediterranean city with gorgeous beaches, modern buildings, and a feeling of prosperity. We found it to be a ‘normal’ city in comparison to other parts of the country that we visited. The other side of the sheet forms a detailed map of the central portion of Israel, from Haifa to Beersheba to the Dead Sea, so includes the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as well as Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee, and most sites of a religious nature, so satisfies pilgrims as well as the explorer. My favourite site was Acre, now called Akko, which is still a walled city. **AVAILABLE**

**USA Travel Reference Map 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 2018 on waterproof paper 1:3,500,000 ISBN 9781771298452 UPC 817712984524 \$9.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP** – The United States is the third most populous country in the world, and has the most developed road, rail, and air networks in the world. As such, it is very difficult to map as a country. It is also, due to its unusual shape, impossible to show on a map without including a large portion of Canada and Mexico, which we’ve tried to downplay so the focus remained on the USA. Due to the size of the USA, I would regard this map as being a main-roads approach to presenting a country. We put on, then removed, railway lines and airports, as the artwork became so crowded with data that it was difficult to see anything. The USA is also a country of villages, rather than large cities, and although we have tried to note as many smaller centres as possible, the map has to be readable and so we had to select which urban areas to include without over-crowding the artwork. If anyone feels a pressing need for the inclusion of some town we omitted, we will do our best to fit it into the next edition. We were able to make room for major parks and preserves, and major attractions, such as the Disney complex close to Orlando, and Gettysburg and a hundred other important sites, but I’m sure some were missed. Space; there is never enough space! This map anchors our growing American series, which now exceeds 30 titles, and we are very happy it is back in print. This is a very important country, with a rich history that continues to unfold in the most American way possible via hourly tweets and deadlocked Congresses and much passion and fervor and mumbling and grumbling. It may seem frustrating as a country at times, but the world would be a lot less interesting without all the thunder and fury emanating from the USA. Use the map and go exploring! **AVAILABLE**

### NEW TITLES RELEASED DURING DECEMBER

**Central America Travel Reference Map 9<sup>th</sup> Ed. 2016 on waterproof paper 1:1,100,000 ISBN 9781553410645 UPC 815534106452 \$12.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP AVAILABLE**

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