

FROM MY TRAVEL BAG

BY DONNA S. VIEIRA

Here we are into a new year, with fresh goals and resolutions in place as we strive to make the world a better place for those we love and the generations that will follow. In the process, I hope you are taking time to relax and appreciate your contributions and the fruits of your labour.

Personally, I believe an annual two week vacation should be mandatory for everyone. I'm amazed at how many boast about not having taken a day off in years. How can that be a good thing for them, for their loved ones or for the company? Justifications range from not being able to afford a vacation to the belief that the workload awaiting their return just does not justify taking time off.

As a self-employed entrepreneur, I understand if you think you cannot be completely out of reach even for a day, but with today's technology, it's so easy to stay on top of that impending list of e-mails and telephone calls awaiting your return to the office.

Recent assignments took me to the Galapagos and New Zealand over a four-week span. How, I wondered, could I possibly be on the road for four weeks, enjoy the experience and still keep an eye on what was happening back at the office? Internet cafés are not on every corner so finding one could pose a problem. Enter Roadpost.

First, you should know I do not own a BlackBerry. Since I am usually in my office, I don't think I need one on a daily basis. As someone who prides herself on

responding to phone messages or e-mails within hours, perhaps I just do not consider myself to be so important that the world will fall off its axis if someone has to wait a few hours for my response. But four weeks was pushing it. So I decided to explore the global voice and data communications solutions Roadpost claimed to offer international travellers.

I immediately liked the idea of renting a BlackBerry 7230 rather than purchasing one. No cash outlay. I also appreciated that Ecuador (albeit not the Galapagos) and New Zealand were both on the Zone 2 list of countries from which I could access and respond to my e-mails. And, the rental service included unlimited e-mail and web-browsing (in 70-plus countries); phone and text messaging service (in 170-plus countries); free phone calls to technical support 24/7; a free accessories kit including headset, charger, USB cable and all adaptors; and unlimited data (no megabyte charges).

There was an office security issue as well. No one had to know I was out of the office because all of my e-mails were automatically and seamlessly rerouted and downloaded to the BlackBerry, but only when I was ready to receive and deal with them.

Another wonderful perk was that, in an emergency, I could have used the BlackBerry to telephone someone locally or back home. Think how important that is when you or the country you are in experiences a devastating event. How do you get in touch with your

loved ones or office colleagues back home to let them know your condition? In my particular case, calls placed and received would have been billed at \$4.49 per minute. Fortunately, e-mail service was all I needed.

If you're like me, every minute away from the office before you leave on a trip counts. So, I was especially pleased with the delivery and setup service Roadpost provided. A simple phone call was all it took to have my BlackBerry kit complete with return shipping documents, arrive at my door two days before my scheduled departure. The next day, Lu Parent from their Technical Assistance Department worked with me over the phone to ensure I was hooked up and ready to go. Four weeks later, I simply placed the kit in the prepaid return envelope provided and called the courier for pickup.

In addition to the International BlackBerry and Worldwide Internet services, the company's comprehensive portfolio also includes International Cellular and Iridium Satellite providing complete global coverage. Visit roadpost.com or call 1-888-290-1616.

Surely, life on the road doesn't get any easier than that! ■



Halfway around the world, I was able to access and respond e-mails — even in the wine region of Hawke's Bay on the northern island of New Zealand. *V&V Hospitality & Media Services*

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