

November 2002

Texas Trails -- Lost in Austin

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Recommended Citation

Leonhardt, Thomas W. (2002) "Texas Trails -- Lost in Austin," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 14: Iss. 5, Article 27.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3776>

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place of business to handle it — those of us who are end-users can filter our mail but what we often really need is a way to block it from coming into our accounts at all.

Let me try to describe what is happening on my campus. Our IT people made two major decisions to help build our “gated community.” First — major electronic junk mail distributors have been identified and are being blocked entirely from our campus network. Legally speaking, we are on solid ground because our mission is the education of our students, and this stuff is totally commercial and not part of that mission. Students, faculty and staff who wish to take part in these commercial activities are welcome to do so on their own time and with their own personal equipment.

Second, my university has installed a rating system for identifying potential spam and this system is currently being tested. We have signed up with a non-profit group called the **Mail Abuse Prevention System (MAPS)**. www.mail-abuse.org.

This filtering process helps email recipients determine rules for what they consider spam versus what they consider legitimate, though perhaps unsolicited messages. Messages that rate high enough on the scorecard get a subject header insert that says {SPAM?}. EXAMPLE: I want all the messages from my subscription and book vendors to come to me. However, some of these

messages are currently receiving the {SPAM?} header because of certain holes in the vendors’ system. Spam is determined by a grading system, and some aspects rate a higher score than others. Providing “open relay” rates a score that is worth mentioning. Relay capability means that potential spammers can hide their true intentions and pass their messages through a host server allowing the relay, often “cloaking” malevolent intentions. This can be insidious if the message carries a virus! At best it can be annoying. My university allowed open relay for many years but last year our state auditors directed us to shut down this capability. Unfortunately, many major sites still allow this because they haven’t realized the implications or they haven’t been asked to change it.

I continue to be amazed when I hear the reports that spammers only receive replies from one-half of one percent of the people they contact. And still, this seems to be enough to keep them in business. Another thing that surprises me is that so many people are having problems with spam and they don’t realize it’s so widespread. Yes, I have received the debt-consolidation and mortgage ads, the toner ads, the people from various African nations who want you to send them money, and the totally bizarre and offensive sex ads that come in with suspiciously innocuous subject lines which apparently are supposed to slip through filters only to promise you sex with animals, dead people or worse. It’s as though these spammers are simply doing this just to see if they CAN. This shakes my

faith in the goodness of people — somehow the ability to send spam is only bringing out the worst in humans instead. We must find a way to turn the tide on this trend. Did people have this much trouble when telephones were first invented? I hope not!

The following articles can give you more complete information about legislation, how to use filters and other tricks to avoid spam:

“Anti-spam bills in the works.” by Anne Chen. *E-week*, Aug. 19, 2002, v.19, issue 33, p.36.

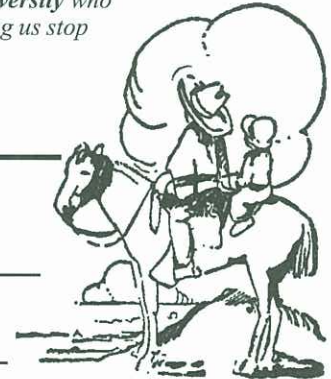
“Just say “No” to spam — again.” by Andrew Brandt. *PC World*. Sept. 2002, v.20, issue 9, p.50.

“STOP SPAM!” by Adam C. Engst. *MacWorld*, Aug. 2002, p.82.

“Strategies for winning the war on spam.” by Alex Salkever. *Business Week Online*, Aug. 20, 2002.

“What spam is, how it is used and proposed laws against it.” All Things Considered, National Public Radio transcript for August 15, 2002. [This is available from LexisNexis Academic Universe or from the NPR Website: www.npr.org.]

A special thanks to Terry Combs and all the folks at Information Technology Services at Appalachian State University who are helping us stop spam!



Texas Trails — Lost in Austin

by **Thomas W. Leonhardt** (St. Edward’s University)
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“Lost in Austin, Juiced in Houston.” That is all I remember from a song popular many years ago. I always liked the way that opening line flowed, the rhyme, the poetry of it. I can’t remember any other lines from that song so I can’t say whether the song writer was being literal or figurative but having lived in Austin (Texas, that is) for almost a month, I know that “Lost in Austin” is not a metaphor, it is a cry for help in navigating the highways and roads of Austin, and once out of town and safely in Houston, the singer takes to drink to forget the circuitous, loopy routes that make sense only with the realization that, with some luck and a good map, you can get where you are going and back again on the same day.

This is a long way of saying that I have not had the time or the courage to go looking for used book stores in Austin or some good, independent book sellers. But there is an-

other reason for not looking for book stores other than the **Barnes and Noble** where I bought a book of Austin maps. I am still recovering from a move of 2,200 miles from Eugene, Oregon to Austin, Texas in a bright yellow Penske truck 25 feet long and pulling a trailer with my automobile on it.

There are only two of us now. Our children are grown and living on their own with their own stuff. But while they have moved out, I seem to have filled all that empty space with books. During these past few years, I seem to have lost my senses, buying books as if they were disappearing and that in order to preserve enough material for my free time and retirement, I needed to stockpile everything that I might need. Never mind that I can’t keep up with annual publishers’ output, never mind that I work in academic libraries with access to literally millions of titles, never mind that public libraries exist to

provide more leisure reading than there is time for even over several life times.

When I left Klamath Falls last year to move to Germany, I should have learned my lesson. I had to pack scores of boxes of books and resort to a trailer when the truck I rented was full but a few boxes remained on the floor of my apartment. I then transported them to Eugene and put them into storage where they remained until just a few weeks ago.

I held a few books out, some were sentimental favorites, some were modern classics (many of which were Signet Classics, an autodidacts literary education in the making), and some were titles from **Harold Bloom’s** *How to Read and Why*. Oddly enough, I didn’t pack even one of the three greatest American novels: *As I Lay Dying* by **William**

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Faulkner, *Miss Lonely Hearts*, by **Nathanael West**, and *Blood Meridian* by **Cormac McCarthy**. I still haven't read *Blood Meridian* and have not re-read the others. I don't need **Bloom** to get me to re-read **Nathanael West** but in this entertainment and personal-cult driven world I just don't feel up to him lately as much as I like all of his novels. I did buy some **Faulkner** before leaving for Germany but left him in storage. He is out now and although I am not ready to start reading all of **Faulkner**, the urge comes more from one of those book talk shows on C-Span than from **Professor Bloom**.

But on his recommendation, I did box and mail to myself in Germany some **Hemingway** short stories and **Italo Calvino's** *Invisible Cities*. I need to ask **Prof. Bloom** about this book because I got lost in one of the cities and never explored the others. **Thomas Mann** and **Franz Kafka** are also on **Prof. Bloom's** list but why take coals to Newcastle? I was going to the source and could buy all the German literature I wanted or at least all that I could afford and that would fit into a small apartment.

Returning to the States presented a dilemma — what to do about the scores of books I had accumulated in just six months. Postage is dear in Germany compared to the United States but I would have to pay in dollars what I paid in marks for German books, about a 2:1 ratio, so I mailed myself a couple of boxes of books and then packed the rest among my luggage and paid \$120 for an extra suitcase, not all books, of course, but large enough and heavy enough to make the extra charge worthwhile.

Once back in Eugene, I began to frequent the **Smith Family Book Store** and a couple of others to a lesser degree. I didn't want to unpack the books in storage but what is a home without books? I found music for the guitar and trumpet, classic German literature at a bargain price, especially at the end of each term at the **University of Oregon**. And children's books to read to my grandchildren when they were at our apartment and a few cook books to make up for the ones in storage and a few **Christopher Morley** titles that I didn't have and some **William McFee** and a few titles from the philosophy section that were not on some course list and affordable and justifiable.

I tried to restrain myself and used the **Eugene Public Library** to resume my reading of the *Hornblower* books by **C.S. Forester** and to begin reading the *Jack Aubrey* books by **Patrick O'Brian**. I found a novel by each author and decided to fully enjoy *Master and Commander* by **O'Brian** and *Flying Colours* by **Forester**.

Not only did I enjoy both books, I noticed that each one was full of nautical terms so

when I returned those volumes, I chose some others by the same authors and decided that in order to better understand the nautical terms, I would borrow the library's copy of *A Sea of Words: a Lexicon and Companion to the Complete Seafaring Tales of Patrick O'Brian* by **Dean King**. As I worked my way to that section of the stacks, *The Hornblower Companion: An Atlas and Personal Commentary on the Writing of the Hornblower Saga, with Illustrations and Maps* by **Samuel Bryant** (New York: Bonanza Books, 1964) by **C.S. Forester** seemed to call to me and I plucked it from its resting place just before finding the *O'Brian* guide.

A couple of days later, while in **Eugene's Barnes and Noble** store, I asked a clerk about *A Sea of Words* and was pleased to find that there was a copy there for me to buy and a new edition (Third Edition, an Owl Book, New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2000) at that. I could hardly wait to get home and begin using it.

As an experiment, I started my *Hornblower* book first and turned to **King's** glossary as I came to terms that I was unfamiliar with. Every nautical term and most geographic and historical names I ran into were in *A Sea of Words*. And I could trace *Hornblower's* voyages using *The Hornblower Companion* but a library copy and not my own. I stored that tidbit away for future searching on the Internet.

To make a long story even longer, just before leaving for Austin, I returned to Klamath Falls to visit friends, including **Aaron Ashurst**. Klamath Falls is great for bird watching with the usual migratory birds but bald eagles and white pelicans, too. **Crater Lake National Park** is just an hour away and the **Lava Beds National Monument** is about an hour away, too, but just across the California line. The town also features [**Ted**] **Swan's Bakery** where the city's symphony director doubles as the best baker in the area and one of the best anywhere on earth. I would pay a


lot for one of his brioches right now even if I didn't have a latte to go with it. Those are all good reasons to visit the area but you would miss a wonderful opportunity if you didn't walk down Main Street, brioche in hand, to spend some time chatting with **Aaron**.

Aaron earns his living running a used book store in a small Oregon city off the beaten path but his book stock is superior to many a similar store in larger areas and near large universities. **Aaron** will talk to you about books all day long, pausing only long enough to answer the phone or to ring up a sale on his antique, mechanical cash register. He reads, too, dipping into his inventory whenever he feels like it without hurting its retail (re-sale) value. Can a haberdasher, a baker, a car dealer, etc. make the same claim?

Well, I just stopped by to say hi and ask if he had been able to unload those old *National Geographic* magazines that I had given him last year, not because I didn't value them but because my truck was out of room and I didn't want to schlep them another mile.

We talked and then he had a customer to help so I browsed, found three hardbound *Hornblower* novels, and got to talking about them to **Aaron**. He knew about *A Sea of Words* but hadn't seen a copy. Then I mentioned *A Hornblower Companion* and he produced a copy and let me have it for about half of what I paid for the **King** glossary. Never mind that I knew I would be moving to Texas in a matter of weeks.

And here I am, lost in Austin and becoming re-acquainted with my friends who have finally been released from confinement. Many of them are on shelves in a walk-in closet while I get settled and determine just where I can put more book shelves.

My new job takes most of my energies and there is no rush. In due time, I will discover the book stores that I have heard about and when I buy new book cases, I will make sure that I can shelve them two-deep. 

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