Any particular story to tell concerning the writing of this book?
I proposed to my soon-to-be wife, Ania, with this book. The book’s dedication is the proposal . . . She was
very surprised.
Before dessert I had the maitre d’ bring a ‘pirate chest’ I had bought to the table. The chest was
locked so I gave her a key. When she opened it, inside she saw the book. She was thrilled to see the
book and at first thought that was what we were celebrating. But after a minute she noticed the book
was book-marked at the dedication page. She opened it to that page and read the dedication and was
shocked, which was great. Then I lifted up the false bottom in the chest I had created and below it was
the ring.

It went perfectly . . . There were 3 layers of surprise. First, when the chest came out, at which point
she thought it might be a proposal. Second, when she opened it and saw the book, at which point she
thought that’s what the full surprise was. And third when she read the dedication and ‘found’ the ring,
when she realized it was indeed a proposal!

What’s some good advice that you’ve received concerning writing? What’s some advice that
you could offer young writers?
Keep it simple. It’s almost cliché to say something like, “50% of what you write is for you, not the reader,
and so could and should be cut.” But this is true, and while it’s very hard to adhere to this rule in prac­
tice, I believe in striving to do so as much as possible.

How did you find the publisher for this book? What has your experience as a publisher been like?
I was very fortunate because my publisher, Princeton University Press, approached me about writing this
book. Everyone I’ve worked with at PUP has been truly outstanding and I feel incredibly lucky to have had
the chance to do so.

What are you working on at the moment?
I’m working on a project that explores what I’m calling the “law and economics of superstition.” Many
important superstitions, I argue, have a rational choice foundation, and perhaps most critically, perform
important social governance functions where government can’t be relied on for this purpose. I’m also
working on a book that examines the economics of anarchy in everyday life.

What are you reading?
Today, I’m reading Gypsy Demons and Divinities, by Elwood Trigg and Expensive Habits, by Peter Mayle.

Peter Leeson, BB&T Professor for the Study of Capitalism at George Mason University has a blog at
austrianeconomists.typepad.com.