

The Redwood Stoa

MINUTES FROM

JULY 17, 2016, SUNDAY

REDWOOD STOA GROUP MEETING

Met at Café Au Coquelet, University Avenue, Berkeley

10:30AM–1:15PM, the Weather: Overcast

Attendees: James, Simon, David, Seamus, John

This month's theme: *Justice*

Reports and Announcements:

- Seamus went to Stoic Camp in Wyoming!
 - PHOTOS of snow in May!
 - About 30 people, mostly University of Wyoming students of the Philosophy Department.
 - Very nice accommodations.
 - Dissecting Meditations and Enchiridion (no Seneca); lectures in the evening.
 - Recommended, but with the caveat that only 10% of people have out-of-school life experiences.
- The Stoic Fellowship — Globally Connected – Locally Engaged
 - <http://www.stoicfellowship.com/>
 - Nine groups, and a guy in Greece who is into Stoicism.
 - StoicCon – “Get your StoicCon” on October 15th will be hosted by the NY Stoic group.
 - <https://howtobeastoxic.wordpress.com/stoicon/>
 - Minneapolis, MN in 2018; Athens in 2029.
- Meetup has a function to send e-mails to people based on whether or not they have been active.
 - One person, who hasn't been able to attend, is not able to meet on Sundays.
- September will be our third anniversary!
 - Meeting in San Francisco, at the park's Horticultural Library, followed by Greek food.
- August's meeting will be in the Redwoods!
 - 10:30am meet at Café Au Coquelet, University Avenue, Berkeley, and then drive to the Redwoods (Simon has offered to drive, but may need a second driver).
 - Meditation beforehand.
- Game night!
 - August 27th, Friday, at 7pm, in Panera by the Fremont BART station.

Announcement of upcoming community service opportunities and events:

- Help Restore Huckleberry Park – Oakland Hills 9:30AM Saturday August 13th @ 6934 Skyline Blvd.
- Little Basin park work exchange; trail maintenance for free camping & meal (November 2016); for more information contact James!

Goals:

Group goals achieved—

- We met!



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- James provided material to start the discussion on this month's theme.

Group goals in progress—

- Provide material to start the discussion on each month's theme.
- Work on the Stoic Toolbox, and finish by December; our quip.com page is available (a link to which should be on the facebook.com page).
- Work on the Stoic primer document, using quip.com

Personal goals achieved—

- James and John exercised!
- David gave up Facebook, sweets, and fried food, and has begun meditation!

Personal goals in progress—

- Simon will continue to read Sellars.
- James and John will continue to work on the Marcus Aurelius course through www.collegeofstoicphilosophers.org
- John and James will continue to exercise.

Open discussion of theme: Justice

- Discussion on topics from Seamus' trip to Stoic Camp:
 - Stoicism may easily be rejected by a person who has greatly suffered and who has never heard of Stoicism before; however, given the choice, such a person would likely choose to be stoic through such suffering
 - James' temporary fix on his car, and his application of Stoic acceptance of when the fix failed, seems like a poor fable to be used to encourage others to get their car really fixed and avoid lots of stress
- Discussion on Practice and Meditation:
 - If you are going to self-flagellate when you think you've done something wrong, be sure to praise yourself when you go back to doing something right
 - Meditation is like sharpening the saw, switching away from the activity that you're trying to accomplish in order to better accomplish it in the future
 - Guilt as feeling bad for your actions, reminding you of your values; shame as feeling bad for who you are, and may only have value in a social context (shame in murder)
- Marcus Aurelius, "Firstly, avoid all actions that are haphazard or purposeless; and secondly, let every action aim solely at the common good."
 - What is the common good?
- The Black Lives Matter movement and police violence
- Learning a philosophy is an important practice, as is avoiding misinterpretations and incorporating the ideas into a person's life at any age
 - Ayn Rand's Objectivism as a tricky philosophy...
 - An Absolutist feels very comfortable executing Justice
- Do judges struggle to be more stoic when deciding sentences?
 - Like a surgeon, it may just be a question of applying the rules for the good of the body



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- Judges and surgeons can make their decisions based on the collective knowledge about the subject, which they can personally stand by or stand against
- How to dole justice out in our daily lives
 - Giving money to the poor and feeling guilty when you don't
 - Does supporting panhandling contribute to the common good?
 - It's only by chance that I am not a panhandler
- Carrying out justice in situations that exist on the border of acceptable and pathologically unacceptable
 - Justice as relative
 - The sage could accept the relativism of justice, and dole it out appropriately
 - Consequentialism, utilitarianism, and 'the ends justifies the means'
- Stoicism accepts that we are self-centered, and the right thing to do is ultimately up to the individual
- Justice for having guns for individuals, but how do you rationalize that gun availability is for the common good?
 - What is good for the individual may not be good for the people
- Is it ever good to make an example out of someone?
 - Yes, without going to extremes

Next Month's Meeting:

- Next meeting will be in **Berkeley (then into the Redwoods!)**
- Next month's theme: **Fortitude**

Join the Redwood Stoa! Now you can become an official member of the Redwood Stoa by adding your name through the following web form: <https://redwoodstoa.wordpress.com/join-the-redwood-stoa/>
It's pleasant to do and will help the group effectively plan future events!

