

REGISTRY REPORT

an eMagazine publication for the
Stoic community since May 2007

Stoicus communitas : Stoikos koinonia



March 2010: Issue # 29

Published by and for New Stoa

New Stoa News

You are on the map! . . . Or will be soon. It was alert reader **Steven Leysen's** idea, and now comes the donkey work. But you can check it out as we make progress. On the Home Page, click on Stoic Map and see where we are all over the world. You may just be amazed!

Marcus Aurelius Conference is full speed ahead. If you haven't made a commitment to be there, do so today. April is sunny in San Diego and accommodations fill fast! Email jjrevans@hotmail.com to let us know you are coming.

New Members

Rob Allen (1968-) is a clerk in Ashville, North Carolina, USA, who said: "I'm just at a place in my life where I need a philosophy to get me through the day and the years. I want to learn how to not get disturbed and obsessed over things, which has been the bane of my existence forever."

Andrew Almeida (1988-) is a senior at the University of Nevada, Reno. "I consider myself a true Stoic, and I apply this to acting, my art and craft, and adhere to the acting technique of David Mamet, which is very much like Stoicism."

Jamie Bater (1982-) is a coordinator in Calgary, Canada, who said: "I believe the Stoic teachings can bring a vast improvement to one's life, so many of the key values translate to modern living."

Ralph Bishop (1985-) works for the government where he lives in Buffalo, New York. "I came across the *Meditations* by Marcus Aurelius in an entry level history course in 2005. Upon further reading, and with the profound effect the writing had on me, I investigated further. Now I read Epictetus, Seneca and Aurelius regularly and want to devote more time to Stoic study."

Matthew Cople (1970-) is a Software Developer living in Gladstone, Missouri, USA. "I have been a student of classical history and thought since childhood. I am attracted to Stoicism because although it is ancient, its message of rationality, self-reliance, and moderation is timeless. I am looking forward to living the good life with friends from the Fourth Stoa!"

Conley Dudley (1953-) is a retired carpenter in Mason, West Virginia, USA. "Hello, I saw your site referenced on the Internet and thought it was very interesting. Thank you."

Andrew Kenworthy (1962-) is an Art Department Supervisor in Tucson, Arizona, USA. "I've worked as an artist all my life in many different ways. One day I was working with a very successful sculptor and spilling my guts about what I thought about life, death, and everything in between. He told me that I was a Stoic. I didn't even know what one was. He suggested I read *Meditations* by Marcus Aurelius. As it turns out he was right. Stoicism affirmed so much of what I already believed that I was instantly hooked, and I still am!"

Walter Kirchner (1962-) is a Human Performance Architect living in London, Canada. "I will start by stating that we cannot isolate one aspect of life from another. When we change the way we live, we change ourselves, we change society, we change our values. And so this statement is about paying attention to relationships, to causes and effects, and it is about being responsible for what one knows."

Kelly Johnson (1985-) is a Software Engineer residing in San Francisco, California. He said: "Until I found a snippet on Stoicism, I had trouble explaining to my friends that all negative feelings were avoidable through a proper understanding of the universe. After I found Stoicism, I was able to expand my vague personal philosophies to more developed, encompassing ideas."

Chuck Martin (1963-) is a lab technician/metrologist in Allegan, Michigan, USA. "I've recently discovered Stoicism, and it has a resonance with me. Far from being a "dead Greek guy" school of thought, it's a vibrant and useful way of looking at the world."

Jim Mazak (1971-) lives in Canton, Ohio, USA, and claims, "I'm a stoic because nature deemed it so."

Michael Minor (1983-) lives in East Greenbush, New York, and is "just seeking a deeper understanding."

Julia Ohl (1952-) lives in Alpine, Texas. "I have been interested in philosophy all of my life. I struggled for most of it to find the god who wasn't there, recently becoming an atheist, thanks especially to Richard Dawkins. I have for many years been into simplifying my life, especially after reading Thoreau. My goal has always been to become wise. I am far from reaching it, but I think Stoicism is a good path towards the goal. While Thoreau mentions the Stoics, I only really discovered them in 1996 when I found a copy of Sharon Lebell's *Art of Living* in a used book store. I live in the mountains of West Texas where my daughter and I are building an earth sheltered stone house. My bachelor's degree is in Spanish/French and I have an MA in Linguistics."

Alex Oxford (1992-) is a philosophy student in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, who said, "I believe everything in my life has led me up to this point where I embrace Stoicism. I have always thought as a Stoic, but never behaved as one. I have gone months without shoes, days without food and water and routinely, and voluntarily, discipline myself. It has taken me many years to come to my own conclusions on God, and I have found that I identify perfectly with Naturalistic Pantheism. I am ready to take the leap into living the life of a true Stoic."

Cody Peabody (1991-), a landscaper in Vancouver, Canada, is new to the Stoic community and strives to learn more about his new hobby: Life.

Zeljko Poznanovic (1958-) is an Attorney in Belgrade, Serbia, who said, "I am admirer of Hellenistic philosophy and Roman way of life -- and Roman religion of course."

Matthew Stafford (1983-) is a student in Flint, Michigan, USA, who says, "Finally a group of people who have it together."

Anthony Roberto Sanchez of Costa Rica

by Erik Wiegardt



Tony Sanchez

Anthony "Tony" Sanchez currently works at Hewlett Packard, the largest private employer in Costa Rica, as an "internal SOX auditor in Change Management, verifying that any changes made to the computer production environment have been adequately tested and documented." When asked to clarify what that meant to a layman such as myself, Tony said, "SOX stands for the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, and its purpose is to protect shareholders and the general public from accounting errors and fraudulent practices in US Publicly traded companies. It assures that all financial records are kept safe and unaltered, so my function is to ensure that these electronic records are not modified or omitted during computer infrastructure changes.

Okay, thank you for that. Let's start at the beginning.

Tony was born in 1965 in Los Angeles. His father was a US Army sergeant who fell in love with a Costa Rican native visiting a friend and they were married soon after. His father was a professional soldier and had been in combat in both the WW II Pacific Theater

and the Korean Conflict long before Tony was born. His mother was "much more strict than my father, and she had an extremely strict code of conduct, a very 'moral' person with few contradictions, and as such she was my first example of ethics applied to real life.

When Tony was 8 years old his father died and his mother became homesick for Costa Rica. After two more years in LA, they moved to CR where Tony says he has "gone native" and plans to live happily for the rest of his life. He lives and works in the cosmopolitan city of San Jose.

As a boy, Tony traveled back and forth between the US and Costa Rica until at 18 he decided to stay in CR. He then attended the University of Costa Rica and studied Computer Science, eventually getting a Bachelor's Degree. Later he went on to get a Master's in Business Administration with emphasis in Computer Services.

Tony is married and has four children ranging in age from 4 to 22.

I asked Tony when he first discovered Stoicism.

That is a very interesting question. I guess I have to start at the beginning: I like Science Fiction. Not the flying saucer riding one eyed monster type, but what we call "hard science fiction," which is usually based on current scientific or political theories and who's authors take very seriously their audience. On TV I was a fan of a SciFi show called *Babylon 5*, which was very well written and whose writer-producer I happened to respect a lot. In one episode the main character, a Jesuit-educated soldier, had a scene where he was sitting with his eyes closed listening to a recorded voice, a reading of some kind of book. It sounded religious but it wasn't. What little was said sounded interesting, and that sparked my interest. In the writer's blog, he later mentioned that it was a favorite book of his, called *Meditations*, by Marcus Aurelius.

I ran to buy it and was hooked. I was already very interested in Philosophy as a way of life, having read *Atlas Shrugged* by Ayn Rand who opened my eyes to what philosophy should be, not what I had been exposed to in my University years. By that time, I wasn't all that comfortable

with Rand's vision of Human Kind, but I have to admit that her books prepared me for what was later to come when I read *Meditations*. I was mesmerized by it and started a journey that I continue today, and intend on staying the course for as long as I live.

Do you consider yourself to be a Stoic?

I thought so much about how to answer this. If I say yes, I feel I am committing hubris, maybe giving the idea that I think I have done great and significant progress in my internal changes, when I am very clear in that I have not. And yet if I said no, there is a part of me that rejects this, calling to my attention the dedication I have put into correcting my habits of thought and action. So I will answer that I consider myself to be a "developing" Stoic, in that I continue to study Stoicism, there is still much to learn, and also that I try to practice what I learn every day. I have seen some changes in me over the last few years that give me great satisfaction, and also, I continue to see failures and setbacks, that although they might make me feel a little frustrated they also give me a little satisfaction, because now I am capable of seeing them and working consciously towards their elimination.

What do you see as the future of Stoicism in the world?

I see it in the same way as the original Stoics used to see it, in that it is medicine for the soul. When I say soul I mean the source of our internal peace and capacity for happiness, which are greatly lacking in the 21st Century's common man or woman. Look at the amount of self help books, the size of this section in any major book store is impressive, and in itself says a lot. Humanity is looking for a new source of wisdom, a new philosophy (a word that is avoided in the mainstream because it brings on the wrong connotations), to come and replace the dogmatic religious views on life and happiness that many of us were brought up with and that do not work anymore. I really don't think that Stoicism will fill this need for everybody, it requires hard work, a bit of sacrifice and a lot of focus, but I do think that it can change enough key people that will set an example, and will help spread out many of its tenets and help society as a whole.

For me, Stoicism came to fill in a gap in my personal life that helped me keep my smile through some very hard times, but it eventually became a very personal goal with which I measure myself and define my personal success. I think most of us eventually find out that money, position at work, social standing, all are transitory and are not a valid (nor just) reflection of who we really are. At least for me, when that point came I needed to find a way to measure myself and my progress as a human being, and this is it, so you can see that it is central to my life.

* * *

Thank you, Tony, what a great testament to the value of Stoicism in the world today. I mean that. I find it very encouraging and am grateful that you took the time and made the effort to so eloquently expressed your thoughts for the Stoic community.

A Stoic Poet

Michel J. G. Daw, a member of the Stoic community who lives in Gatineau, Quebec, Canada, describes himself as a Stoic Prokopton, Training Manager (aircraft maintenance software), and Part-Time Poet. He has analyzed the prose of Seneca and transformed it into verse. First, the prose:

Michel said, "While reading Seneca (Loeb edition - R. Gummere trans.), I came across a passage that had a very poetic feel to it. So, of course, since I am not one to leave well enough alone, I have expressed the passage in Sonnet (modified petrarchan, if anyone cares). What follows is the passage, then the poem.

“And so we should love all of our dear ones, both those whom, by the condition of birth, we hope will survive us, and those whose own most just prayer is to pass on before us, but always with the thought that we have no promise that we may keep them forever - nay, no promise even that we may keep them for long. Often must the heart be reminded - it must remember that loved objects will surely leave, nay, are already leaving. Take whatever Fortune gives, remembering that it has no voucher. Snatch the pleasures your children bring, let your children in turn find delight in you, and drain joy to the dregs without delay; no promise has been given you for this night - nay, I have offered too long a respite! - no promise has been given even for this hour.”

SENECA: “To Marcia on Consolation,” x. 3, 4

Fortune's Gifts

by Michel Daw

So we should love those dearest to our heart,
Both young and old, whose lives we would prolong.
No hope have we that we will never part,
None even that we keep them very long.

How often must the heart reminded be
that those we love will someday surely leave.
Nay, are already leaving, this we see,
for Fortune's gifts no voucher we receive.

So drain the cup of joy without delay,
No promise has been given for this night.
Nay, I have offered too long a respite!
No promise has been given for this day!

Snatch now the pleasures that your children bring
That through delight in you their hearts can sing!

* * * *

Thank you for reading,

Erik