

CRANIUM

Volume 1, Issue 2
December 2003

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW...

"New Year's eve is like every other night; there is no pause in the march of the universe, no breathless moment of silence among created things that the passage of another twelve months may be noted; and yet no man has quite the same thoughts this evening that come with the coming of darkness on other nights."

~ Hamilton Wright Mabie

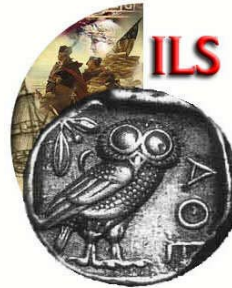
As the New Year approaches, it is a time for accounting, for looking back on activities and for realizing the contributions that have been made in the past to benefit the future. The year at ILS has been productive, with a new Student Organiza-

tion, a newsletter, and several events sponsored by Le Salon.

The ILS student board began its meetings last year, but had to wait until the beginning of the Fall semester to see any of its ideas realized.

At its inception, the student board began working towards an open house that would be able to introduce the concept of the ILS student board, and Le Salon, to the students on campus. Students walked State Street to find door prizes, and ideas for the open house began to be put on paper.

In the fall, Le Salon formally received its new name, and with that name began to plan an opening night event. From an introduction to the programs



A new year for ILS

available in ILS to the possibilities of scholarships, to a debate between Professor Craig Werner and Professor Howard Schweber, the details were laid out.

Door prizes were sorted, flyers were hung, and pizza was ordered so that the event would take place without a hitch. [continued, p.3]

Inside this issue:

Suggestions?	2
Focus: ILS Student Board	2
Holiday Reading	3
Archimedes' Puzzle	4

DITTO!

A few notable quotes from quoteable folks:

"It is common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it frankly and try another, but above all, try something"

~ Franklin D. Roosevelt

"The actions of men are the best interpreters of their thoughts."

~ John Locke

THE MATRIX: REVISITED

The movie "The Matrix", as well as its sequels *Reloaded* and *Revolutions* have proven to be box office hits. Focusing on the life of Neo, a computer-geek-turned-revolutionary, *The Matrix* brings viewers into a world of the surreal, where ma-

chines have taken over the jobs originally given to humans.

With help from the other humans, Neo must fight the computers, specifically a program named "Smith" to allow humans to take back

the land that was originally theirs.

Within the world outside the Matrix, humans have formed a small colony, named Zion, and must work together to both wake up more
Continued, p. 2, Matrix

THE MATRIX: QUESTIONED

Humans, but also to fight against the world of machines to one day reclaim the place they called home.

The Matrix provides the same glimpse of what could happen to the world as did *AI*, showing a world in which machines become reality, and reality in its own turn becomes incomprehensible. The storyline is able to drag viewers into the movie on its own.

By questioning reality, and the human perception of reality, The Matrix provides a challenge to those who enjoy contemplating the myths of reality.

Thus, the ILS student organization found itself together watching the Matrix and discussing many of the questions it brought up under the supervision of Daniel Kapust and John Evans, the Lecturer and a TA for ILS 205.

After the movie, the group contemplated several questions:

Do we exist, or, are we in the Matrix?

What is the nature of happiness, or, why leave the Matrix?



Neo (Keanu Reeves) is given the opportunity to find out what the Matrix really is.

What is freedom, or, is Neo, or anyone else, free?

These questions, raised by the movie, have no definitive answers, although humans from Plato through modern philosophers at Harvard and Oxford continue to contemplate these questions, or others like it. Perhaps it is not the answer, then, that must be found, but rather the discussion and contemplation that ensues once one of these questions is asked—and therein we find the goal of Le Salon!

Soooo...if you would like to voice an opinion on any one of these three issues, please write an email to:

Lisa Valenti-Hein

Lvalentihein@wisc.edu

... it will be placed in the next Cranium.

SUGGESTIONS?

The ILS student board is always looking for new ideas of things to do to promote its meaning and mission. Every event of Le Salon, from Undergraduate brown bag lunches to Matrix movie reviews, is developed and planned by the students.

The students have put together introductory events, such

“Every event of Le Salon, from Undergraduate brown bag lunches to Matrix movie reviews, is developed and planned by the students.”

as the ‘getting to know you’ night at Mieklejohn house, and a brown bag lunch (see front page article).

If you would like to become involved in the life of the ILS student board, we would love to have you! There is always need of student help, from people who

arrange events, to those who present in them, to those who brainstorm...and even those who write newsletters!

We are also always in search of new ideas, and are willing to write about anything in the pages of this newsletter. Please feel free to write to the student board (see article below) if you would like to help out, or have any suggestions.

FOCUS: ILS STUDENT BOARD

The ILS Board is the group of movers and shakers behind Le Salon [pardon the cliché]. They got together last year and began to make plans for a student-run organization that would allow people to congregate and discuss the ideas of the ancient and modern philosophers as they applied to modern events.

The group, pictured, has been behind the showings of *The Matrix*, undergrad brownbag lunches, and the opening event that was featured in the November edition of the Cranium.



A Candid of the ILS Board

If you are interested in working with the Student board, or in writing an article for the Cranium [shameless self-promotion], please send and email to:

lssb@yahoo.com

NEW YEARS REFLECTIONS

The evening went off without any difficulties, and Le Salon turned its attention to other matters, such as the new newsletter, *Cranium*, movie nights, and an undergrad brown bag luncheon.

The newsletter was published, and became a regular feature of Le Salon, with announcements about future events, stories of interest to those studying in the Integrated Liberal Studies Program, and other quotes and inserts. Hopefully, this publication will grow to more than the few people behind it now so that it can better express the ideas and varied points of view that exist behind the Integrated Liberal Studies program, its student board, and Le Salon, the student organization.

At the undergraduate brown bag luncheon, Robert [Bob] Probst presented the research that he had done for his ILS capstone seminar, which is necessary for a degree in ILS. His study

of the voting trends of modern day youth was able to shed new light on what many consider to be the main problem with today's political system in the United States: voter inactivity.

Finally, Le Salon was able to close out the year with the film *The Matrix* [see front page article]. Several students were able to use this medium to explore some of the essential questions behind the ILS program.

Le Salon has faced challenges, but is looking back on a productive semester, and looking forward to a year of possibility...

...now for some New Year's resolutions!



A new motto for the ILS group?

BOOKLOVERS: GOOD BOOKS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Looking for something to do over the holidays? Can't quite get over the nagging feeling that you should be doing something more, educational (gasp) with your time? The solution is clear: a few good books!

Ishmael by Dan Brown

A book that presents a unique, grassroots theory of how the world should be run, through the discourse of a

young man and a Gorilla named Ishmael, who come together through a newspaper article:

TEACHER seeks pupil. Must have an earnest desire to save the world. Apply in person.

The storyline and the theory behind the book are sure to keep you hooked for a long while to come.

The Sparrow by Mary Doria Russell

Imagine receiving a message from outer space, in the form of a song. This is ex-

actly what happens to Emilio Sanchez and his friends, as they begin a novel that is a journey to a distant world. They must work together in order to explore a world that is completely unlike anything they had previously known, with

new foods, new cultures, and new peoples.

Throughout the journey, as Emilio learns the language of the new race of beings, the group attempts to learn more about

the new civilization that they have discovered, only to find that they are ever more confused by the society that evolved.

This book takes a close look not only at human assumptions of other species, but at human assumptions about faith and about themselves. It is a piercing look at the human soul, and the human psyche, that leaves the reader with many more questions than it does answers. This book will provide a non-stop read over the holiday season.

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance by Robert Pirsig

This is a book that falls in the category of "love it or hate it". Pirsig takes readers on a journey into the mind of a former (?) madman as he journeys across the United States on his motorcycle.

Pirsig takes a scrutinizing look at the human being, claiming that for each person "the cycle you are working on is yourself". Although long in places, Zen gives good analogies, and asks some of the central questions of life.

Through his quest across the country, Pirsig takes on love, technology, science and nature to form his picture of the world as it is. The book will stretch your mind and your vocabulary, but leave you in the end with a new insight into life.

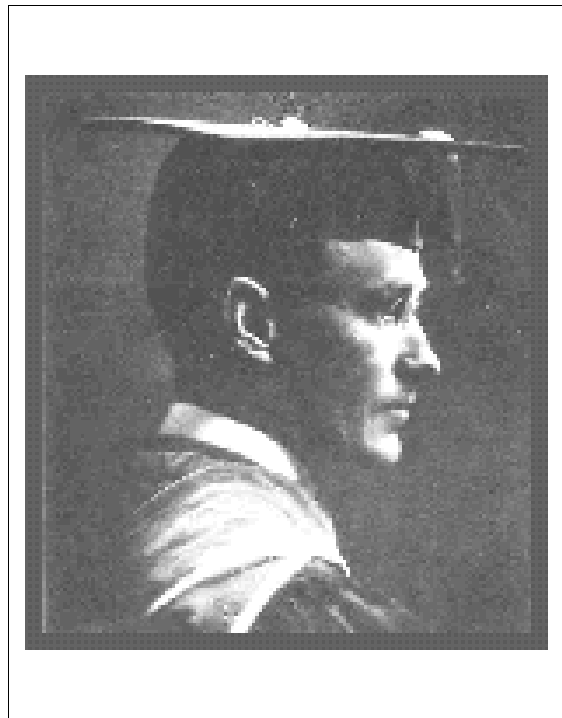
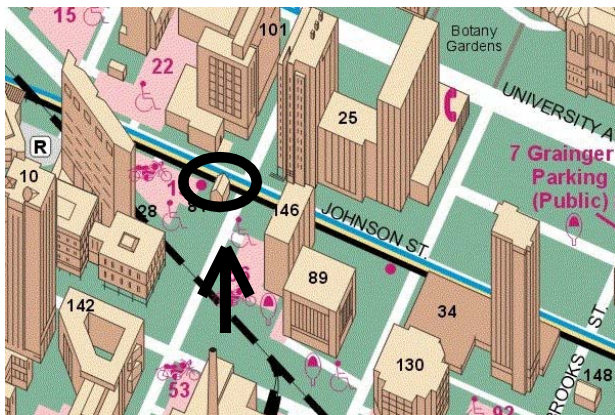
Just a few ideas for reading over the holidays, whether they make their way to your hands as stocking stuffers, gifts from friends, or a gift to yourself, feel free to give a good book a try, in between sledding and sibling-torture, that is.

LE SALON

Meiklejohn House
228 N. Charter Street
Madison, WI 53715

Phone: (608) 262-2190
Fax: (608) 262-4042
Email: ilssb@yahoo.com

WE'RE ON THE
WEB!
<http://www.wisc.edu/ils/>



Alexander Meiklejohn

ARCHIMEDES' PUZZLE: SOLVED!

For many years, the treatise of Archimedes, called the Stomachion, was generally ignored. Originally written in 975, and written over by Christian monks in the 13th century, the manuscript passed through the hands of Johan Ludvig Heiber, and a French family from Istanbul before being anonymously purchased for \$2 million. The writing of Archimedes was uncovered with the help of computer imaging and ultraviolet light, which allowed the scientists to recover some of the text that had been bleached and written over in the 13th century.

Originally, those who read the treatise on the Stomachion thought that it had to do with a children's game, in which various small strips of paper were pieced together in order to form various shapes, and forms the basis of many modern-day games in which children

attempt to create figures out of irregularly shaped blocks.

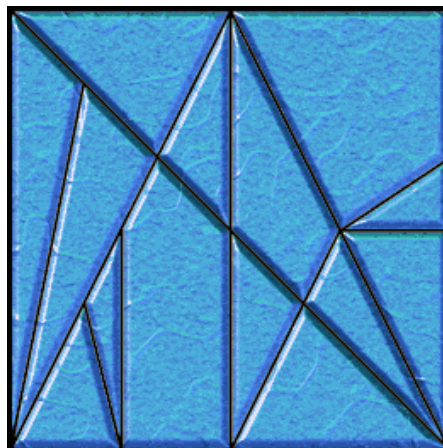
Dr. Reviel Netz, however, had a different opinion. The historian of mathe-

matics at Stanford postulated that the puzzle was in reality a question of how many different ways the various pieces of the puzzle [shown at the left] could be put together to form a square. This revelation was groundbreaking because it revealed a knowledge of combinatorics that dated to the tenth century.

By systematically counting all of the various ways that the puzzle could be put together, Dr. Netz arrived at the solution to the Stomachion. His number was double checked by a computer program that verified the work previously done by Dr. Netz and his colleagues.

The magic number?: 17,152.

~ Story originally found in the New York Times of December 14, 2003.



The stomachion, one of the worlds' oldest puzzles...finally solved.