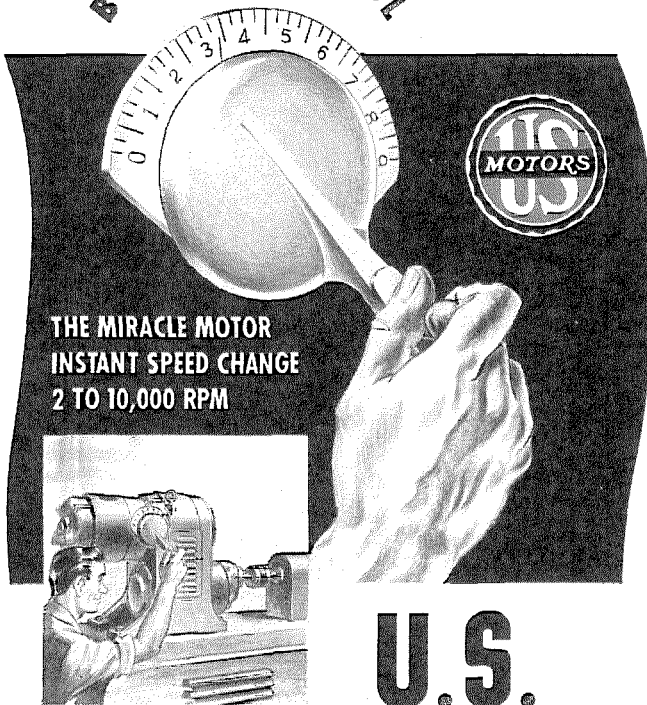


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THE BEAVER

Some Notes on Student Life

Third Term

AS STUDENTS RETURNED to Tech after their short spring vacation, it was quite obvious that this was the third term that was beginning. For one thing, undergrads were not busily running up to each other and asking, "How did you do last term?" No one took the unconstitutional liberty of pulling the little brown envelopes from the mail boxes and holding them up to a strong light to determine the scholastic rank of his colleagues. No one ran around the campus with blue books trying to call a few minor points on his final exams to the attention of his instructors. There was no look of determination on the undergraduates' faces. They had spent all their energy—or rather the Institute had spent it for them—during the first two terms.

The Call to Worship

The mind of the undergrad is often easy to understand—for everyone, that is, except that great part of the faculty which still clings to the heroic myth that the Caltech student is something more than just human.

The undergraduate spends much of his time—certainly more than is necessary or even healthy—thinking about grades. During the first term he is eager to establish good study habits for the year, and makes many sacrifices and genuflections to the Great God G.P.A. He thinks of the grades that will go on his record for the year in terms of the grades he is getting that term. But the undergrad thinks differently in the third term. By then his grades for the year are already two-thirds determined, and his third-term performance thus seems comparatively unimportant.

The Wet Term

Climate is just as important a factor in luring the students from their books during the third term as the psychological factors already mentioned. The combination of Pasadena heat and smog is enough to make the print blur in any textbook. In the vicinity of the student houses, the strain is alleviated by numerous outbreaks of hostilities in the form of water fights. Usually, these are just skirmishes involving no more than a few men. But at times they assume such epic proportions as a conflict between two different houses.

The Sporting Life

As the name implies, this sport involves the production of water, either from a container or a stirrup pump,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

directed by a participant toward any member of the opposition. This form of activity is most popular with the freshmen, but also finds much favor among those sophomores who mature slowly. Because such production of water within the student houses is against the student house rules, ardent enthusiasts of the water fight often exercise much ingenuity to perpetuate their sport.

On the Beach


Another distraction is the beach. During the third term it is not uncommon to see Tech men bound for the beach, with a blanket under one arm and a book under the other. The function of the book is not quite clear. One school of thought maintains that it serves as a refreshing memento of the happy excursion when, as it is opened the next Monday, it spills its contents of sand upon the undergrad's desk. Another approach to the problem of why Tech men take books to the beach is more subtle. It assumes that the mere presence of the book soothes a strained conscience, which has not forgotten that nothing but a dimly-lit library is the proper place for a Tech man—even on a bright spring day.

Allegedly, in spring a young man's fancy turns toward the greatest distraction of them all. But Caltech is not the ideal place to observe whether or not this saying is true.

School for Pool-Sharks

During the spring vacation, a truck delivered a shuffle board to 1301 E. California Street. The shuffle board now supplements the ping-pong and pool tables already gracing a section in the basement of the student houses known as the "game room." The game room is kept up financially by a special fund. In other respects, the game room is kept up by the freshmen in the houses. As with any organized and many unorganized activities at Tech, there is a committee which is concerned with just whose turn it is to clean up the game room. As with all school activities which lack an overabundance of glamour, the game room committee has much difficulty prodding people to keep the room in order. Another student committee is now hard at work to assist the game room committee in forming the required subcommittees to keep the room in order. —Al Haber '53

SIT BACK AND RELAX



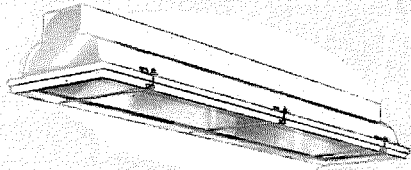
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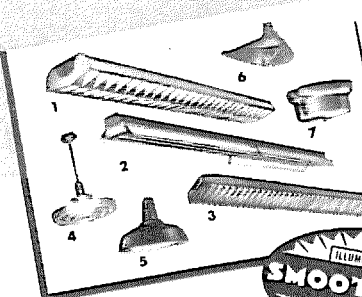
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