

A LOOK BACK, A LOOK AHEAD

THE SOPHOMORE kicked off his loafers and sat down on his bed, leaning back up against the burlap wall. So this is spring vacation, he smiled to himself.

It was always an unsettling experience to be around the student houses when they were deserted, as they were now. There was something wrong about seeing the same old rooms and alleys and courtyard, and not seeing the dirty socks in the corner of the lounge, or the puddle where the water balloon had hit, or the little groups of Techmen standing around laughing and talking and complaining.

Almost everybody was away for the week of vacation, it seemed. Even by Wednesday of finals weeks the meal count had dropped heavily in the dining rooms; now all but about fifty of the residents of the houses were home, or climbing mountains, or visiting friends, but anyway gone.

The Sophomore lived in the East and it never had seemed worthwhile to him to go home for the spring week, although he had almost weakened when he heard of an opening in a car that was driving back that would only have cost fifty dollars or so.

But he had a long list of things to get done, and it sat there on his desk and laughed uproariously at him, and he knew that he would be lucky to get one or two of them done, much less the whole list.

He could hardly believe that finals were over and that before ten days had passed it would be third term. Third term! That meant he was half done with his four years at Tech—but right now it seemed as though he'd barely started.

The out-of-it term

They always said that second term was the out-of-it term, and during the term the Sophomore hadn't believed it. But now that it was over he could look back on the last three months and they seemed just like a day or two—and maybe that was what they meant. Actually, he thought, there weren't any out-of-it terms at Tech, if you yourself kept your own little ball rolling. There had been ASCIT elections and there had been basketball season (a very bad one) and four big dances

at the end of the term coming on consecutive weekends (he'd only gotten to two, the ASCIT formal and the ICC dance) and there was the Interhouse Sing and, for some guys, the Mobilgas Economy Run.

Come to think of it, there was something special about this second term. There was a gymnasium and a locker room and a swimming pool special about this second term, and he'd become so used to them now that it was hard to remember the days in the miserable old field-house. He had just been over at the gym playing basketball the day before, and he hadn't even realized that a few weeks beforehand he wouldn't have had that chance.

The power-packed term

But of course it was third term that he was really looking forward to. Ever since he was at frosh camp and the upperclassmen had told him the exciting stories of third term, he had looked forward to it in eager anticipation of beach parties, barn dances, outdoor formals, snaking in the sunlight on the Athenaeum lawn, and baseball season, and everything. It could really be a power-packed ten weeks if you wanted it to be. It seemed like the pressure had lifted somehow in the class rooms and you didn't have to work quite as hard; and you had more time than ever to relax and talk and go out and just enjoy yourself.

The Sophomore picked up the defenseless little slip of paper on which he had written the list of things to get accomplished during spring vacation. Third term wasn't a time to get things accomplished, he thought with a quick rationalization. Third term was a time to let your responsibilities go to hell, and to see what you could do about having such a good time that it would make up for every painful hour of studying in all the other terms together.

He crumpled up the little sheet of paper dramatically and tried to hook it into his wastebasket but he missed it completely. Somewhat embarrassed, but not discouraged, he got his gym shoes from the closet and took off for the new gymnasium for a couple of hours of basketball.

He was all in favor of vacations.

—Marty Tangora '57