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Friday, September 4, 1936

THE FRESHMAN AND THE FRATERNITY

It is unfortunate that about half the members of the Class of 1940 will be forced to make a decision which will have a large influence upon their four years here after they have been on the campus less than two weeks. But empty rooms upstairs and vacant seats at the dinner table don't help pay off the mortgages in fraternity row and every fall sees the same undignified scramble as each house tries to grab off the select of the current freshman crop.

And so, after about ten days of acquaintanceship, during which both rushers and rushees are on their good behavior, 600 freshmen will select the particular group of men with whom they expect to live for the duration of their undergraduate lives. That this almost hit-or-miss process usually turns out satisfactorily is a tribute to the social adaptability of the average college student.

As far as rushing is concerned freshmen fall into three obvious classes: those who are trying to decide which house to join; those who know that they are not going fraternity; and those who are undecided. Suppose we start with the last group.

Some of the advantages a freshman may gain by joining a house are these: It gives him a certain social position and prestige. It enables him to identify himself with a particular group and to enter into the activities of it. It provides him immediately with a wide range of acquaintances in which he will probably be able to make several friendships. It throws him in with twenty or thirty upperclassmen who will be able to help him orient himself in a strange environment. On the other hand he will find that life in a fraternity will be more expensive than life outside. He will find that he must sacrifice some of his freedom and independence; emphasis is upon conformity, not individuality. He will discover, after the first few weeks, that he is expected to take care of such matters as waxing floors and mowing lawns. He will find that under the fraternal surface there is constant bickering by house cliques, often ill-will between members, occasionally even graft among the brothers.

If he decides to go fraternity the actual selection of the House is not too important. Aside from obvious differences in the matter of creed or race the fraternities on the campus do not vary a great deal. Some may have more imposing houses; some may be in better financial condition; some may have a long list of activities men; but into almost any of them a freshman will be able to fit himself.

Perhaps that is a little too broad a statement: certainly not every freshman could get along in every house. But the rushing season, short as it is, is long enough for him to find out if he feels at home with a particular group. If he does he probably won't make a mistake in joining it. If he doesn't he had better wait until he finds a group into which he feels that he can fit.

But what about the other 600 freshmen who at the close of rushing season will still be living in rooming houses or dormitories?

The best thing they can do is not to worry about it. They will find that they can have just as many and just as good friends, though it make take them a little longer. They will find that, with a few exceptions, they have just as good an opportunity to "make out" in activities as fraternity men. Their marks are likely to be higher because they will have better opportunity for uninterrupted study. Through various non-fraternity units they will be able to participate in intramural athletics. They will be freer to do what they want and say what they want.

Whatever it may depend upon, Success in College (whatever that is) is not guaranteed either by the presence or absence of a pledge pin.

OLD MANIA

Cheerful Earful:

Before all the advisors begin advising, fraternities fraternizing, everyone telling you how to get through school with the least amount of work, and English Composition 1 hasn't yet had the chance of antagonizing you too much against we infinitive splitters, Campy, with his eye to the key-hole and ear to the ground will tell you, in a few simple lessons how to become what is euphemistically called acampus luminary, commonly called a big-shot, and other times called any uncomplimentary name you can think of.

Any of the following activities will bring to you this fame:

1. Have yourself born the son of the College president.

2. Become a big fraternity man. This consists of joining a fraternity and spending most of your time your freshman year waxing floors, emptying ash cans and stooping for the upperclassmen. Your sophomore year you are busy riding the new freshmen. Your junior year you catch up on your school work and spend your spare time getting back the neckties that the brothers had borrowed. Your senior year, there you are, a big Frat Man.

3. Become a merry-quipster. This consists of reading Dorothy Parker and other dealers in smart cracks and then pulling them on a good friend who promises to tell it to the Maniac or myself. If the Maniac or myself, Campy, are short on material, we'll probably print it and your name in this column and once again you have become a campus luminary. Example of things not counting: Knock, Knock. Who's there? Hetzel. Hetzel who? Hetzel to write a column.

4. Become a radical. This is rather complicated and requires much analysis. Reds, Communists, Fascists, Atheists, etc., are not radical. That is, they are not radicals comparatively. If you really want to be different and appear radical become an ultra-conservative.

5. Become an apple-polisher. This does not necessitate your taking an agricultural course. You will get further also becoming a master at the indirect method of apple-polishing. This consists of going up to a professor and saying "Joe Boetz certainly knows his stuff about this course. Why only last night he said," etc. Of course it helps things if you have a friend who will do the same for you.

6. Become a politician. This is perhaps the easiest of the lot. All you need do is practice smiling in the mirror and saying "Hell-o," buy lots of beer and become a habitue of the Corner Room and tap rooms. You will end up being appointed to some committee that never meets except to get its picture taken for *La Vie*.

Of course I cannot guarantee all of these methods for some of them are liable to have a boomerang effect. For instance: the Merry-Quipster might end up as a *Froth* monser where he would feel very much out of place with all his funny jokes, or the politician might be appointed to a dance committee and Neil Fleming might not let the selection of the band up to the committee.

Rum and Rumor:

An old grad was explaining the wiles and ways to a student who planned to enter Penn State as a freshman this year. The neophyte was looking in the catalogue and said, "It says here you must matriculate, what's that mean?" "Yeah, you must matriculate," said the old grad with a sigh, "but it doesn't hurt very much."

Parke Eshbach is planning to enter professional wrestling... Several of the profs have discarded their 1914 joke book for a revised edition, 1923... Anyone knowing the whereabouts of Towne Swalm please report or return him to the COLLEGIAN office. When last seen he was lost in a German beer garden.

Parents . . .

You Will Find
The Corner Room
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An Excellent Place to
Eat When You Visit
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Offers You an Attractive
Place to Spend the Night

Dramatic Group Invites Freshmen

Penn State Players Schedule 'Personal Appearance' For 1st Offering

One of the first activities in which freshmen will be invited to engage is in the work of the Penn State Players. This is a group of students interested in dramatics who, under the director, Prof. Arthur C. Cloetingh, or the assistant director, Frank S. Neusbaum, each year present about half a dozen plays.

"Personal Appearance," a comedy which had a long run on Broadway recently, will open the season this year, and will be presented on Dads' Day, October 3. Announcement of try-outs will be made shortly after classes begin. It will be directed by Mr. Neusbaum.

"Men in White" Will Be Given
Three other recent plays and one revival will complete the program for the year. "Men in White," Sidney Kingsley's Pulitzer Prize-winning play

of three seasons ago, will be one of these. The others will be announced later. "The Old Maid," the Pulitzer play of two seasons ago, was one of the most successful Players' productions of last winter.

The other plays produced last season included John Wesley's "The Last Mile," a drama laid in the death house of a prison; the colonial comedy, "The Pursuit of Happiness;" and Gerhardt Hauptmann's romantic fantasy, "The Sunken Bell." "Ah, Wilderness!" Eugene O'Neill's comedy of adolescence; and a revival of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," presented so far as possible as it was about seventy years ago, were the other plays produced.

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