

The Time of the Freshman

The time of the freshman is the time of twisting, tinted leaves, of crisp, cool mornings with woodsmoke and morning mist hovering over the low places . . . of hawks wheeling southward, of yellowing birches and dying fields.

For much of the world about the freshman, it is the time of remembrance and regret--the remembrance of sunny green days and the regret of promises unfulfilled. "Next summer," many of us reassure ourselves, "it will be different. We'll really enjoy summer next year."

But for the freshman, it is a time of anticipation and bright promise. A new world is unfolding--a world of new sound and color and movement.

The sound may be the murmur of voices mingling in a spacious hall, where the mechanics of study are being worked out . . . what courses, what credits . . . what major . . . what minor . . .

Or the sound might be a new voice from a podium in the center of a vast room, where the more abstract qualities of college life are delineated and explored . . . or the clink and tinkle of dishes and tableware in the cafeteria, where merry and raucous voices bespeak new friendships being formed or last year's regulars in the corner booth getting together again.

The new color might be the maroon and gold beanies that stipple the corridor, or the brick red and quarry gray of new buildings standing sharp and strong against an azure heaven, or the redolent symmetry of variegated hills rising behind the campus . . . or bright-covered books clutched in doubtful arms.

The new movement might be the cluster of students milling into the classroom, or the quiet traffic of the library, and slow-turning pages. . . or the long walk down the middle of the campus to Old Main, or the flocking together of freshmen after the first examination to exchange anxieties and doubts.

The glamorous time of the freshman is passing--the time of the beanies and the first glimpses of new places and faces. But throughout the year, the freshman will see, feel and think much that he has not experienced before.

For being a freshman is the lifetime of a year--not the first few days or weeks. The story continues to take unexpected twists and turns even after the story line is known.

And even when spring brings out new green leaves, there will still be new sound, color and movement to remind some 700 UMD students that they are still in the time of the freshman.