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CREATIVE HOLIDAY

In Mexico

by Nancy Fox

Technical Journalism Senior

A THREE MONTH creative holiday in Mexico cost Jeannine Pettit, applied art senior, just \$175 plus personal expenses. Jeannine spent last summer in San Miquel de Allende, Mexico, studying at Instituto Allende, a fine arts school.

Jeannine decided to go to the Instituto Allende upon the recommendation of Mr. Sawhill, Clarinda, Iowa, under whom she had studied ceramics. He felt Jeannine would benefit from art work at the college.

Although Jeannine went to Mexico specifically to study ceramics, she became interested in jewelry courses. She set up a schedule at the beginning of the summer for different jewelry problems she could do. These problems included cuff links, bracelets, earrings, pins, chains, necklaces and buttons. She usually finished one of the problems every two class periods.

The copper, silver, gold and brass Jeannine used in her jewelry came from the school store. Mining towns near the Instituto were the sources of the semi-precious stones she used.

The ceramic work Jeannine did included a table with a mosaic top and ceramic figures. "I especially enjoyed learning about the chemistry of ceramics," she said.

An average day of classes consisted of a laboratory from 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon, a lecture from 12:15 to 1:30 p.m., and a laboratory from 3:30 to 6 p.m. Two nights a week classes were held from 8:30 to 11 p.m. One credit is granted for every 30 hours spent in class.

Most of the classes had two instructors. They, as well as the students, came from all over the world, though all of the classes are taught in English. The staff, Jeannine said, changed quite frequently as many of the professors taught at the Instituto just for a change of atmosphere. They usually stay for six months to two years.

"The classes were very inspiring," Jeannine said. "All but five of us were graduate students, so we had the advantage of reaping the benefits from our classmates' knowledge."

While in Mexico Jeannine and two former Iowa State women, Carol Harper, ex '57, and Margaret Wait, '56, also attending the Instituto, rented a five room house for \$32 a month in San Miquel de Al-

lende. This rental fee included gas, electricity, linen and a caretaker, who cared for the three acres of land on which the house was situated. A woman was hired to do all of their washing and ironing for 50 cents a day.

"We could have hired a cook for practically nothing," said Jeannine, "but we wanted the experience of bargaining in the markets and cooking our own meals. It just cost each of us about 50 cents a day for meals. Potatoes were only 4 cents a pound and choice cuts of meat were 27 cents a pound."

Jeannine's summer was not all classwork. She took trips every weekend to see such places as Mexico City and craft towns.

"If I were ever given a chance to return to Mexico I certainly would," said Jeannine. "I had heard so many wonderful things about the Instituto and I didn't see how they could be true—until I had been there just a few days. It was definitely the most profitable experience I have had, and yet so inexpensive."

