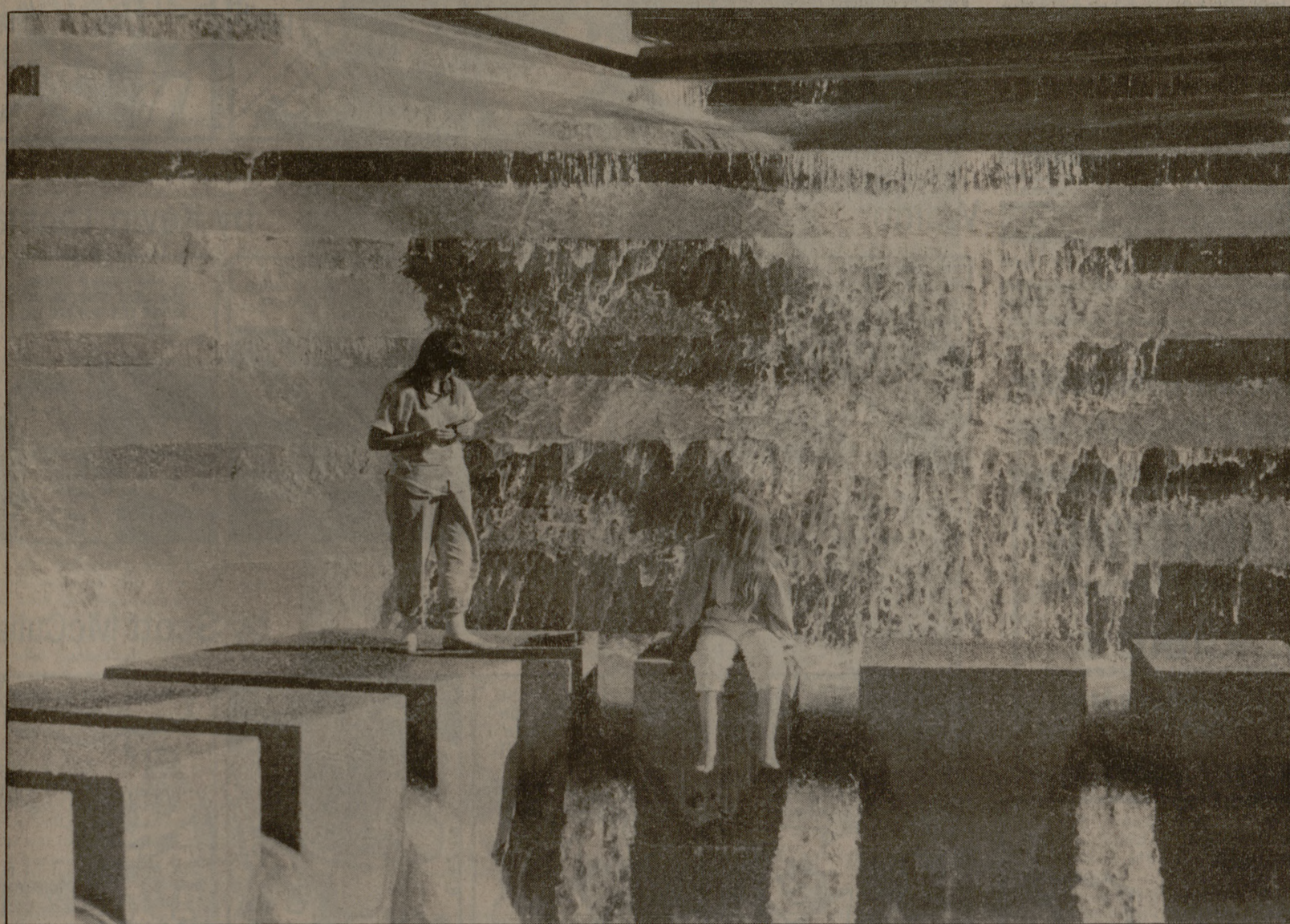
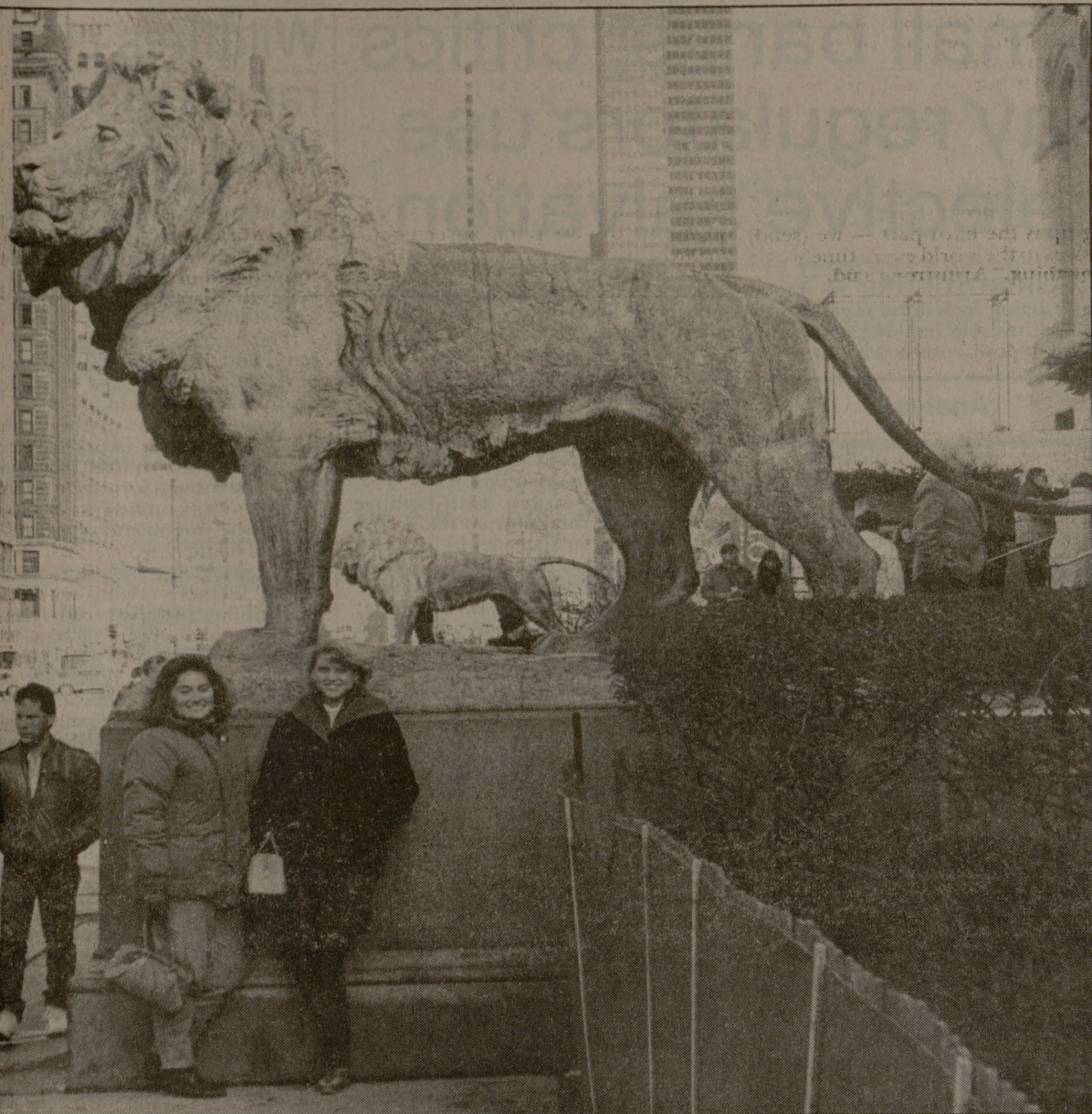


Students spend spring break trying to escape from worries



• Top: Sophomore Margene Harrison, an education major, and her roommate, biomedical science major Beth Weissinger, relax during spring break at the Fort Worth Watergardens. The two students stopped to take pictures. They spent the week traveling across central Texas. Photo by Steve Noreyko.



• Left: Suzanne Hoechstetter, a sophomore journalism major, and Kristi Prevette, a sophomore secondary education major, pause before entering the Art Institute of Chicago. The lion is one of two on either side of the museum's entrance. The two students spent their spring break in Chicago. Photo by Kathy Haveman.

• Bottom: On the way home from Colorado, a group of Aggies were delayed by car problems outside of Waco. Boyd Bogus, wearing cap, fixed the car as (clockwise from top left) Shelly Stamler, Debbie Quackenbush, Brian Mau and Darren Gabriel watch. Photo by Andrea Veatch.

Mexico museum houses artifacts of 3 civilizations

XALAPA, Mexico (AP) — Huge carved stone heads, tiny clay figures and thousands of other artifacts at a museum here tell a strange story about three civilizations that flourished long before Columbus discovered America.

It's about the Olmecs, Totonacas and Huastecs, who inhabited a long stretch of coast on the Gulf of Mexico.

The fascinating and sometimes gruesome story is told vividly at the Museum of Xalapa, which specializes in the region's archaeological treasures.

A lot is still unknown about the three civilizations. They are believed to have been part of a series of migrations from Asia that started about 35,000 years ago across the Bering Strait, by way of Alaska, and lasted several millennia.

But, says museum director Fernando Winfield Capitaine, "as new finds are made and studies of old ones shed new light, the results may rewrite quite a few history books."

"We don't know what their language was, or what they even called themselves," he adds. "Even the names we use for them are false and relatively new. They are 'nahuatl' names, the trading language of the Aztecs, which didn't even exist at the time."

Only 3,000 of the museum's 29,000 pieces are on display for lack of space. They tell how these people performed human sacrifices, probably perceived the earth as round, designed remarkably accurate calendars and had an advanced knowledge of mathematics and astronomy, among other things.

The artifacts range in size from a tiny Olmec carving of a rain god 4 inches high, to huge stone altars. The museum's centerpiece is a monolithic head 9 feet high and weighing 16 tons, carved from andesite rock.

Now housed in a new \$3 million set of modern buildings covering 14,400 square yards and surrounded by eight acres of wooded park, the museum is part of the Veracruz state university in Xalapa, the state's capital 74 miles northwest of the port of Veracruz.

The Olmecs, Totonacas and Huastecas based their agriculture on corn, frijole beans and squash, supplementing their diets with dog meat, river fish and wild animals and birds, which they seasoned with chili peppers, herbs and other spices.

Both their weapons and their tools were crude, mostly made out of stone or wood, and no one is sure how they carved such huge stone statues. But their civilizations were surprisingly advanced for the time.

In his guidebook "Master Works of the Xalapa Museum," Mexican anthropologist Alfonso Medellin Zenil says it's possible the Olmecs were the first to make paper out of wood pulp in America.

Archaeologists believe the political organization was more of a loose coalition of small towns or city-states than one big government entity. But their influence spread far and wide and some of it survives in present-day Mexico.

They could read and write and knew what a wheel was, but didn't use it, probably because they had no draft animals. Their ancestors had hunted them all out of existence, including the ancient American horse and the elephant.

They spun and wove natural fibers, including cotton. They tailored their clothes, wore earrings and jewelry, blackened their teeth with natural tar for cosmetic purposes and made rubber from the rubber tree, which is native to the region.

Being cross-eyed was considered a sign of beauty.

They played a ceremonial sport with a rubber ball, which was a combination of soccer and basketball. The winning team was afterwards beheaded as a sacrifice, usually to a sun god, although some authorities claim it was the losers who lost their heads.

Other victims had their hearts cut out atop some pyramid or other sacred altar. Some were skinned alive and priests donned their skins to dance before Xipe Totec, the "god of the flayed," in a fertility rite to mark the beginning of spring.

Mexico candidate blasts U.S. policy

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico (AP) — Mexican presidential candidate Cuauhtemoc Cardenas blasted U.S. Central American policy during a campaign appearance here Sunday.

Cardenas, son of Mexico's most popular 20th-century president, is certain to lose the July 6 election to Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the candidate for the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI. The party has won every gubernatorial and presidential election since it was founded.

Cardenas is a former governor of Michoacan state who broke with PRI last year over Salinas' nomination. He organized a coalition of left-of-center political parties under the banner of the Democratic National Front.

His father, Lazaro Cardenas, nationalized the petroleum industry in 1938 and is widely recognized as the country's greatest 20th-century leader.

Addressing about 1,500 people in the downtown Plaza de Armas, Cardenas expressed dismay over the deployment of U.S. troops last week in Honduras and the United States' ef-

orts to oust Panama ruler Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega.

"We are reading how the American government is once again intervening in Central American affairs," Cardenas said. "The government... tries to impose in an unshameful way of intervention, tries to impose the procedures that already have been imposed in the past, and to impose its interests in Central America."

He called the Honduran bombing of a Sandinista camp on the Nicaraguan side of the Coco River "very grave," and said U.S. pressure in Panama is a case of "bringing back the politics of the garrote."

"We ask that the American troops cease their intervention in Central America, particularly in Panama and Nicaragua," Cardenas said.

Cardenas has proven to be more popular in rural areas than in the urban north, where the National Action Party, or PAN, runs strongly against the ruling PRI.

The candidates of those two parties were scheduled to visit Juarez today.

Mexican police nab airport's manager in marijuana deals

TIJUANA, Mexico (AP) — Federal Judicial Police said Sunday that they had arrested the man serving as the deputy manager of the Mazatlan airport when he was caught unloading 390 pounds of marijuana at the Tijuana airport.

They said that they believed that the drug was probably destined for a drop somewhere in the United States.

This information was confirmed according to the government news agency Notimex.

Mexican police reportedly said that Luis Montoya Romero, 33, also was serving as an airport operations office for the national airline, Aeromexico.

Both of the occupations were considered to be covers for a marijuana trafficking operation that has been going on for several months, accord-

ing to the police reports.

The police reports stated that Romero picked up the large container of the illegal marijuana at the port of Mazatlan.

He then loaded the substance aboard an Aeromexico cargo flight.

Romero accompanied the marijuana to the destination in Tijuana where officials then arrested him for possessing the substance.

They said he was arrested while he and another Aeromexico employee, who also was arrested for his involvement in the possession scandal, were allegedly unloading the contraband.

A woman who was allegedly going to drive the marijuana across the border into the United States was also arrested, Notimex said.

Police identified her as Maria de Refugio Beltran, 26.

