Alec Van Ryan, press aid to former Louisville Mayor William B. Stansbury when this approach was delivered commented that "We're not talking necessarily about Ford and General Motors, but about people who make pottery and farm machinery. They will have a link through sister cities."

Louisville sees the Montpellier program as a pilot. If it succeeds, then similar economic trade agreements will be worked out with Louisville's four other sister cities: Mainz, West Germany; Dublin, Ireland; Tamali, Ghana; and Quito, Ecuador.

In recent years, thanks to the cooperation of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation, many sister cities have sponsored Global Education workshops that have led to expanded international programs and activities in their school systems. By making changes in the schools' curriculum, involving local civic leaders, and using existing sister city ties, these communities have been able to raise public awareness about the need to improve global understanding.

At one such workshop in Baltimore last fall, Mayor William Donald Schaefer set the tone of the meeting with this comment:

"The Global Education workshop will deal with a very timely issue: the effect that international affairs has on our port city, on the individual members of our community, and—most importantly—how we must educate our citizens and youth concerning global issues."

One byproduct of the Baltimore workshop was a citywide Global Education Week in May which featured 29 special activities involving the schools, museums, city hall, neighborhoods, and cultural organizations.

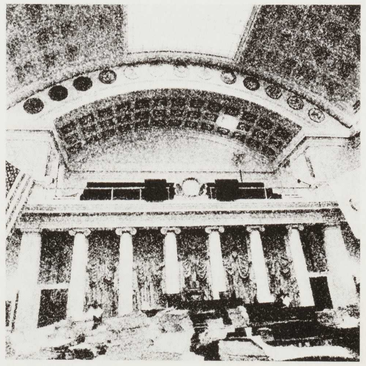
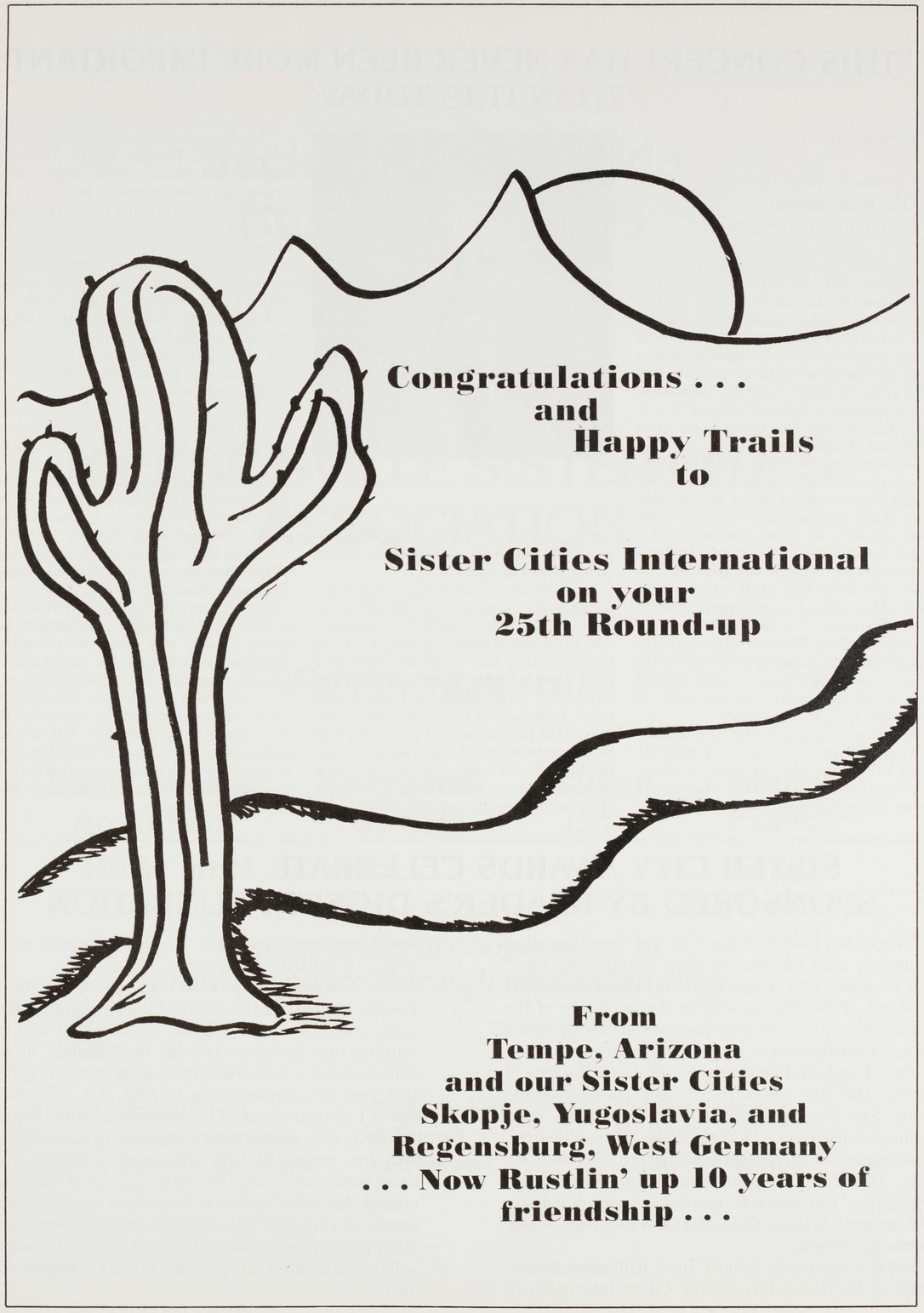
The Sister Cities program at 25 is robust. A total of 720 American cities take part in the program and maintain affiliations with 1,000 foreign cities located in 77 countries. That's an impressive record. And although sister city relationships sometimes have their ups and downs with interest and participation rising and waning from year to year, most of the bonds forged are long-lasting and strong.

To strengthen and expand Sister Cities programs during the 1980s, let's consider these ideas and activities:

- If your city has no Sister City program, help organize one. Sister Cities International can supply the details.
- If your city already is in the program, consider establishing additional sister city relationships with other cities, particularly with cities in developing nations. The potential is there. For example, only 37 cities in the developing nations of Africa are affilated with American cities.
- Take a hard look at a technical assistance program as a way to help improve the urban life of a sister city in a developing country. SCI can provide details.
- Investigate the possibility of establishing direct trade ties with your sister city. Your local Chamber of Commerce and economic development commission could carry the ball.
- Encourage other cities to set up Sister City programs. Spreading the word about the benefits of a sister city affiliation can lead other American cities to join the program. The 1,000th U.S. city in the program would be cause for a real celebration.
- Get your school system involved in co-sponsoring a Global Education workshop in your city. The result could be rewarding in giving a boost to international awareness at many levels in the community.
- Encourage your city hall to take part in international programs aimed at improving relationships between local governments around the world. The International City Management Association sponsors international exchanges of city managers and study tours of foreign nations. The Council for International Urban Liaison issues regular reports and periodicals designed to spread the word to U.S. local government officials about innovative ideas found successful in foreign countries.
- Look at the idea of an "International Community Forum" in which you involve people from your sister city/ies and people from your own community in public discussions of the differences, similarities and possible solutions to common problems your communities may face. For example, a group of transportation and planning experts may be coming to your city from your sister city. Involve them with similar experts from your city. Public or commercial television might want to cover your forum.
- Involve amateur radio "hams" in your exchange programs. Not only can they get messages back and forth quickly, but they keep up with the new advances and techniques in audio and visual communication. They will also have the expertise in advising you on how to explore these types of exchanges with your sister city.

The Sister Cities program has played an important role in American foreign affairs during the past 25 years. The next quarter century will even be more challenging.

But the ideas and concepts for broadening our international thinking are available for all to share. Sister Cities International stands ready to help you and your city capitalize on them.

The next plateau of international activity in the sister city movement beckons.

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