

UNITED NATIONS DAY RUN



1977

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UNITED NATIONS DAY RUN 1977

The United Nations was the guest of honour at an unusual, world-wide birthday party on October 24, 1977. Runners and cyclists in 23 cities and ten countries around the world ran and cycled in relay with one goal in mind: to celebrate and support the United Nations. One observer of the activities, Mrs. Kay Bullitt, Chairman of the Mayor's Committee for United Nations Day Observance in Seattle, commented that the runners "are working with the same intensity that excited us 32 years ago when this all began." This dedicated spirit gave an inner meaning to the outer effort, which was strenuous. A radio interviewer asked a participant in the Australian 320-kilometer U.N. Day relay, "What's the attraction of blistering your feet running along highways?" His reply was, "... the physical suffers a little, but the spiritual side is enhanced. We all felt a sense of a uniting world."

Union was a common theme of the world-wide athletic activities. Knowing that other runners and cyclists throughout the world were joined by millions of other people in celebrating the vision of the U.N., gave people a feeling of closeness, of living in one family with ties everywhere.

Many of the runners and cyclists shared another common link as students of meditation teacher Sri Chinmoy, who, as a Non-governmental Organisation representative to the U.N. and Director of the United Nations Meditation Group, has cherished the vision of unity that is at the heart of the U.N. He conducts regular meditations at United Nations Headquarters in New York for interested delegates and staff, delivers the Dag Hammarskjold lecture series on world peace, and has written numerous books on the significance of the "inner life" of the United Nations. His students in 63 centres throughout the world form a spiritual community that frequently supports the United Nations through fund-raising activities for UNICEF and UNESCO, through educational forums, publications and other activities.

Like the United Nations itself, the world-wide running and cycling feat combined inner unity with outer individuality. For example, each runner wore an emblem with the words "United Nations Day" in his or her own language. The start of each relay was a significant local point, such as the stately Philadelphia Art Museum, the Parliament House in Canberra, Australia, the War Memorial Opera House in San Francisco, scene of the signing of the U.N. Charter in 1945, and the grave of the late Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold in Uppsala, Sweden. Several other relays started from local UNICEF or United Nations Association offices, where the relayers made new friends, united in a common cause.

Each carefully planned relay route brought the athletes past prominent local or international landmarks—the Eiffel Tower, the Olympic Stadium in Montreal, war memorials in Quebec and Seattle, government establishments, scenic rivers and parks and United Nations offices. In Toronto, runners passed national consulates and exchanged a United Nations flag for the flags of India, Haiti, Italy, Australia, Senegal and the U.S.A.

The varied routes were each 32 miles or 32 kilometres in length, one mile or kilometre for each year since the U.N. began. In Australia the figure was 320 kilometres for a Canberra to Sydney run, while cyclists in Western Australia travelled 1600 kilometres! The Australian runners had originally planned a 200 kilometre run but decided to jump the figure to 320 in keeping with the U.N.'s 32nd birthday. Elsewhere, many people also went beyond their original plans or their usual limits. In London, a runner completed his first marathon, over 26 miles, in the course of the day. He dedicated each of the two-mile laps to the United Nations. In Miami and London, little children ran parts of the relay. In Zurich, the three runners were asked to hold their run on a later date to coincide with an International Year of the Child ceremony. This they cheerfully did, but meanwhile could not keep themselves from running an extra 32 kilometres on the U.N.'s birthday. Everywhere, runners and cyclists added extra miles or kilometres to their usual capacity.

Both at the beginning and at the end of the events, city officials took time to join in celebrating the U.N. and the birthday feat. Dignitaries included the mayor of Vancouver, Canada, the mayor of Santa Barbara, California, the vice-mayor of Miami, Florida, the Lord Mayor of Perth, Australia, and the mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

At the conclusion of the running and cycling, inspired participants commented, "What joy!" and "To describe the inner experiences would require many pages for each runner (We) came to know, in an intimate way, the great soul of our planet." At the end of the run in Philadelphia, runners reported that they "were not tired, but on the contrary were charged with energy and emotion. It seemed incredible that such poor runners as we five could have accomplished this." Everywhere, the feeling was one of, "Let's do it again next year!"

The joy, dedication and cooperative spirit felt by runners, cyclists, observers and supporters reflect the oneness that the United Nations embodies and is slowly bringing toward us. This spirit is captured by a song sung by runners and cyclists in many lands on October 24, 1977, a song dedicated to the United Nations by Sri Chinmoy.

O UNITED NATIONS

O United Nations, O U.N.,
You are the world-body
Crying for the world-soul.
And you are the earth-life
Longing for the oneness-goal.

In the heart of your glowing dream,
Big brothers and brothers small
Shall smile, sing and dance —
O Vision-Perfection in all.



United Nations Association of the United States of America

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Presented to

Sri Chinmoy Kumar Ghose, Director, United Nations Meditation Group

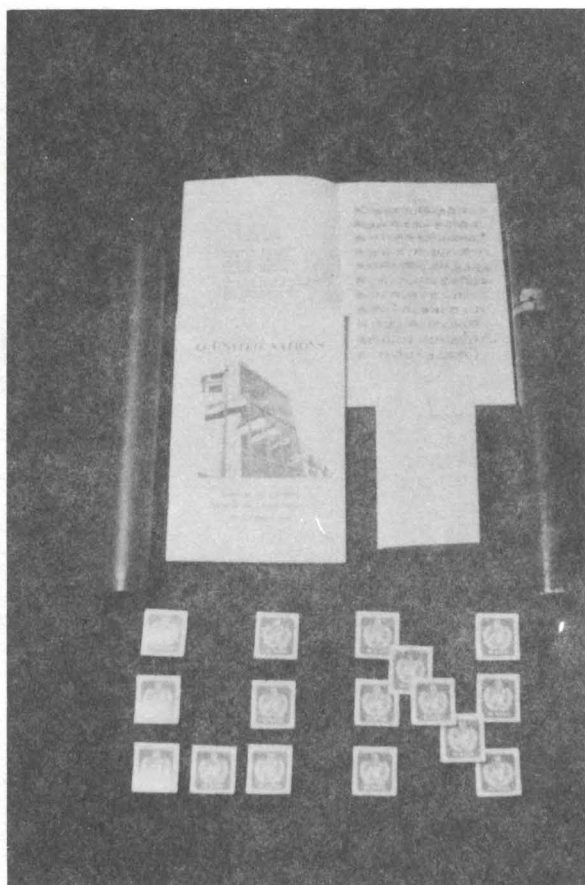
*in appreciation of public service
in promoting
the nationwide observance of*

UNITED NATIONS DAY 1977

Henry Ford II
U.S. National Chairman for UN Day 1977
By Appointment of the President of the United States

Robert M. Ratner, President

An award to Sri Chinmoy for his service in promoting observance of United Nations Day.



Typical contents of a baton carried by runners—the preamble to the United Nations Charter, “O United Nations,” a song dedicated to the U.N. by Sri Chinmoy, and a postage-stamp replica of the U.N. flag.

Torch carriers



BRISBANE runners (from left) John Menteit, Ray Harrington and Darryl Hurst training last night for the United Nations relay run from Canberra to Sydney next Sunday and Monday.

They will take part in a 220-kilometre relay starting on Sunday at 3 a.m.

*John, 19, Ray 27, both of Hawthorne, and Dar-

ryl, 24, of East Brisbane, will join 11 others from Sydney, Melbourne and New Zealand in the run to celebrate United Nations Day on Monday.

The runners are all students of the United Nations Meditation Group director, Sri Chinmoy.

They will carry a flaming torch, which will be passed from runner to runner.

John, a Queensland Railways clerk, said yesterday the flame would symbolise a re-kindling of the deeper spiritual values and human ideals upon which the United Nations was founded.

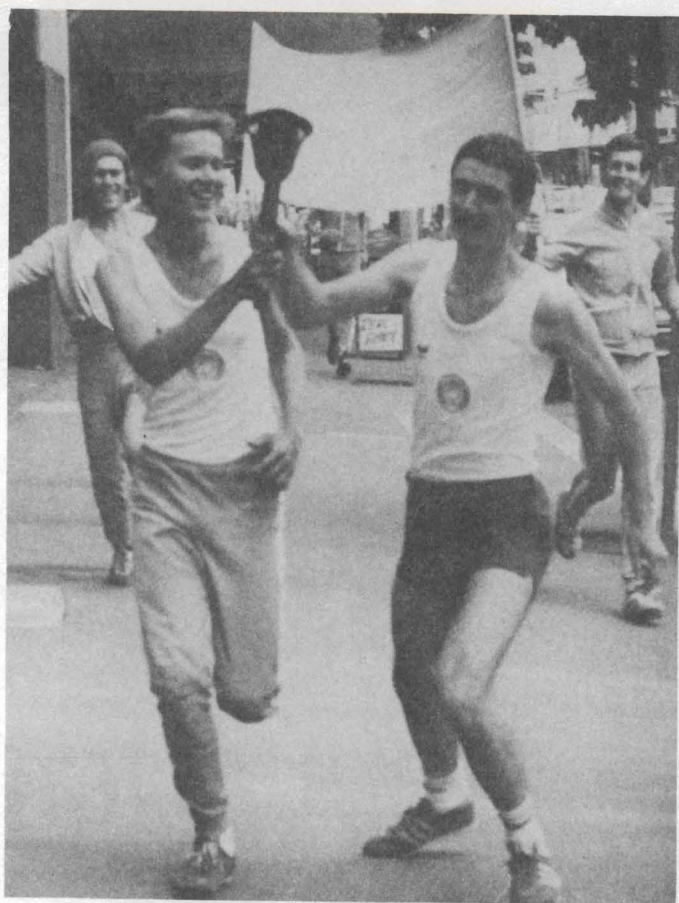
He said each of the 14 runners would carry the torch for two eight to 10 kilometre stretches.

The final runner was expected to reach Sydney at 11 a.m. on United Nations Day, 22 hours after the first runner had left the steps of Parliament House, Canberra.

Brisbane Courier-Mail news article.



Just before the 3 a.m. start of the 320 kilometre relay. Veteran runner Jack Pennlington holds aloft the torch carried by the runners.



Change of running teams in Goulburn, New South Wales.

From: Captain Charles Wiggin



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

30th November, 1977

Dear Mr. Harrington

The Duke of Edinburgh has asked me to thank you for your letter of 30th October, 1977 and for the 'Declaration of a Purpose' which you so kindly enclosed.

His Royal Highness was delighted that the 200 mile non-stop relay was such a success and has asked me to pass on his congratulations to the runners.

Yours sincerely
Charles Wiggin

R.J. Harrington, Esq.

Letter from Buckingham Palace.

Riding for the U.N.

Eight young people will set out tomorrow to cycle 16,000 in 24 hours in honour of the 32nd birthday of the United Nations Organisation.

They will wear track suits of sky-blue and white the colours of the U.N. Week will include universal children's day on Wednesday and an Austcare

Freedom from Hunger doorknocker appeal next Saturday.

The cyclists will leave from Winthrop Hall tomorrow about 11am.

Their ride will end at a U.N. flag-raising ceremony in front of Council House in St Georges Terrace at noon on Monday.

The riders have not been sponsored but will ride as a gesture towards the U.N.'s aims and ideals.

They will carry a scroll from an interfaith service at Winthrop Hall to deliver to the Lord Mayor, Mr Ernest Lee-Steere, at the flag raising ceremony.

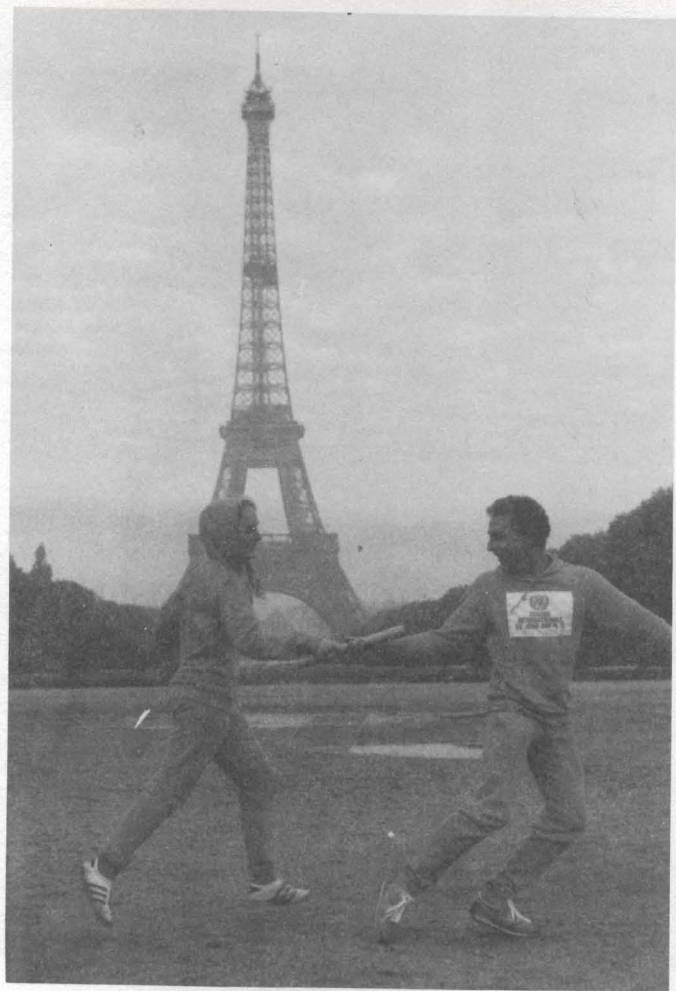


The cyclists (from left): Roderick Bothwell; Angelo Goudas; Meredith Bennett; Sally Coleman; Lalita Johnson; Pauline Hood; Danny Farrow and Syandan Johnson.

From the West Australian, 23 October 1977.



Paris runners with representatives of the U.N.,
UNESCO and UNESCO Club.



Patricia Aubertin passes the baton to Marc Choldenko by the Eiffel Tower.



A relay runner passes through fields near Augsburg.

Staffellauf zum Geburtstag der Vereinten Nationen

Um die Vereinten Nationen (Uno) an ihrem 32. Geburtstag zu ehren, kommen am Montag, 24. Oktober, acht Läufer aus ganz Deutschland in Augsburg zu einem Staffellauf von 32 km zusammen. Der Lauf in Augsburg ist Teil einer Reihe von Gedenkläufen, die rund um die Welt stattfinden werden. Der Lauf wird um 12 Uhr an der Unicef-Stelle in Neusäß, Danziger Straße 7, gestartet, führt dann durch einige Außenbezirke Augsburgs und kommt um 14.40 Uhr am Jakobertor, um 14.45 Uhr an der Regierung von Schwaben, um 14.50 Uhr am Theater und um 14.53 Uhr am Bahnhof vorbei. Durch die Annastraße erreichen die Läufer um 15 Uhr den Rathausplatz, wo sie zu Ehren der Uno das Lied „Oh United Nations“ von Sri Chinmoy, dem Leiter der New Yorker Uno-Meditationsgruppe, singen und die Präambel zur Uno-Charta vorlesen werden. Danach gedenken alle Anwesenden in einer Minute des Schweigens der großen Anliegen der Vereinten Nationen. AZ

Article from Augsburg Allgemeine.

Twenty runners completed a combined total of 160 miles in London. A U.N. Day run was also held in Scotland.



Runners pay their respects at the grave of Dag Hammarskjöld in Uppsala.

SRI CHINMOY CENTRE
Postfach 305
CH-8022 Zürich

Herrn/His Excellency
Kurt Waldheim
Secretary General
United Nations
USA - NEW YORK

Zürich, den 24. Oktober 1977

Sehr geehrter Herr Generalsekretär Kurt Waldheim,

vom Meditationsbaum aus, den der Leiter der UNO-Meditationsgruppe hier gepflanzt hat, grüssen Sie die schweizer Studenten von Sri Chinmoy und entbieten den Vereinten Nationen zu ihrem 32-jährigen Bestehen die herzlichsten Glückwünsche.

Ebenso wie wir uns heute als verschwindend kleine Gruppe bemühen, unserem Einssein mit den Vereinten Nationen und der ganzen Menschheit Ausdruck zu verleihen -- dieses bescheidene Solidaritätszeichen wird von den Unterzeichnenden in einem 32 km-Staffellauf in Zürich zum Flugzeug getragen, von wo es in New York von einem weiteren Studenten Sri Chinmoys zu Ihnen gebracht wird -- werden in Zukunft ganze Bevölkerungen die UNO feiern, der UNO ihre besten Kräfte und Fähigkeiten zur Verfügung stellen und alles tun, um den gemeinsamen Fortschritt der Menschheit zu fördern.

Wir danken Ihnen aus tiefstem Herzen, dass Sie heute gegen viele Widerstände den Mut und die Kraft aufbringen, den Kurs der UNO im vollen Besitze Ihrer Gewissheit lächelnd und unbeirrbar beizubehalten.

Sri Chinmoy hat uns gelehrt, die umfassende Aufgabe der UNO zu sehen, uns immer für die Ideale der UNO einzusetzen und jene Persönlichkeiten hoch zu achten, die ihr Leben der Verwirklichung der grossen Menschheitsziele widmen. Bitte empfangen Sie und alle Angestellten der Vereinten Nationen und ihrer Organisationen den Ausdruck unserer vorzüglichsten Hochachtung.

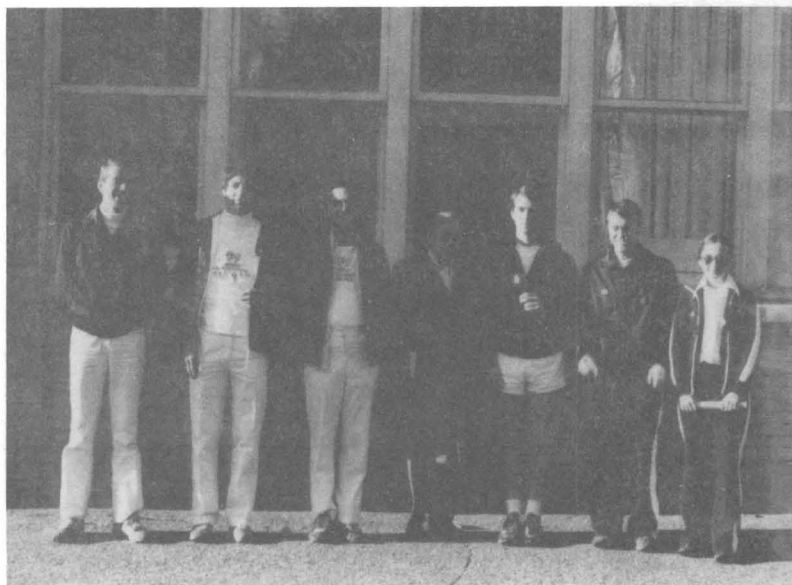
Mit herzlichen Glückwünschen
zum Tag der Vereinten Nationen

Die schweizer Schüler Sri Chinmoys

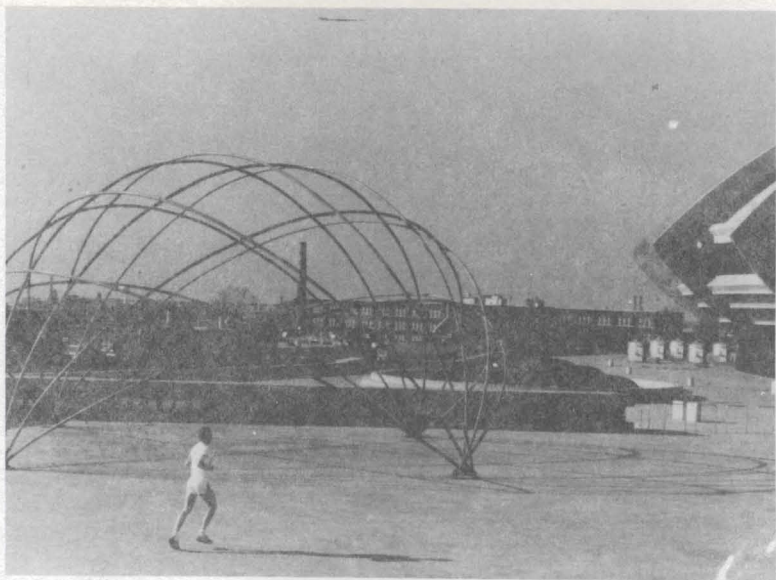
Letter of appreciation to Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim on United Nations Day, from Swiss students of Sri Chinmoy.



UNICEF representative greets "Year of the Child" runners on November 20, 1977, in Zurich.



Montreal runners with the United Nations Association representative for the Quebec Region.



Richard Naud heads toward Olympic Stadium,
Montreal.



Runners celebrate the U.N. before taking off in Ottawa.



Approaching Laval University in Quebec City.



Vancouver runners Karen Runkel and Coryne Hockley present a copy of the motto of the United Nations Meditation Group to Dr. Colin Smith, director of International House, University of British Columbia.



A U.N. Day ceremony at the conclusion of the run
in Victoria, British Columbia.



Jose Ortiz passes the 30-kilometre mark under the statue of John the Baptist in San Juan.



The end of a U.N. Day marathon under the statue of Christopher Columbus in Old San Juan.



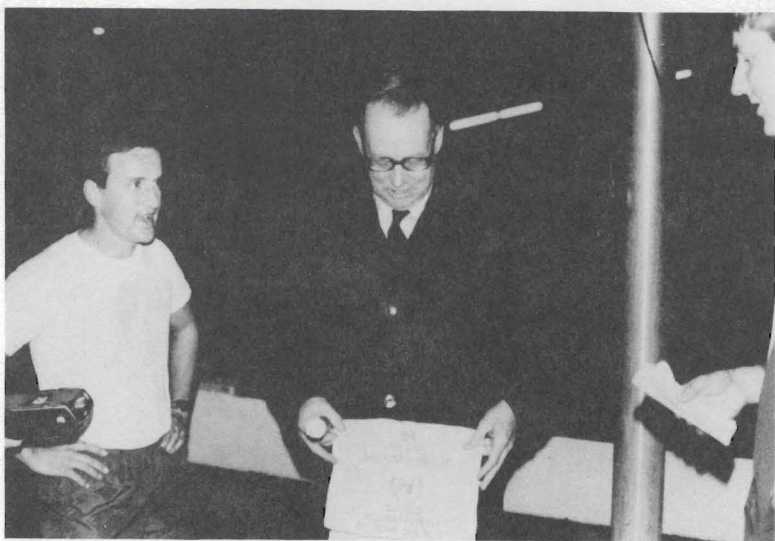
An informal meeting. San Juan mayor Dr. Hernan Padilla (right), Julian McConnie, United Nations Association President in Puerto Rico (center), chat with Sri Chinmoy (left). Following this, the mayor presented Sri Chinmoy with a plaque and proclamation for his U.N. Day activities.



Chicago runners finish at Buckingham Fountain.



Baton pass from Steve Jeffries to Jim Fink in Eugene, Oregon.



Presentation of U.N. Day multilingual banner to Charles Henry, city manager of Eugene, Oregon.

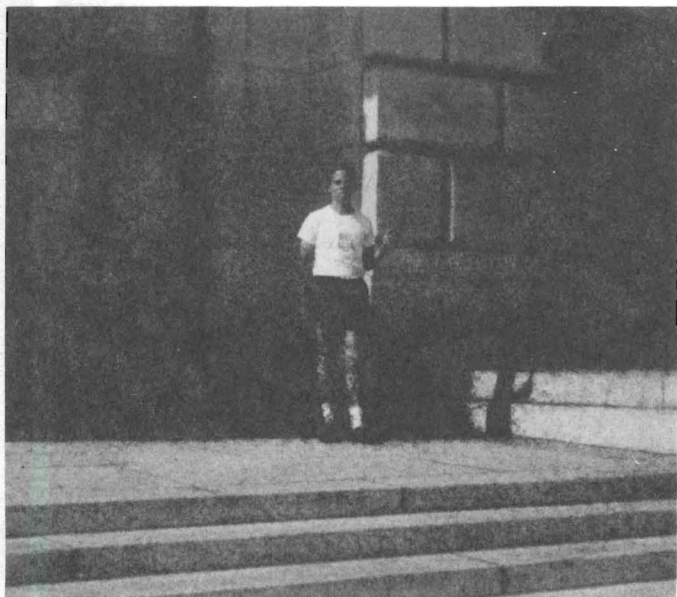


— RICHARD JOHNSON / Miami Herald Staff

CARRYING the United Nations banner, a runner begins the trek from the Marriott Hotel to the Torch of Freedom in Bayfront Park to focus attention on United Nations Day Monday. Ina Pliske of the Miami-Coral Gables chapter of the United Nations Association was one of a half dozen runners making a portion of the 32-mile trek Saturday. Meeting at the Marriott, the group heard an address from Assistant to the U.N. Secretary General Robert Ryan, on the U.N.'s efforts for disarmament and world peace.



Bennet Madway passes the baton to Kevin Fox in Philadelphia.



Starting point of the San Francisco run, by the War Memorial Opera House, scene of the United Nations Charter signing in 1945.



Martin Weber passes to Royal Mason in front of the Palace of the Legion of Honor, in San Francisco, a gift from France.



Santa Barbara runners sing "O United Nations" before their departure from the steps of city hall.

Santa Barbara, Calif., News-Press, Tuesday, October 25, 1977



UN RELAY DAY

Santa Barbara runners yesterday took part in a 32-mile relay race to honor the United Nations on its 32nd birthday. John Harter, above, carries the baton as he leaves City Hall after UN Day ceremonies. Similar relays were held throughout the world.

—News-Press photo

News item from Santa Barbara News-Press.



By the Pacific Ocean in Santa Barbara.



R U.N.ner

Lincoln Polissor ran a leg of a 32-mile relay run on Beach Drive Southwest yesterday in observance of the 32nd birthday of the United Nations. Polissor and four other runners from Sri Chinmoy, a meditation group which supports the U.N., ran the relay here while similar relays were run yesterday in other parts of the world. The run began at the United Nations Center, 1410 Fifth Ave., and ended at the Flag Pavillion at the Seattle Center by way of Alki and Seward Park. A United Nations Flag was presented to Center officials at the end of the run. — Staff photo by Cole Porter.

News item from the Seattle Times.



Seattle runners join together for the last half-mile.

UNITED NATIONS:



the Heart-Home
of the World-Body

The United Nations Meditation Group is an association of United Nations delegates, staff, NGO representatives and accredited press correspondents.

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