



SCENIC AMERICA

Viewpoints

Summer 1997, Vol. 14 No. 2

Kuralt's Passing Saddens Scenic Advocates

Scenic America was saddened by the recent death of Advisory Board Member Charles Kuralt. Kuralt joined Scenic America's Advisory Board in 1996. Kuralt died on July 4th of complications from lupus. As a news anchor for the CBS "On the Road" series for 13 years, Kuralt celebrated America's back roads and scenic beauty. He spent the next 15 years hosting CBS's "Sunday Morning" show. A prolific author, he wrote seven books, including his acclaimed memoir, *A Life on the Road*.

Less than two months before his death, he gave a moving keynote address, "The Goodliest Land," at Scenic America's national conference in Baltimore. In one of his last public appearances, Kuralt described how squalid our cities used to be and pointed to Baltimore's Inner Harbor and Chicago's lake front as examples of how far we've come. He spoke of places, like Myrtle Beach, SC, where miles of beautiful beaches collide with miles of ugly billboards. Kuralt inspired us with his strong belief that ordinary Americans can and will turn the tide of visual pollution. Scenic Americans who attended the conference will remember Kuralt's easy-going style and the way he opened the floor for 20 minutes of questions and answers, encouraging us to "shoot the breeze" with him. Charles Kuralt was truly a Scenic American, and we will miss his keen insight into the people and places that make this country unique.

CONFERENCE TRAINS SCENIC LEADERS



Charles Kuralt is flanked by Scenic Ohio board member Christine Freitag (left) and Scenic America president Meg Maguire.

When more than 200 scenic conservationists gather in one place, they're not just participants at a conference — they're the "Leadership for a Scenic Century."

So said the title of Scenic America's 1997 Training Conference, "O, Say, Can You See... Leadership for a Scenic Century."

Conference highlights included two big events. At Scenic America's 1997 Banquet, May 12, Charles Kuralt spoke movingly about our nation, "The Goodliest Land," and about the vital ways in which our visual environment tells the story of what it means to be an American. On Tuesday afternoon, May 13, Scenic America Chairman Roberta Henderson presented our Stafford Awards to distinguished scenic conservation advocates.

Held in Baltimore, the conference was

preceded by a reception the evening before and followed by Scenic Action Day on Capitol Hill the day after. It brought together activists, elected officials, planners, business people, journalists, and others for a variety of sessions examining virtually every aspect of scenic conservation, from billboard control to community gateways, from achieving community consensus to the use of GIS technology. In addition to plenary speakers, the conference featured some 25 workshops on critical topics such as "Scenic Conservation Education and Volunteer Development," "Tourism Strategies for Distressed Areas," and "Taming Technology: How to Diminish the Clutter of Towers and Wires."

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The Big Picture

WE CAN PROTECT THE 'GOODLIEST LAND'

"Ordinary Americans — I am persuaded of this with all my heart — ordinary Americans want a beautiful country. We are proud of the amber waves of grain, the purple mountains' majesty. We are not powerless. We can have...the Goodliest Land under the cope of Heaven."

- Charles Kuralt, in "The Goodliest Land," his keynote address to the Scenic America Conference, May 12, 1997. [In 1584, English explorers Philip Amadas and Arthur Barlowe wrote Queen Elizabeth, after visiting Roanoke Island, NC, later the site of the first English colony in the New World, that they had seen "the goodliest land under the cope of heaven."]

By Meg Maguire
Scenic America President

It was a great privilege and inspiration to hear Charles Kuralt in what we now know was one of his last public appearances.

In appreciation of his life, USA Today's Matt Roush said: "Kuralt was that rarest of journalists — a TV



journalist at that — whose vocation was not sensation but illumination, of values and of rolling valleys. In the hectic commercial marketplace, his was an all-American road less traveled. Where he led — or meandered, more like — we followed. Gratefully. Hungrily. Kuralt's road was and

is the world in which we live, but which we all too infrequently hear about."

The world in which we live, yes, but, also a world in which scenic beauty is too rapidly disappearing, replaced by heartless sprawl and deadening blight. In 1978, a hardy band, including Scenic America Board members Marion Brown, Ellie Kelly, and Barbara Sandford, and a few others, founded this organization to turn the tide, to fight the proliferation of billboards and to reverse government policies that enable billboard blight. They came together, in other words,

to make sure that Charles Kuralt's beloved America will not disappear beneath a rising tide of ugliness.

In May, these same three joined Mr. Kuralt and 220 others to lay the groundwork for what Scenic America hopes will be a "scenic century." They came to learn from each other, to draw inspiration from each other, and simply to imagine what a scenic century might look like. They came together to meet the old leaders, to find new leaders, to chart a path from blight to beauty.

What will we see in a scenic century? More beautiful places, yes. But we'll also see the people that Mr. Kuralt loved and illuminated. People with a passion for place. People like those who attended the conference:

....Ruth Hawkins, VP of Arkansas State University, and scenic byways advocate Deb Myerson, both of whom found us on the Internet;

Houston Council member Chris Bell and Ft. Worth Zoning Commissioner Margaret DeMoss (whose city, as a result of her efforts, recently banned new billboard construction); and

Baltimore billboard activist Bev Thomas, New Jersey community leader Joe Ford, and Vermont transportation planner Bruce Bender.

A scenic century will be each one of us individually and thousands of us, collectively, pulling together for a more scenic America.

We'll carry the flame and keep your faith, Charles. We are not powerless. We will have... The Goodliest Land under the cope of Heaven.

On Capitol Hill

SCENIC ACTIVISTS STORM THE HILL

More than 20 scenic conservationists visited Capitol Hill the day after the May conference for Scenic America's first-ever Scenic Action Day to tell Congress that scenic beauty matters.

Organizers and participants alike declared the day a success. But the impact of scenic conservation advocates has yet to be realized because the major bill in Congress — the reauthorization of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) — is mired in a series of debates about funding levels and distribution.

Budgetary issues have greatly slowed ISTEA, which is supposed to be reauthorized by September 30, 1997 — a date that the Congress now seems likely to miss. But while these macro issues continue to dominate the Congressional landscape, we must keep up the pressure for an ISTEA that fosters scenic conservation.

The Highway Beautification Act reform drive remains in high gear, with public pressure for reform mounting. Editorials in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Orlando Sentinel*, and other newspapers, as well as significant radio and television coverage, have helped bring the billboard issue back to the forefront of scenic issues. Scenic America is working hard for an ISTEA which reforms the Highway Beautification Act.

National Scenic Byways Program advocates recently enjoyed a breakfast with the Congressional Scenic Byways Task Force. Featured speakers at the event included Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater and Congressmen Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and John Duncan (R-TN), who is co-chair, along with Rep. Sam Farr (D-CA), of the Task Force.

Meanwhile, a broad coalition of groups is fighting to retain a designated share of funds for transportation enhancements. One recent proposal opposed by the coalition would make some enhancements funds "flexible" — that is, available for non-enhancements purposes.

You can have a big impact on this process by taking the time to meet with, write to, or call your Representatives and Senators. Though it may not always



Scenic America president Meg Maguire speaks to our Highway Beautification Act press conference, while Senator Jim Jeffords (R-VT) and Rep. John Lewis (D-GA) look on.

seem so, the fact is that members of Congress do pay attention to their constituents. They need to hear from you not only at times of crisis before important votes but also during the rest of the year — with updates about scenic conservation initiatives in the district, for example, or reports on billboard and other ordinances that are passed.

Federal policies have a huge impact on the visual quality of our surroundings. Sometimes, as with the Highway Beautification Act, the impact is negative; other times, as with scenic byways and enhancements, it's quite positive. It's up to us now to put the pressure on Congress to fix what's broken and preserve what works.

Carol Truppi (center) is surrounded by scenic advocates on a walking tour of the Westport section of Baltimore. The Baltimore Gas and Electric building is in the background.



“Leadership for a Scenic Century”

Leaders, from page 1

First-day plenary speakers focussed on the importance of the visual environment. University of Missouri professor Kit Salter, in his appropriately titled talk, “O, SAE (Observe, Speculate, Analyze, and Evaluate) Can You See?” spoke about understanding landscapes — how we shape what we see, and how it shapes us. Texas A & M professor Roger Ulrich’s afternoon speech, “Does Scenic Beauty Matter?”, examined the ways in which our scenic environment affects our physical and psychological health. His groundbreaking research has found, for example, that the “crudscape” of billboards and sprawl too common in America actually has serious public health implications because it makes us more tired, more irritable, and more stressed.

Noted planner Anton Nelessen kicked off the second day with “Design and Democracy,” a talk about his pioneering efforts to empower ordinary citizens to have real input in community design decisions through “visual preference surveys.” These surveys allow com-

munity residents to rate pairs of slides for their attractiveness — ratings which, coupled with other participatory activities, can then be used to shape planning decisions. Finally, at day’s end, Scenic America board member and former Houston mayor Kathy Whitmire issued “Leadership for a Scenic Century: A Call to

Action,” where she exhorted scenic activists to get involved in the political decisions that share our visual environment.

The two intensive days may have been exhausting, but they received rave reviews. One correspondent wrote, “In terms of wealth of information and expertise, it’s one of the best [conferences] I’ve been to ever.”

From another: “What a splendid symposium. You and that dedicated staff did a tremendous job — cheers for all of you.” And a third: “I know it was a tremendous amount of work, but if the goal was to empower new leaders — it worked.”

Now, for all scenic conservationists, comes the difficult but exciting challenge of transforming our momentum into real and lasting change for a more scenic America.

(Right) Charles Kuralt chats with Scenic America board members Louise Dunlap, and Roberta Henderson.





Ken Connolly of Senator Jeffords' staff accepts the Stafford Award for his boss.



(Above) Staff Members from the Hudson County Community Partnership celebrate their Stafford award. Joe Ford, Partnership director, is third from the left. (Right) Margaret DeMoss of Ft. Worth accepts her Stafford Award. She became even more deserving when the city banned new billboards on July 15.



STAFFORD AWARD WINNERS EXEMPLIFY "SCENIC CENTURY"

At a luncheon on May 13, 1997, Scenic America presented the 1997 Stafford Awards to individuals and organizations who have made exceptional efforts to protect the scenic environment. The Award, first presented in 1988, is named for its first recipient, US Senator Robert Stafford (R-VT). This year's winners were:

- US Senator James Jeffords (R-VT), for his long leadership on billboard control and other scenic conservation issues;
- David Dunn, Rhode Island, for his commitment to visual environmental education and scenic conservation nationwide;
- The Garden Club of Virginia, for their stalwart efforts in 1997 to prevent the billboard industry from cutting down publicly owned trees;
- The Hudson County Community Partnership, New Jersey, for its efforts to rid inner-city neighborhoods of billboards advertising alcohol and tobacco;
- Margaret DeMoss, Ft. Worth, Texas, for her leadership of the successful drive to ban new billboards in that city;
- Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, Washington, for their work to protect the I-90 corridor leading to Seattle from urban sprawl;
- Save Our Coast/Citizens Alliance for the Tunnel Solution, California, for their successful effort to prevent the construction of a bypass of a section of the Pacific Coast Highway which would have degraded scenic and environmental resources; and
- Starbucks Coffee Company, Washington, received the Award for Corporate Leadership for their efforts to site their stores in historic structures in downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts.

COMING SOON URBAN FORESTRY CONFERENCE

Anyone interested in creating beautiful cities should plan to attend the 8th National Urban Forest Conference, "Cities by Nature's Design." The conference, to be held in Atlanta from Sept. 17-20, 1997, will focus on the role of urban forestry in creating healthy, thriving cities. General and concurrent sessions will be organized into three parts: Understanding the Elements, Building the Components, and Working Toward More Sustainable Communities. Highlights also will include in-depth workshops, the Virtual Coffeehouse

exhibit hall, educational tours exploring the area's ecosystem, an opening reception, and the Global ReLeaf Reception & Banquet.

Organized by American Forests and sponsored by the USDA Forest Service and the Southern Group of State Foresters, the conference is the largest gathering of the urban forestry movement. For more information on registering or exhibiting, call American Forests at 202-667-3300 or visit them on the world wide web at <http://www.amfor.org>.

EARTHJUSTICE MAKES ITS MARK

After 26 years, the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund has changed its name to Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund, or, more simply, Earthjustice.

The organization chose the name to in order to signify their maturation as an independent advocacy organization representing not one but hundreds of environmental groups. Over the years, the Fund has been a staunch defender of and a strong advocate for our nation's environmental laws — all of which will continue under the new moniker.

Byways Nominations Sought

Here's your chance to write a glowing recommendation for your favorite scenic highway. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is seeking nominations for National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads. Roads must have outstanding scenic, natural, historic, cultural, archeological or recreational qualities to be eligible. In addition, byways advocates must develop a corridor management plan for the road.

Designation as an All-American Road or National Scenic Byway entitles a highway to receive priority funding under FHWA's scenic byways discretionary grant program and can help generate increased tourism and economic development. The construction of new billboards is prohibited on designated roads that are part of the Interstate or federal-aid primary systems.

Nominations must be submitted to FHWA by Dec. 15, 1997. To obtain copies of the nomination guide and filing instructions, call the National Scenic Byways Clearinghouse at 1-800-4BYWAYS.

FORT WORTH BANS NEW BILLBOARDS

On July 15, by a 6-3 margin, the Fort Worth, TX, City Council banned new billboard construction. The move had been sought by the Fort Worth League of Neighborhood Associations, whose vice president, Martha Newman,

hailed the decision as "a historic decision that will affect Fort Worth's future."

Scenic Fort Worth led the fight, with significant aid from Scenic Texas, Scenic America's local affiliate, and Scenic America. Margaret DeMoss, a

1997 Stafford Award winner, spearheaded the successful drive. With a population of nearly half a million, Fort Worth is one of America's largest cities with a ban on new billboards, as well as one of over 40 Texas cities with such a prohibition.

STAFF ADDITIONS PUNCTUATE SUMMER

Summer has seen three new staff members join Scenic America.

Wendy Taylor came on board in June, 1997, as the Development Associate, a capacity in which she will work closely with Vice President for Program Development **Ray Foote** to manage Scenic America's membership and to enhance fundraising efforts. Wendy comes to Scenic America after a two-year stint at the National Tree Trust as the Assistant Director for the Community Tree Planting Program. She is a 1995 graduate of Antioch College in Ohio.

Anna El-Eini became Policy Associate in early August. In that role, she will assist Vice President for Policy and Communications **Frank Vespe** as the link between grassroots advocates and national policy makers. Anna most recently worked for Friends of the Earth. A native of Great Britain, Anna has completed significant work towards a Ph.D. in molecular biology at McGill University in Montreal.

Scenic America completed its hat trick when **Deb Myerson** joined the organization as Program Associate. Deb has worked on several scenic byways projects in New York state and holds a Masters Degree in Planning from Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. At Scenic America she will carry out many of Scenic America's funded projects, including byways projects in Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio.

Meanwhile, **Matt Hussmann**, formerly Scenic America's Director of Grassroots Development, has moved on to head up the Bethesda Urban Partnership, a downtown development organization in Bethesda, MD. In mid-October, **Carol Truppi** will transition from Scenic America's Director of Programs to a consultant for special Scenic America projects. She is also considering opening a consulting firm in planning, landscape architecture and architecture with an emphasis on sustainable development.

Scenic America, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, is the only national group dedicated solely to preserving and enhancing the scenic character of America's communities and countryside.

Chairman: Roberta Henderson
President: Meg Maguire
Vice President for Policy and Communications, Editor: Frank Vespe
Policy Associate: Anna El-Eini
Vice President for Program Development: Ray Foote
Program Associate: Deb Myerson
Development Associate: Wendy Taylor
Director of Programs: Carol Truppi
Office Manager: Djuana Waters
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New Materials Available from Scenic America

21 Dupont Circle, Washington, DC 20036
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New Fact Sheets

"Facts & Figures about the Highway Beautification Act: Why it's time for reform" **FREE** _____

"The Scenic Highway Protection Act: Fixing the Highway Beautification Act" **FREE** _____

New Release

"The Highway Beautification Act - A Broken Law" **\$10.00** _____

New Books

"Hallowed Ground - Preserving America's Heritage," By Rudy Abramson **\$40.00** _____

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GIVE YOUR EARTH SHARE TO HELP SCENIC AMERICA

One way you can do your part for the environment and Scenic America is to ask your employer to include Earth Share in your workplace giving campaign. Earth Share is a federation of 44 national non-profit environmental promotions environmental education and charitable giving through workplace campaigns. Scenic America has been a member since 1992.

Earth Share is a convenient and efficient way for employees to contribute to the environment. You can designate your gift to a specific participating group or give to the general Earth Share fund that is distributed to all member organizations.

Since 1988, Earth Share has raised over \$40 million to help preserve scenic places, save endangered species, and ensure clean water and clean air.

The federal government, a number of

state governments and a host of companies offer payroll deduction campaigns through Earth Share. For example, you can designate



Earth Share

Washington, DC, or Rhode Island.

As part of its educational campaign, Earth Share provides useful lists of earth saving tips. The tips can be included in your company's newsletter or posted. Earth Share also has developed a major public service advertising campaign with the Ad Council, which last year generated

Scenic America directly in a number of state campaigns, in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC #0938) if you are a federal employee, or in the United Way in

\$38 million in donated media coverage. The campaign's goal is to create greater individual involvement in the environment by suggesting simple action steps people can take.

To learn how your company can host an Earth Share campaign or to receive a copy of the fall 1997 Earth Saving Tips, please contact Wendy Taylor at Scenic America. You can also download the tips from Earth Share's web site at www.earthshare.org.

LEAVING A LEGACY

Consider leaving a legacy for scenic conservation by including Scenic America in your will. By providing critical support for our programs and services, your gift is a meaningful way to help us preserve America the Beautiful for future generations. To discuss your plans, please call Ray Foote at (202) 833-4300.

JOIN SCENIC AMERICA...YES, I WANT TO HELP SAVE OUR SCENERY!

Citizen Membership: ☐ \$25 ☐ \$35 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other \$ _____

Organizational Membership: ☐ \$50 Local or State Organization ☐ \$100 Regional or National Organization

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