



# ETF News

www.eugenetreefoundation.org

NEWSLETTER OF THE EUGENE TREE FOUNDATION

## ETF Celebrates Its 10th Anniversary

by Whitey Lueck

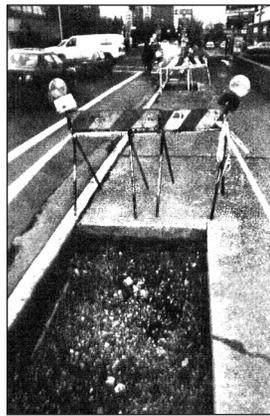
Shortly after dawn on June 1st, 1997, the Sunday morning quiet of downtown Eugene and the neighborhood just west of it was broken by the sound of chain saws. Only a few hours later, 40 large trees—mostly sweetgums and bigleaf maples—lay wilting in the early summer sun, and the landscape of West Broadway between Charnelton and Lincoln streets was changed forever.

What had been two City-owned parking lots was to become the future Broadway Place development. And although the removal of the trees was legal and had been much discussed during the preceding months, many Eugeneans were still horrified to see the shady city block turned into what looked like a battlefield—the corpses, in this case, being those of the trees.

One of the people who never again wanted to see such carnage was Jon Kline, who resides just a few blocks west of the site. Jon had planted trees with Friends of Eugene's Urban Forest (a group that planted and advocated for trees during the late 1980s and early 1990s) and was profoundly aware of the benefits that large trees provide in urban areas.

Jon telephoned a half-dozen of us who had been active in earlier pro-tree efforts, and on Tuesday evening, July 15th, we met at Jon's house to discuss the formation of what would eventually become Eugene Tree Foundation. From the outset, we agreed that our group would strive to act always in a constructive and respectful manner when advocating for trees. The schism here in

Eugene between the development community and environmentalists was already considerable; our hope was to bring diverse interest groups together, not further separate them.



Since its earliest days, ETF has had a three-pointed approach to helping ensure a more tree-friendly and tree-filled community. First and perhaps foremost is our very popular and successful tree planting program—including the *Trees-for-Concrete* projects where concrete in the public



West 11th Avenue at Pearl Street—the first *Trees-for-Concrete* project—on a sunny day in April 2007. Above, just-removed concrete in March 1999.

right-of-way is removed and trees are planted. These plantings are made possible by the City of Eugene's NeighborWoods program (started in 1992) which provides the trees; ETF members and others who help plant them; and the always supportive and helpful staff of the

division of urban forestry within the City's Public Works Department.

The second part of ETF's mission is its education program, from providing slide shows to interested community groups, to publishing a quarterly newsletter which is mailed out to more than 800 people and businesses.

The third part of our mission is advocating on behalf of trees. Some of the major downtown

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Mission Statement:

**To enhance community livability for present and future generations through the collaborative stewardship of Eugene's diverse and vibrant natural landscape**



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Continued on page 2

# President's Column

Happy Spring!

I'm writing these lines a few days before Arbor Day thinking that this famous date on the calendar will be even more special this year since it is ETF's 10th year! I'm celebrating a bit early since our great organization wasn't founded until summer 1997.

Look at what we've accomplished! Our Board now has five new members; we have planted over 1,300 trees; we have identified a dozen Legacy Trees; and more citizens are aware of our Tree Walks, and thus more appreciative of the beauty of their town. With increased awareness, more people are calling us when they have concerns about trees, so we really feel that we are building momentum.

We recently said goodbye to board member, Lisa Theobald, and wish to thank her for her passionate work on behalf of trees during the past several years.

The Board just finished a training session with a consultant coaching us on the best way to use our resources and hire a part-time staff person. That will allow us to even better serve our community and its trees. Eugene is changing and so are we; I'm welcoming you to the second decade with Eugene Tree Foundation!

Our Celebration of Trees on Feb. 16 was a great success. We thank Neil Björklund for his entertaining talk on the relationship between trees and butterflies. At the Celebration, we officially welcomed our five new board members:

Jason Blair has been a project coordinator at the Oregon Research Institute for ten years. He also writes for

the Eugene Weekly.

JoAn Henry, a retired RN, has worked in various hospitals and clinics, as well as Oregon's Outdoor School.

Nick Martinelli, an InfoGraphics cartographer, is currently working on his Master degree in Geography at the University of Oregon.

Peter Rodda, a retired geologist-paleontologist, enjoys researching Cretaceous fossils from Northern California and Central Oregon.

Doris Wimber, now retired, has conducted biology research and worked as an RN.

With new energy on the board, I am certain we can accomplish even more for Eugene's trees!



Alby Thoumsin, President

## Continued from page 1 **ETF Celebrates Its 10th Anniversary**

projects where we have had significant influence include the Eugene Public Library, the reopening of Broadway between Oak and Charnelton, and most recently, the new plantings at the Citizens Building at 10th and Oak. ETF has become a respected voice in our community and we

work comfortably and amicably with developers and environmentalists (not necessarily mutually exclusive groups), City staff, and local utilities to ensure that trees are always part of the discussion.



Lawrence Street at Third Avenue—another Trees-for-Concrete project, then and now.

Meanwhile, Eugene's landscape continues to change, just like it always has. Old trees sometimes must be removed, and new trees are planted.

Before 1850, the corner of Broadway and Charnelton was a treeless grassland as a result of frequent fires set by Willamette Valley Indians to maintain the open, mostly treeless (!) landscape that they favored.

From the late 1870s until well into the 1900s, the four corners of the intersection were homes to some of Eugene's most prominent citizens, including the T. J. Hendricks family. A drawing of the Hendricks home from the early

1880s clearly shows vigorous, ten-year-old bigleaf maples growing in the park strip in front of the house.

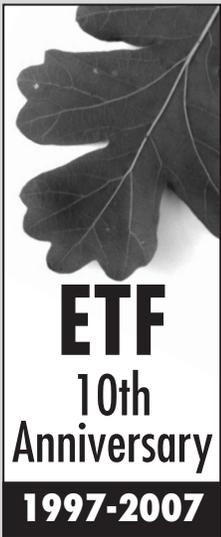
As Eugene's downtown changed in the mid- to late-1900s, the houses and the trees at Broadway and Charnelton were removed to make way for new businesses—and new trees. The two lots west of Charnelton eventually became parking lots for cars, under a canopy of maturing trees.

Then those trees were cut in 1997 to make way for the new apartments. And yet more trees (including new bigleaf maples right at the intersection of Broadway and Charnelton) were planted. A 1997 inventory of trees growing in the public right-of-way in downtown Eugene showed many empty spaces just waiting for trees. Now, just ten years later, virtually every one of those spaces has been filled, thanks in large part to the efforts of Eugene Tree Foundation. Just imagine what we might accomplish in the next ten years!

Happy Anniversary, ETF!

*Whitey Lueck is a horticulturist, naturalist, and landscape designer, and a co-founder of ETF.*





# Anniversary Tree Walk

**June 3rd, 1-3pm**

In honor of our 10th anniversary, ETF is sponsoring a special treewalk led by well-known Eugene dendrophile (and co-founder of ETF) Whitey Lueck. The tenor of this walk—like that of ETF since its inception—will be constructive in nature. We'll discuss the eight-year-old landscape at Broadway Place, then visit

nearby projects where ETF has had a positive influence over the past decade. Besides the inevitable talk of politics and community activism, there will be plenty of fine trees to admire.

Meet at the southeast corner of Broadway and Lincoln.

*Corner of Broadway and Charnelton where young trees are already beginning to shade these downtown apartments and businesses*



## Reflecting on A Thoughtless Act

*by Alby Thoumsin*

My jaw dropped when I saw it. The first thing I noticed was the size of the tree, then the unmistakable jagged edge where the trunk had been broken.

It was early March and one of the new silver lindens—planted by the owner of the Citizens Building as a major improvement project—had just been vandalized.

Prior to the planting of the new trees, the building's owner removed concrete to provide for future healthy tree root development; he changed the tree species to better fit the space; and he increased the tree diversity and improved the ambiance of that part of town. This wonderful project and the building's owner received our 2006 Big Leaf Award for outstanding urban forest stewardship!

Of course, the first thing that came to my mind was the inevitable question: why? The worst part was feeling angry at having let the person who vandalized the tree “win,” since the primary reason for vandalism is to upset others.

So now, not only has a tree been damaged, but my mood is injured, too. On top of that, some smaller plants were stolen the night after that section

of the planting had been completed. Along with the time and money that it will take to replace the linden, it seems this project has a black cloud hanging over it.

All of this aggravation because of one thoughtless act. I have to remind myself that this column is about education, the lack of which, I believe, was one of the reasons for this incident!

Trees are often taken for granted and damaged intentionally or otherwise because of the common belief that they “grow back” or can be replaced. How many times have I heard the words “renewable resource” when trees enter the conversation? The problem in the case of urban trees is that they are usually in a unique place in town—often associated with a landscape design—or because of their placement they have become landmarks. Growing in town is not easy, and vandalism sets back our efforts to improve our urban forest. After seeing the damage done to the young tree, I felt an even more pressing need to educate people. Children are incredibly receptive and appreciative, so they are prime targets for tree education, but can't we connect with any other age groups? The crowd attending our Tree Walks is usually “converted”

already to the preservation of our urban forest, so we need to find the missing link. Maybe then, there will be a little hesitation before a person grabs a tree and snaps it in half.

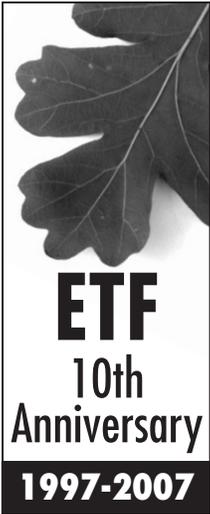
It is interesting to see the ramifications of a spontaneous decision to vandalize the tree, and maybe that's what it's all about: seeing time and money wasted to replace a tree that was just fine until that very second. I can't help thinking about the new tree that will be just as vulnerable! How about the other ones?

It seems that, this time, my “education article” was not really educational! Perhaps I'm the one who needs someone else's help to find the missing link mentioned above, so I can continue to feel good about helping humans understand and respect our tree brothers.

My tip this time? Talk about your love of trees. You will likely influence someone in a very positive way.

Until next time!

*Alby Thoumsin is a certified arborist.*



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The tulip-tree is common in the deciduous hardwood forests of eastern North America, where it can soar to heights in excess of 100 feet on some sites. Its most distinctive features are its unique leaves—which have four to six lobes—and its beautiful, tulip-like flowers which appear in spring after the leaves are already developed.

The botanical name for tulip-tree is itself beautiful: *Liriodendron tulipifera* means “tulip-bearing lily tree,” ah!

Here in Eugene, the tulip-tree is neither common nor particularly rare. But perhaps because it is not generally available in local nurseries, few of them are planted. It is a fast-growing tree that is closely related to the magnolias. In fact, the pink-petaled magnolia that in local gardens blooms before it leafs out in spring—which most of us elsewhere in

## *It's Tulip-tree Time*



the U.S. call a saucer magnolia (*Magnolia x soulangiana*)—is referred to in California as a “tulip tree,” too.

One of the best places to see tulip-trees in central Eugene is on the west side of the Lane County Elections building (at 10th and Lincoln) because the branches of those trees are low

enough to permit passersby to admire the flowers, which appear in May. And at 1176 Polk Street, there is a pair of large trees growing in the park strip.

Tulip-trees grow best around here on deep river loam soils and on irrigated soils away from the valley floor. They do not do well on the poorly drained soils of our “clay neighborhoods,” where ashes, sweetgums, pin oaks and other trees native to swamps are better choices.

One drawback of the tulip-tree in our area is its susceptibility to aphids (perhaps due to our dry and relatively dirty summer air, compared to the humid and rainy summers where it is native) which drip their sticky “exudate” onto pavements, vehicles, and people beneath the tree’s canopy. Nevertheless, it is a magnificent tree whose flowers are a sight to see at this time of year.