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***Gordy Ebnet saws full-time***

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# Total Tree LLC is just what it sounds like

## Gordy Ebnet goes full time with his full-service tree service

By JIM LUTGENS  
Editor/Publisher

Gordy Ebnet never planned on starting his own business.

For 35 years, he got up at 3:15 in the morning, drove to Waseca, punched a time clock and put in eight hours at the old E.F. Johnson building.

Last Friday, April 15, he clocked out for the final time. But he didn't retire.

Ebnet is going full time with his tree service business, Total Tree, LLC, faced with a situation of too much to do and not enough daylight to do it.

It started in 1997 when Ebnet and his wife, Brenda, moved from New Richland to a farm east of town. Surrounded by 40 acres of woods, he started sawing. Nearly 20 years later the Ebnet home is filled with custom hand made cabinets and other wood furnishings.

Along the way, one piece of equipment at a time, Ebnet's tree service evolved and grew by word of mouth, though many people are still unaware he does it. Fully licensed and insured, of course, Ebnet is not only able to take down your unwanted trees, he can turn them into lumber. He also does stump grinding, wood chipping and sells firewood.

"All this wood came from my woods out there," said Ebnet, gesturing toward their kitchen cupboards. "My wife says it's kind of expensive, because of the equipment, but it puts me in an unusual position as a tree service man. I can take down a raw tree and wind up with furniture — for myself. I do a lot of custom cutting of lumber. Basically, I have the equipment to do all that I



**CUSTOM CUT LUMBER** – Gordy Ebnet has been cutting lumber from local wood for 20 years. When he takes down a tree, it doesn't go to waste. The lot drying here is earmarked for his daughter's house in Faribault. Star Eagle photo by Jim Lutgens

have to do. I didn't really choose this profession. It kind of chose me."

He had to make a choice because, for the last three years during the summer, his work days started at 3:15 a.m. and didn't end until after dark.

"People told me, 'You're burning the candle at both ends, you've got to choose one or the other,'" said Ebnet.

So far, he's happy with his choice.

"It's so much different than what I was used to at the factory," he said. "I'll miss the boys down there, of course, after 35 years,

but working in the tree business, people have been so nice."

Folks regularly offer food or refreshments and Ebnet, in turn, believes in taking care of his customers. He wants to do a good job while offering competitive rates. He employs some part-time help for job site cleanup and Brenda serves as his bookkeeper.

How does it feel to finally be his own boss after all these years? Ask him in the fall.

"Somebody asked me that today, and I said I don't know," said Ebnet. "I haven't had a chance to slow down."

Ebnet's general service area is

within a 50-mile radius, though he's been known to travel farther for jobs.

Ebnet, a 1975 graduate of New Richland-Hartland High School, and Brenda, a 1978 NR-H grad, have two grown children, Misty (Westergren) and Shawn (Alicia), and three grandchildren. Alicia is battling breast cancer and has a benefit April 23 in Kasson. Brenda grew up a McGuire and is the sister of New Richland's Merlys Wenzel.

Contact Total Tree at (507) 456-1017.





**GORDY AND WIFE BRENDA** look like they do have it all, smiling, appropriately, in front of their family tree.

Star Eagle photo by Jim Lutgens



**FROM FOREST TO FURNITURE** – Ebnet has all the necessary equipment for the job. Star Eagle photo by Jim Lutgens

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# Making a business of gardening

## Former restaurant worker 'plays in the dirt' in Geneva

By KATHY PAULSEN

Staff Writer

It's spring, and that means many folks are starting to think about planting a garden.

For most, the original planting is intriguing, to say the least, but as time goes on it loses some of its attraction. Some people just aren't able to plant those little seeds and wait for them to sprout.

Thanks to Lance Perkins, they don't have to.

Perkins, who graduated from NRHEG High School in 2008, runs Dream Away Gardens just east of Geneva, offering a wide variety of vegetables.

Prior to starting Dream Away, Perkins worked at Buffalo Wild Wings, where he was a successful trainer in their kitchen, but though he was good at it and interested in food, his real interest was playing or working in the dirt.

He found just the right place – five acres right outside of Geneva – and is in his fourth year as a vegetable gardener. He has a two-acre vegetable plot that he started getting ready in February and will keep him more than busy into October.

Perkins grows radishes, cucumbers, peppers, potatoes, four kinds of lettuce, kale, cabbage, broccoli, squash, tomatoes, onions — to name a few. He has also started some asparagus for next year's eating enjoyment, and the rhubarb he planted last year should be ready by mid-May.

The radishes and kale planted this spring will be ready this week, and in a few weeks Perkins should have

some Chinese cabbage, lettuce, radishes and few other vegetables.

Kale is a product that has really come into its own and used for many things. My grandmother used to make kale soup with potatoes in it, but there are more ways to use it as "greens" or baked. It's a high quality food.

Perkins also raises berries — strawberries, raspberries and aronia on a plot near Hope.

He sells the vegetables to the Winter Green Co-Op and the Farmers Market in Albert Lea. He is hoping to get a farmers market started in Geneva.

Perkins's business includes selling a three-quart bushel box of vegetables, either once a week, or bi-weekly. His customers can pay a flat rate for the summer to get fresh vegetables.

His vegetables are available at the Wintergreen Co-Op from 3 to 6 on Wednesdays and 9 to 12 on Saturdays.

Perkins married a local girl, Kelsey Christensen, in 2011. Kelsey, daughter of Jeff and Robin Christensen, also has gardening in her family; her dad; her Grandpa Ron, her Great-Grandpa Hans and her Great-Great-Grandpa Chris have all been gardening enthusiasts.

Perkins worked in corporate restaurants and helped open 13 stores in different parts of the U.S. He knows the value of quality food and felt he wanted to be part of this "get-healthy enterprise."

Perkins serves on the Albert Lea Farmers Market board and is a part of the CSA, Community Supported



**NEW SHOOTS** – Vegetables destined for Farmers Market are sprouting up in Lance Perkins's greenhouse.

Star Eagle photo by Kathy Paulsen

Agriculture, and is also in the process of getting his certified organic license.

Perkins also has pasture chickens that are grass-fed and known for good eating, as well as providing some very high quality eggs. Currently, Perkins has more customers than eggs because of the

high demand. He raises about 400 chickens a year and plans to add about 40 more to his flock this year.

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STRAWBERRIES IN PROGRESS – Lance Perkins oversees a planting of strawberries in his Geneva garden area.

Star Eagle photo by Kathy Paulsen

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# 15,000 windshields is a lot of glass

John Glynn has pretty much seen it all

By **JESSICA LUTGENS**  
Staff Writer

Colors and Glass has been providing personal and commercial auto glass replacement and repair for Southern Minnesota since 1990. Owned and operated by John Glynn, the shop is located just outside Owatonna at 4146 Lemond Road and offers free pick up and delivery, weekend and same-day service, full insurance claim assistance, lifetime warranty and roadside assistance for the local area.

Glynn is a lifelong resident of Owatonna, having graduated from Owatonna High School in 1983 and studying at Albert Lea Vo-Tech and MSU. He has four kids — three daughters, the youngest of which has a twin brother — all college-age, and in his free time he enjoys hunting, fishing, and spending time with his children.

Prior to starting his business, Glynn

worked at a Chevrolet dealership in Owatonna selling cars at age 24.

“I wanted to be my own boss,” he said. “But what I like best about my job is all the people I’ve met over the years that I wouldn’t have without doing what I do.”

With more than 15,000 installations in 27 years of business, Glynn has pretty much seen it all when it comes to auto glass. Having worked on everything from cars and trucks to tractors and semis, he has also seen many changes over the years.

“Everything has become more high tech,” he explained. “Windshields now have all kinds of options — heat, rain sensor, antennas, lane departure warning.”

New airbag technology, according to Glynn, has caused changes to door glass, and windshields in general have gotten bigger. Safety is also a major concern regarding windshields.



**JOHN GLYNN is ready to go to where he’s needed, same day.**  
Star Eagle photo by Jessica Lutgens

“Windshields are designed to keep you in the vehicle in case of an accident, and they’re a backboard for airbags,” Glynn said. “They’re important to the structural integrity of the vehicle. If installation isn’t done properly, the car isn’t safe.”

Colors and Glass uses OEM (original equipment manufacturer) glass and the best urethane available. As a mobile service, vehicle pick-up and delivery are free.

All in all, Glynn enjoys his job and likes the unique and ever-changing aspect of the business, commenting, “From the fanciest cars to big semis, I’ve done them all.”

For local residents in need of auto glass replacement or repair, call John at Colors and Glass: (507) 475-0473 (cell) or (507) 451-1936, e-mail: color-sandglass@outlook.com, or visit color-sandglass.com for more information.

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Star Eagle photo by Kathy Paulsen

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