

Almost to the moon and back

By David Nordby
The Brillion News

BRILLION – More than 34 years after Darcy Zander-Feinauer started full time at her family company, she has now set sail for retirement.

Since Wednesday, April 1, 1987, Zander-Feinauer has been a staple of the company, carrying the family torch as the company's first fourth-generation employee. She worked a variety of different roles including most recently as layout editor of *The Brillion News* and *Lake to Lake Shopper* and a graphic artist. She has been co-owner with her sisters Beth Wenzel and Kris Bastian since 2005, when their father, Zane Zander, retired.

While she will not be a stranger to the company in the future, she had her final day as a full-time worker last Thursday.

"In the last 19 years, the amount of miles that I've driven is almost to the moon and back, or 951 times around the Earth," Zander-Feinauer said. "I think the piece of information that's even more devastating to me is if I added up all the hours I spent, it's one year and 26 days of time that I've just wasted sitting in my car each week, and I'm just done wasting the time."

That cumulative commute of close to 10 hours each week started in 2002



Darcy Zander-Feinauer started working full time at Zander Press on April 1, 1987 and retired last week after 34 years. Prior to her sendoff, she trained her daughter, Bailey Lindgren, to fill her position. Lindgren is the company's first full time fifth-generation employee. (Brillion News photo)

after she moved to Oshkosh and married her husband, Dale Feinauer.

"I love my job. I love the people I work with. I love all the people in the community ... it's just I'm done wasting my time driving back and forth," Zander-Feinauer said.

Zander-Feinauer's retirement will change the dynamics of the day-to-day operations of Zander Press and start a new era, with the first full-time fifth-generation employee from the Zander family tree. Zander-Feinauer's daughter, Bailey Lindgren, has taken over her role.

"It's good and it's bad because I know she has the same kind of commitment and responsibility to the family business as I did, but then I have to worry about her, where if it was just some other employee, I could just kind of walk away," Zander-Feinauer said.

Zander-Feinauer spent multiple Saturdays training Lindgren as part of an internship from her graphic and web design degree from Lakeshore Technical College and the last two weeks full-time in the office.

"I'm always a resource for her. If she has any problems or questions, she knows where to find me," Zander-Feinauer said. "There's pride and

(RETIREMENT/page 6)



Jun 10

2021

Page 0006

Clip resized 46%

From 0001

6

NEWS

THE BRILLION NEWS
Thursday, June 10, 2021

RETIREMENT
(from page 1)

there's worry. It's two-fold." According to Businessweek, just three percent of businesses make it to fourth generation.

"For the fifth-generation to be here, that's pretty incredible," Zander-Feinauer said. "That's pretty uncommon, and really cool, actually."

Zander-Feinauer says she did not worry about a fifth generation entering the fray, because while she was 22 when she started full-time, Bastian, Wenzel and their brother, Mike Zander, were all in their thirties when they joined the family business.

"You never know when someone's career path is going to change," Zander-Feinauer said.

Lindgren's previous career was a veterinary technician. After her previous employer switched ownership, she was looking for other options. Zander-Feinauer was encouraged by her husband to call Lindgren to fill her role with retirement upcoming.

Lindgren quickly enrolled in school and earned her degree all while she got married and had her first child.

Zander-Feinauer meanwhile ended her career working with decades-long employees at Zander Press.

"A lot of these women I've worked with for 30 years. I've known them forever," Zander-Feinauer said. "It's just the longtime friendships and employees become family. I'll miss everybody, but I'll be popping in and out."

Bastian and Wenzel will continue in their day-to-day ownership role.

"It might be easier. They call us the 'three-headed Medusa' and it's because you have to deal with all three of us, so once it gets down to two, then it's a little bit less complicated for everybody, I think," Zander-Feinauer said.

Laying out

Carrying on the family legacy was serious business for Zander-Feinauer, and so was the layout of the newspaper each week.

"There's a sense of responsibility since I'm the fourth generation putting the paper together, and it's always been in the back of my mind that my great-grandfather started this and it was his baby," Zander-Feinauer



Zander-Feinauer stands with her daughter, Bailey Lindgren, in front of the wall that remembers Zander Press' history. (David Nordby/BN photo)

er said.

Her great-grandfather, Otto, has been on her shoulder while she has worked at her desk, she says.

"Every once in a while, when I get this nagging feeling that something's not right with the paper, and I search into it a little bit more, I screwed something up, and I think that's him," Zander-Feinauer said.

She says the family business created that sense of responsibility.

"It's something very important to my family and it's something very important to the community," Zander-Feinauer said. "It's just a sense of responsibility that I carried on something so important to my great-grandfather and my grandfather [Elliot]."

Every week is like a puzzle with articles, photos, legals, ads and other miscellaneous items to fit inside the Adobe InDesign layout program.

"It's kind of like every week packing up all your stuff, moving out of your apartment, moving into a new apartment, unpacking and making it look pretty," Zander-Feinauer said. "And then at the end of that week, you pack it all up and you move to the next apartment."

When she started in 1987, the layout was more complicated with code set each week on a Compugraphic computer system and then sent to a printer to print out galleys of stories.

"We weren't laying it out on a computer screen because they didn't have computers as we know of now back then," Zander-Feinauer said.

The newspaper galleys were printed, run through a machine that put a layer of wax on the back and pasted onto sheets by a crew of four people.

"Then we'd shoot negatives of the pages and take the negatives over to Denmark where we printed it," Zander-Feinauer said.

In the early 1990s, Apple computers helped replace that system.

Before the company added more employees to help with print work, Zander-Feinauer handled all printing jobs in addition to *The Brillion News* and *Lake to Lake Shopper*. She also typed everything into the newspaper and shopper, prior to the advent of email as an information sharer.

Zander-Feinauer worked on print work up until the last 12 years, when she went back to layout editor of the newspaper and shopper.

"I think it's good to have someone who's familiar with the community and familiar with the people to do the paper justice," Zander-Feinauer said.

That relationship between the community and the newspaper, she says, will last. Larger newspapers, she says, have stories with information more easily accessible from multiple sources online.

"The weekly newspapers, they concentrate on the local communities... so, you're always going to have that audience," she said.

Over the years, the community has become a major contributor to the newspaper.

"We're fortunate to have people like the moms that will take the pic-

tures or Craig Orth or Ted Petrie, the ones that step up with their kids and hopefully we continue to have that role of help because we can't do it all. It's impossible," Zander-Feinauer said. "We need the tips; we need the stories."

The Zander family often describes the newspaper as creating a history book in real-time.

"That's a record that's kept forever," Zander-Feinauer said. "It's pretty cool to be a part of that."

Zander-Feinauer and her three siblings were always a part of the newspaper family in the city.

"The biggest problem was Dad knew everything we did, so we had to get more creative to sneak around him because he would just walk down Main Street and someone would say, 'Yeah, I saw your daughter doing this' or 'Your daughter did that.' So, we couldn't get away with anything. It was like Big Brother watching over your shoulder," Zander-Feinauer said laughing.

By 22-years old, she started full time with the company.

"I always knew this is where I was going to be," Zander-Feinauer said.

Retirement

Often times when a customer has walked into Zander Press, one of the first faces they have seen is Zander-Feinauer. Now, she will be somewhere in Oshkosh working on projects and keeping up with 46 acres of land.

"Oh my gosh, I have so much planned," Zander-Feinauer said.

There are the less fun tasks like "deferred cleaning," but also more enjoyable hobbies to pursue.

"I want to relearn how to play piano because I lost that skill," she said.

She also plans to start painting again, a passion from when she went to college, and learn woodworking.

"And hopefully not lose a finger because that will kind of damage the piano playing possibility," Zander-Feinauer remarked.

Whatever she does, she says she will work at a slower pace rather than the often frantic rushing of work. Traveling with her husband will resume eventually, too.

"Just being able to go on vacation and not worry all the time, like, 'Oh my gosh, is this going to get done or is that going to done.'... Just stop being so focused to get so many things done all the time," she said.

Zander-Feinauer, with Bastian and Wenzel, had a goal to "not be the generation that failed." The business has never been larger than under their leadership.

Since Mike Zander's departure from the company, Zander Press has had the unique distinction of three females - sisters, no less - as owners.

"We're sisters. We love each other. Some days we hate each other. Sometimes we fight. Sometimes we get along great, but behind it all, we still have to keep the business running and be successful and take care of our employees," Zander-Feinauer said.

The last 15 years she's spent every workday with her sisters. Prior to that, she spent them with her dad.

"You're also sharing your days with your sisters, and that's pretty magical. I got to spend 20 years with my dad every day. A lot of people don't get that, so that's something that's very special to me," Zander-Feinauer said.

As part of the company's growth over the years, Zander-Feinauer would show potential clients her design work.

"We just kept growing the business that way showing people what we could do... I'm proud of that. Just carrying on the tradition," she said.

The responsibility of carrying on the family tradition has been a mission accomplished.

"I'm really at peace with it. I've come in here; I've done my job. I think I've made my ancestors proud and that was always really important," she said.

The work was enjoyable, too.

"I think I can count on two fingers the days I just did not want to come to work in the last 34 years. I just love my job," Zander-Feinauer said. "If there was a way I could do it from home, I'd probably still be here."

Zander-Feinauer had intended to leave on April 1 (April Fool's Day, she joked), the exact 34-year anniversary of when she started full-time, but it was stretched to last week to help Lindgren transition into the role.

She says the time working feels much shorter than 34 years, but if she had to give a piece of advice to herself on April 1, 1987, knowing what she knows now, it would be a simple one.

"Don't take life so seriously. It all works out in the end."