

Author pens biography of mother who co-founded Caledon nursery

Astrid Peters self-published her first book, *Sibylla: One Story at a Time*?

By Zachary Roman

Astrid Peters' mother was born in the Netherlands in 1918.

She lived there until 1948, when love changed her life. Sibylla Janssen-Peters married her husband Frans at age 29 and the pair moved to Canada. They started their own nursery, Humber Nurseries Ltd., and embarked on the journey of life together.

Astrid Peters, who now lives in Brampton, wanted to document the life of her mother through a book. Peters is a former high school French and music teacher and took an interest in historical genealogy in her retirement.

Through interviews with her mother, she tells the story of her life one story at a time, in as close to her mother's words as possible. Her mother lived to the age of 92 and raised four children in addition to running her business.

"It's her personality that just speaks right through the book," said Peters. "I've done a few other writings, but this is the biggest project that I've ever done."

Peters self-produced her book with the help of a publishing company.

Humber River Nurseries was founded in 1948 in what is now Toronto. In the 60s, the business was moved to Brampton and kept growing. In 2020, it moved to Bramalea Road in Caledon, on a piece of land that's been in Peters' family since 1954.

Astrid's brother, Frans, now runs the business with his son Frans ? who goes by JR to avoid any confusion as they work so closely together. The business is now called Humber River Nurseries 2020 Ltd. to mark the move.

Peters said her mother was always very popular with clients and would spend lots of time chatting to them. She said people would ask her mom about her life and her business and she was always happy to share.

"She was a real hook into the past and the present, a real connection between the 20th and the 21st century, so to speak," said Peters. She said her mother's business style and insights have inspired many entrepreneurial women.

Peters' book is available at Forster's Book Garden in Bolton, as well as online on the Barnes & Noble and Amazon websites. The book is also available at Humber River Nurseries at 14905 Bramalea Road in Caledon.

Peters will be doing a book signing and presentation there on June 11 beginning at 1 p.m. She'll be selling her book at a reduced price that day, and there will be a draw to win free books as well.