

CULTURAL MOMENT FOR JUNE 23, 2025 CELEBRATES THE SWAMP SISTERS

Out of the mist on a moonlit night emerge two shadows making their way from the marsh into Damascus. These foreboding visions in search of men, moonshine and mayhem are fondly known as the Swamp Sisters.

They first attended the West Luther Centennial celebrations in 1981, where hands down they won the log sawing contest. However, the most remembered moment for the Sisters is when Dean Hopkins, an NHL player with the Los Angeles Kings, attended the township centennial. It is said Dean never took a check as hard as he did when one of the Swamp Sisters hit him with their purse.

During the next decade, most locals could hardly wait until the Arthur Enterprise News was in their mailbox to anxiously read the next instalment of the column 'The Damascus Road.' It was there where the report of the Sisters brightened our day.

The Sisters have a soft side. They were reported to have visited the newest senior citizen of Damascus for their birthday with a gift from the swamp - turtles.

There was also a sighting in Drain 36. One of the Swamp Sisters surprised two local residents who were out for an Easter Sunday walk. They were strolling along the edge of the drainage ditch when a canoe came out of the mist. It was gone as quickly and quietly as it had approached.

Trouble, however, was never far behind. Even during harvest season, when most were too tired for nonsense, the Sisters found time for new antics. One was rumoured to be raising large, toad-eating snakes—and letting them roam freely through neighbours' gardens.



West Luther's highly sophisticated, extremely good looking, very shy, well mannered, always behaved Swamp Sisters made a surprise appearance at the West Luther Centennial variety show in 1981. (Jeff McKee/Arthur Enterprise News photo)

The Luther Marsh, a sprawling 12,000-acre wetland and a vital stopover for hundreds of thousands of migrating birds, was their domain. Strange things happened there. Canada geese were seen stomping across rooftops, honking wildly. A Swamp Friend blamed it on the “quack grass” the Sisters had been feeding them.

Just at dusk on a fall Sunday evening, as the fog and the mist settled in, they were spotted sitting on the steps of the Damascus store. Soon a crowd had gathered, leery of getting too close to them. But finally, one brave soul approached within 20 feet. As she did so, the Sisters faded into the fog and mist, no doubt on their way back to the swamp.

For just over a decade, the Swamp Sisters reigned in West Luther, where they were rumoured to have control over Reeve Jack Lennox. Now, whispers stir once more. Could they rise again, this time to challenge Mayor Andy Lennox?

Only the mist knows for sure.

Submitted by Bonny McDougall, Wellington North Cultural Roundtable