



For Sister Hazel, it's always been about the music, but over the course of their decade-plus music making career, it has expanded beyond that to incorporate so much more. They've maintained their unerring focus and desire to help, to share, to include, and to grow -- be it through their music or through other means -- all the while stretching their musical umbrella to cover what has become a true community. "We love to do so many different things," says Block. "Between writing songs we believe in, the live shows, building a community, expanding our events, and the charity, there's this whole lifestyle that is what Sister Hazel is all about."

This lifestyle is defined by Sister Hazel fans and their sense of community. The fivesome has never been far from the road, and their consistent, regular touring has only helped to grow their fan base, year in and year out. Even before they signed their first record deal, they were always very available and open with their fans, and they've continued to strive to provide those fans with a feeling of sharing along the way. The result has been a group of fans who are extraordinarily loyal, some of whom follow the band on the road from city to city. "We've created a community of like-minded people who enjoy the music as much as we do," says Newell. "We're still having fun and that translates. All of us try to be accessible to our fans, and we really are concerned with their journey as much as ours."

Fans have flocked to special fan-centric events the band helped to create: The Rock Boat and The Rock Slope. The Rock Boat, the world's largest floating music festival which first sailed in 2001, was the first of its kind -- other bands have since mimicked the concept, but none as successfully as Sister Hazel. With The Rock Boat being such an enormous hit, the band went on to create The Rock Slope in 2004, a ski and snowboarding music fest, in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, where the bands involved perform at the hotels, on the mountain, and on the ski decks. Both The Rock Boat and The Rock Slope are perfect extensions of the Sister Hazel mentality toward their fans -- open the lines of communication, be available to spend time with them, and provide the fans with the best experiences possible. "I think my favorite thing about being part of Sister Hazel is watching our music connect with the fans and inspiring them," says Copeland. "Our music also connects and gaps generations. We see people of all ages in our audiences." Trojanowski likes to call the group: "a band of the people. We've never been a guarded type of band. Ken and Andrew especially have a natural way of making everyone feel comfortable with them immediately."

With fan interaction so important to all of the band members, it is certainly understandable that Sister Hazel is equally serious about the charity work that they do. The band has raised over half a million dollars through concerts and silent auctions of handwritten lyrics held to benefit the Lyrics for Life charity they founded: funds raised go to help children and adults battling cancer. The group hosts five to six events per year, where Sister Hazel and artists like Elton John, the Beastie Boys, Jessica Simpson, Tim McGraw, Stone Temple Pilots, Barenaked Ladies, Aerosmith, Kid Rock, R.E.M., and many more have assisted in the Lyrics for Life cause.

"We've been fortunate with our success," says Block. "As a band, we've always put writing songs that we believe in, putting on powerful live shows, and being passionate about our craft at the top." Trojanowski attributes their longevity to a simple concept: "When you set yourself up as a band, a democracy, it lasts longer. That equal partnership is key." Their music is solid and satisfying, comfortable and easy, like old friends and family. Following on the heels of the successful "Absolutely" album (the band's sixth studio record), fans have had their requests answered twice in 2007: first with the release of a b-sides and rarities disc entitled "BAM!" during the summer, and with the release of a holiday album in September entitled "Santa's Playlist."

[www.sisterhazel.com](http://www.sisterhazel.com)  
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