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Outlaws

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maneuvers that included a nimble full-body flop commonly called the worm.

When he proudly rose, arms folded defiantly over his chest, Amos received an ovation of camera lenses clicking.

"You people on LBI are the best because you're willing to go the extra mile," Hezekiah said, calling on stage two young women from one of many bachelorette parties in attendance.

Whether in the name of love or lust, the girls proceeded to lead "Pour Some Sugar on Me."

The understated but efficient electric guitar work of Brother Ishmael L Cool J and the confident drumming of Brother Jacob the Pipe Layer were no match for the jiggling in the front of the stage. But on the Def Leopard track – and throughout the evening – the

band's two "honorary Amish" (translation: not Amish) members kept a harmonious cohesiveness from their perches toward the back of the stage.

At the forefront remained Hezekiah and Ezekiel, who played Snoop Dogg to the other's Dr. Dre for a creative "Nothing But a 'G' Thang" that included some specialized lyrics.

"From a young Amish's perspective ..." Hezekiah adlibbed before Ezekiel riffed Dre by getting "back to the lecture at hand."

It was one of many times throughout the night that the men dressed in suspenders, black shoes, socks and caps riffed on their Amish roots.

The trio, all former members of the strict sect, decided to leave their respective communities during a period of sanctioned exploration called rumspringa. Following this teenage time, many Amish choose to return home. Now in their 30s, Hezekiah and his band members instead found their way in music, something forbidden to the Amish.

However, Hezekiah explained, there is a small repertoire of acceptable songs that Amish are allowed to sing.

"It's religious chanting," he said, singing a line that sounded like a Monty Python impersonation. "It's like Gregorian chanting only it's not that cool."

Amos and Ezekiel, both 32, found music on their own. And while Amos first played soothing songs on the synthesizer, Ezekiel favored a sound a bit more sinister. His devotion to Heavy Metal has led him to regularly attend shows by the likes of Type O Negative and Celtic Frost. He even messed around playing in a metal band, he said.

Despite leaving home years back, the band still has ties to their Amish communities, which they visit intermittently to see their families. An avid showman, Ezekiel has even performed for two of his brothers during their respective rumspringas.

"We're serious about what we do," Ezekiel said. "But we don't take ourselves too seriously."

It was fitting, then, that the Amish Outlaws, perennial favorites at the Shell, took particular pleasure in delivering a reverberating rendering of "Livin' on a Prayer."

— Dan Schwartzman

danschwarzman@thesandpaper.net

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Hooking Up

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Such was the case that Morgan experienced a few years back. Her parents had just moved to a new town and the 26-year-old was home from school for the summer. A casual encounter got physical and it was fun while it lasted. But her boyfriend kept asking the same insecure question.

"You're not going to leave me at the end of the summer?" he whined repeatedly in a gender reversal that would dress John Travolta from "Grease" in drag (like John Travolta in "Hair-spray.")

"No," she reassured him. Sure enough, it got colder and that's when it ended. But now visits home to Chatham dredge up more than the memory of her summer lover.

"I still see him to this day," she said begrudgingly.

But for every dozen relationships that head south like a warm gulf tide, there are a few that stick around for a September swell.

With a cadre of her Chatham girlfriends surrounding her, Christina retold the origins of her romance. On one hand she wore a rock the size of Gibraltar. It was fake – the other ring finger had the real engagement ring.

"I had convinced myself it was very casual," she said, talking about a summer several years ago. "Whatever happens, happens."

The relationship began in the warm weeks during a hiatus from school. However, when the season ended, the romance survived into temperate climates – and for several amorous orbits around the sun.

One day late in summer before the date was set, her man pulled her close and they exchanged secrets.

"One day we're going to get married," they both vowed to each other before the onset of autumn. ♦

Are you hooking up? E-mail Dan Schwartzman at danschwarzman@thesandpaper.net.