

## Inspired by your Favorite Biker Mag

By Kenn Hartmann

I regularly check ads in FRP, meticulously perusing each issue. The Ironhorse in Cobden, MN refers to the town of Sleepy Eye as a point of reference, like it's the nearest big town. Sleepy Eye lacks the literary cachet of Sleepy Hollow and it's doubtful anyone outside of Southwestern Minnesota has heard of it. But I have. Many moons ago I rode from Mankato through New Ulm seeking a local brew. Fished the Minnesota River, a few casts, caught nothing. Headed through Sleepy Eye to Morton on the Lower Sioux Indian Reservation to see the band Ahbleza with Jamison Mahto, Lakota poet on lead guitar. Ahbleza played in a one-room schoolhouse converted into a temporary venue years before any Casino came to town. About seventeen Sioux Indians showed up to listen, all ages. Plus me, from the TC and my brother Chuck, who arrived from Chicago. When Ahbleza rocked, the Elders left, all five of them paraded out, dismayed at the Talking Heads tune 'Life During Wartime' and milled about the front steps and murmured softly. Then the band broke into a Willie Nelson rendition and the handful of old folks beamed back in ready to dance. Partied into wee hours, maybe 10 PM small town time and the next day, perhaps while headed to Pipestone I somehow got stuck in Worthington at the Turkey Day parade and met a couple cheerleaders, one from Sleepy Eye.



All the FRP ads fascinate me; the Hell's Lovers MC presents a birthday bash. I wonder if it's the same HLMC I met in Milwaukee at Harley's 100th? They had Joru's on Teutonia rocking the dead at Union Cemetery across the street. Folks all over town warned me not to go, especially to avoid the backyard after the midnight graveyard shift put down their shovels, a veritable hotbed of hellacious intrigue and devilish debauchery. Arriving after midnight I headed to the backyard but found it empty except for a Haitian zombie waving a prison shiv, mumbling incoherently. Normally, trading for weapons at taverns is a worthy enterprise, but I came to sell books, not collect souvenirs. We did share a fine cigar, a blunt he called it. All the action was out front at the pool table and on the street. A block party raged with scads of cycles and gregarious biker joviality that erupts around gasoline, exhaust and beer. I started the day selling my books downtown on Water Street and at sunset, I worked into the hood; the literary crowd shied away as day gave way to electric night. I caroused down fifth and witnessed no dearth of equalizers packed in holsters, belts and waistbands. One dude, a local proprietor let me weigh the subtle balance of a substantial snub-nose .38. Maybe he needed a second set of prints. At Throttle Twisters I heard folks asking directions to the Hell's Lovers shindig. Said follow me. This towering flashy freak asked how a white boy knew about Joru's. Who do you think wrote the book? So there I was with an anxious pack itching to roll thus let it rip. The flashy freak had a hot momma on back of a stretched monster chop and kept pace alongside down Fifth all the way up Teutonia with a tenacious pack in fervid pursuit. We rumbled into Joru's just after midnight like zombies oozing from the crypt. I paid five bucks for a Milwaukee 100th skull patch from a behemoth biker with his mammoth ass cheeks planted over two chairs. He got pissed that I wiped the patch on the sole of my boot. He said it showed no respect. I asked him, what the hell am I to do with a clean patch? The nighttime street-grime from the hundredth at Joru's still graces that emblem. Next time I'm bleeding I'll spill a few drops on it to prove ownership.

A badass hombre in a leather duster insisted that if I ever wrote about the Hell's Lover party to tell the truth, as opposed to recite the facts. Thank God the truth is all I have, too easy to f-up the facts. Little Dude, who was in Milwaukee Biker Bars heard I had camped the previous night near the crack heads down by the River and suggested I crash at the crib with the entertainers. You mean musicians? 'No, strippers,' he said. Well, I pondered aloud, what if the girls get lonely and climb into bed with me? Little Dude just shook his head and said, 'take it like a man.' Meanwhile a pack of Ninja sport riders parked across the lot but didn't come into the party so I wandered over to see what's up. It was a gathering of young hotties in matching suits, helmets and bikes. Damn, my socks don't even match. I asked, how fast you girls going to go? 'Hundred-forty.' Damn, Sam. At 1:30 a.m. the girls headed out for an all night romp. I hopped on my bike and headed south to Thirty-Fifth and National just in time to ride through a gun battle. No time to duck in the middle of a fusillade. Felt vulnerable, nearly porous.

You know what ad I like? Hoover's Live Bait, who would have thunk it in a biker mag? 'Live Free or Die.' I haven't been to Amherst since my dad dragged me up there in the early sixties. This was back in the days when you would have got a cattle prod up your hind end for even thinking to serve a pre-fabbed fake milk shake in the heart of Dairyland. We went north of Iola to camp on Farmer Torbenson's land at North Lake, where my brother Ronny and I played pirates and caught northern pike and smallmouth bass amongst the lily pads and reeds. Farmer Torbenson had an authentic tipi hanging in his barn and for a punk kid from Chicago it created lifelong vivid dreams. Around the lake-side campfire, he remembered his childhood when the local indigenous population came to fish for big snappers on this very spot. Adolph Torbenson was born in the farmhouse in 1877 and lived there ninety-eight years. Officially the oldest person I ever knew or will know. Nobody alive today was born in 1877. But Adolph didn't act old; spry may be apt for the tall, lanky farmer. At County Roads J and C were a bar and a café. The corners actually had a name I can't recall. When Adolph, well into his eighties and my dad walked into the bar, Adolph kicked up his leg and planted his boot on the top door jam. He announced to the stunned patrons, 'by yiminy, this here's my friend from Chicago and we'll take all comers!' With Adolph still stretched with his leg damn near to the ceiling poised Kung Fu farmer style ready to strike, my dad figured Adolph didn't need help tangling with anyone. At least my dad didn't want to meet the man that could tangle with Torbenson. Meanwhile, the café across the highway served the best malts in existence. By 1965, the café bought a new fangled malt machine that dispensed fake shakes and we never went back.

Fellas, I'm a live bait fisherman, but I bet Hoover's has a few small lures I could pick up. Maybe a Mepps or Lazy Ike. I'm always willing to add a small Daredevil to my arsenal. The ultra-lite fishing rod I carry on my handlebars is a Heddon Pal, the exact rod I fished the Waupaca county waters way back when. It's beat up a bit, been broken and repaired and worn out in places, but there's still some action left. Just like me.

-Kenn Hartmann

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

Like HIGH PRICES? See your Dealer  
If not, see us!  
We're done with dealers, are you?  
**DWD MOTORCYCLE SERVICE**  
**8302 W. Lisbon Ave.**  
**Milwaukee**  
**414-445-7402**  
**FAST FRIENDLY SERVICE**  
**LOWEST PRICES IN TOWN!**

**THE  
HARDTAILS  
SALOON**

208 West Main Street  
Hortonville, WI 54944  
(920) 779-6877

OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK  
MON-FRI 11:00AM  
SAT 10:00AM SUN 9:00AM

"GET IN THE WIND"

GRILL OPEN DAILY

GREAT SANDWICHES & HOMEMADE  
SOUP & CHILI  
LIMITED BREAKFAST ON SUNDAYS

OVER 16 DOMESTIC AND  
IMPORTED BEERS

HAPPY HOUR & DAILY SPECIALS

LIVE MUSIC

**Country Trailers**  
Fiberglass Motorcycle Trailers  
Edward Denman

129 E. North Street (County Hwy V)  
DeForest, WI 53532  
608-846-5363 or toll free 866-365-5286  
Fax: 608-846-2028 e-mail: [trailers@itis.com](mailto:trailers@itis.com)  
[www.countrytrailers.net](http://www.countrytrailers.net)

"For I know the plans I have for  
you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper  
you and not to harm you, plans  
to give you hope and a future."  
JEREMIAH 29:11 NIV

[www.ridefreeforever.org](http://www.ridefreeforever.org)

**Park Ave Bar**

Pizza  
Hot Appetizers  
Ice Cold Drinks  
Video Games  
Pool  
Darts

Hwy 44 Exit  
358 W. South Park Ave. Oshkosh, WI  
920-233-7275

**HARDTAILS**  
American Motorcycle  
Parts & Repair  
Specializing in Harley Davidson

Sales • Service • Parts  
American Made Motorcycles  
(320) 251-0545

7285 Cty. Rd. 75  
St. Cloud, MN 56301