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Poets on Wheels

The Wild Ones Share Their Sensitive Side

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Easy writer? The hyperbole fits like a leather glove for a dozen Chicago-area poetry-reading bikers known as The Wild Ones. The sensitive choppers present the world premiere of their video poetry as part of the 4th National Poetry Video Festival held Wednesday through Friday at two Wicker Park locations.

Many of the folks who attended last weekend's World Largest Indoor Swap Meet & Bike Show at McCormick Place North caught a preview of the poetry in motion. Right after the bike show's annual leather fashion revue, members of The Wild Ones took to the stage. Wearing black T-shirts showing Shakespeare on a motorcycle, they read about riding, death, sex and love.

"It's an expression of the soul that's put in words," said biker-poet Ted Aliotta, whose video "Colors" [the term that refers to motorcycle attire] will be screened Thursday. On Wednesday at the Hot House, Aliotta will read "Colors." Before the reading, The Wild Ones founder Santo Procenti is scheduled to ride Aliotta into the Hot House on his '72 FLH Harley that to date has been covered in 35 cans of orange paint. Also on Wednesday, festival organizer Jean Howard will show her video poem "Harley & The Hill."

"Poetry is the unique call to try and help humanity which is in all of us," Aliotta said. "That little part of God and the other side of the devil that's in us—with his tail hanging out."



JON SALL/SUN-TIMES

Ted Aliotta recites poetry at the bike show last weekend at McCormick Place.