

Bikers gather for Holocaust memorial

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On most rides, motorcyclists think about the wind in their faces and the freedom of the open road. But during the 2011 Ride to Remember, participants could only think about two words: Never Again.

Hundreds of riders honored the victims of the Holocaust — those who died and those who survived. Coming from the East Coast, the Midwest, Canada and even Australia, they mounted their wide array of two-wheeled vehicles on May 13.

Sponsored by the Jewish Motorcycle Alliance, the annual Ride to Remember is held in a different location each year, and proceeds benefit a local Holocaust education program. This year's recipient was the United Jewish Federation of Tidewater's Speaker's Bureau, which provides living testimony through survivors sharing their stories in schools and other settings.

Following a photo opportunity for riders on the Virginia Beach Boardwalk at 8 a.m., the bikers rode into Norfolk for



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Above Mitch Harris, left, of Kentucky and Chris Madairy of Maryland talk about relatives lost in the Holocaust during the Ride to Remember.

Left Hebrew Academy students hold Israeli flags during the riders' departure.

REMEMBER

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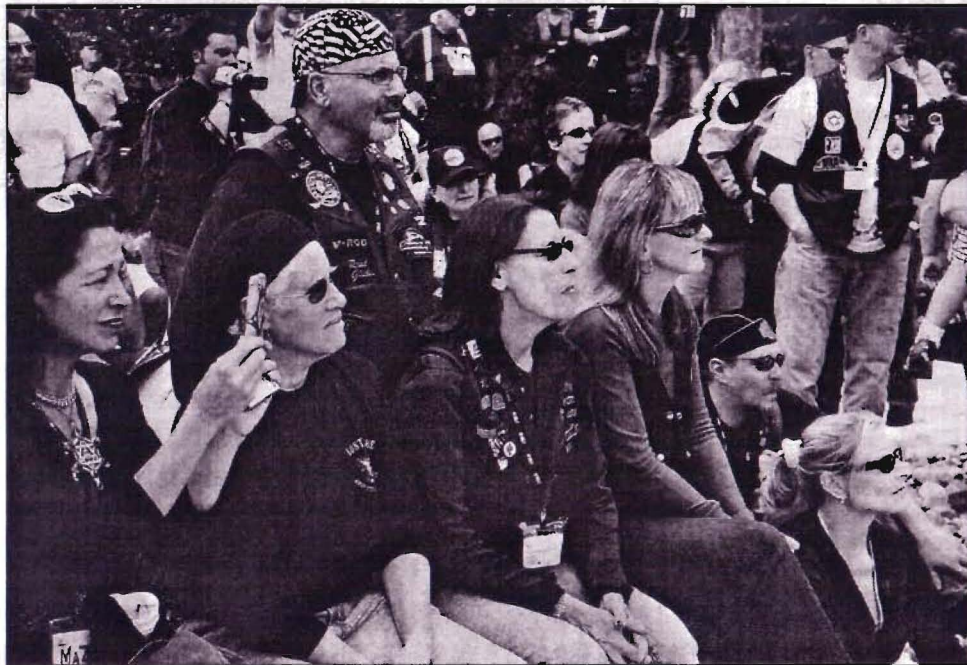
breakfast at B'nai Israel and a tour of Norfolk. The actual ride began when kickstands went up about 10:30 a.m.

With a police escort, the riders made their way through downtown, back onto Interstate 264 and to the Helen Gifford Holocaust Memorial Garden on the grounds of the Simon Family Jewish Community Center in Virginia Beach.

Once gathered, the sense of Jewish pride swelled – far outweighing the motorcyclists' pride in their ride and organizations. T-shirts and leather jackets bore the names of groups such as Motorcycle Menchum, Sons of Israel, Chai Riders, Hillel's Angels and more.

"The Jewish people have been persecuted for thousands of years," said Mark Nachman, a member of the local motorcycle group The Lost Tribe. "This is a way of saying we won't forget the victims, but we won't let this happen to us as well."

Mike Ashe, also a mem-



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Members of The Lost Tribe, a local cycle club, join others listening to rabbis speak. "Judaism is not going to be kept alive in our minds," one said. "It must be kept alive in our actions."

ber of The Lost Tribe, was emotional before the ride even began. He lost 15 family members in the Holocaust and recalls the story of his father arrested by the Gestapo in Germany and later smuggled to freedom.

"My dad made it clear to

me to be proud of who I am growing up," Ashe said.

With a solid, single purpose, riders listened as speakers took the podium – including rabbis Israel Zoberman of Congregation Beth Chaverim, Michael Parnitz of Temple Israel, Aar-

on Margolin with Chabad of Tidewater, Chaim Silver of B'nai Israel, Zachery Betesh with Chabad of Fort Lauderdale and Harry Graber, executive vice president of the United Jewish Federation of Tidewater.

An eerie yet respectful



Rabbi Israel Zoberman, left, of Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach and Rabbi Zachery Betesh of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., address the gathering May 13 during the 2011 Ride to Remember.

hush settled over the crowd as Cantor Allen Berman chanted a memorial prayer in Hebrew for the 6 million who perished in the Holocaust.

Then the riders got back on their bikes as students from the Hebrew Academy waved Israeli flags along the riders' departure route.

Lunch at Beth Chaverim followed with other festivities, including a Friday night service. The event stretched the entire weekend, from May 12 to 15.

"Judaism is not going to

be kept alive in our minds," Silver said. "It must be kept alive in our actions."

Max Eida, an Israeli who lives in South Florida and rides with King David Bikers, summarized why he and 13 other couples drove up for the 2011 Ride to Remember: "I'm Jewish."

Grabber echoed that sentiment to the group.

"Live life, ride hard and be a great Jew."

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