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JEWISH MOTORCYCLE ALLIANCE



MIKE KROPP, TIMES-DISPATCH

From left, Wendy and David Hefter attach an Israeli flag to a motorcycle as members of the Jewish Motorcycle Alliance arrive at the Virginia Holocaust Museum during the penultimate stop of a cross-country tour Tuesday. The purpose of the tour is to raise awareness for Holocaust museums across the country.

A message of remembrance

Cross-country ride places spotlight on Holocaust history

SAM MOSTOW
Richmond Times-Dispatch

The Jewish Motorcycle Alliance completed the penultimate leg of its North American Holocaust Museum Tour on Tuesday

in Richmond.

A group of bikers arrived at the Virginia Holocaust Museum shortly before 11 a.m., then presented the museum with an art piece called the Circle of Chai.

"The circle represents the Jewish diaspora around the world. ... It is cracked in four different locations, but never entirely broken," said Steven Goode, who organized the Jewish Motorcy-

cle Alliance's Richmond leg. "It represents the Jewish people; even though we've been tested throughout time, we've never broken with our faith. We've stayed together over 5,700 years."

The group's stay in Richmond marked its 20th stop of the summer. The North American tour began June 8 in Charlotte and went coast to coast, covering more than 10,000

miles, including a stop in Canada. Roughly two dozen people participated in the Olympic

Please see **RIDE**, Page A8



WATCH: See more photos of the bikers' stop in Richmond by aiming your cellphone camera at the QR code and clicking the link. **NEWSVU**

VA. COLLEGE BOARDS

Youngkin appointees blocked

Judge OKs injunction; Miyares will appeal

MICHAEL MARTZ
Richmond Times-Dispatch

A Fairfax County judge granted a preliminary injunction Tuesday that prohibits three Virginia higher education institutions from allowing eight of Gov. Glenn Youngkin's appointees to continue serving on their governing boards.

Fairfax Circuit Court Judge Jonathan D. Frieden issued a 25-page opinion that grants the injunction sought by nine Democratic members of the Virginia Senate. The senators had asked the judge to uphold a committee's decision to refuse Youngkin's appointments to the boards of visitors at the University of Virginia, George Mason University and Virginia Military Institute. The senators had filed the lawsuit against the UVA and George Mason rectors and the VMI board president to prevent them from allowing the appointees to continue to serve.

Please see **COLLEGES**, Page A6

VCU Pro-Palestine student activist wins appeal

Graduate to receive degree after it was



MIKE KROPP PHOTOS, TIMES-DISPATCH

At left: Asher Cohen, with the Jewish Motorcycle Alliance, carries an Israeli flag through the Virginia Holocaust Museum. **At right:** A member of the Jewish Motorcycle Alliance holds a trophy called a Circle of Chai, which was gifted to the Virginia Holocaust Museum.

Ride

From AI

torch-style tour, in which most people only rode a few legs.

At each museum, the Jewish Motorcycle Alliance presented a Circle of Chai art piece. The tour will reach its final stop Wednesday at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

"Remembrance is so important," said Samuel Asher, the Virginia Holocaust Museum's president and executive director. "They're carrying this forward with pride to help bring more meaning and memory, and we're grateful for the part that they're playing in this."

The Virginia Holocaust Museum aims to preserve and document the Holocaust through exhibits, educational programming and outreach about the Holocaust and other genocides. About 40,000 people visit the museum each year, including an estimated 5,000 to 7,000 students.

"One of our biggest things is to get more people into the doors, and that's really the key," Asher said. "The summer is a time when we have our highest numbers of visitors from the outside, as opposed to student groups that are here throughout the year. So, it helps us to bring more people."

Goode completed legs in Whitwell, Tennessee; Naples, Florida; Chicago; Detroit and Richmond, and journeyed to Washington on Tuesday after the event. He emphasized the importance of ensuring people understand the Holocaust and memorials of the Shoah.

"This is the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the camps



MIKE KROPP, TIMES-DISPATCH

Samuel Asher, executive director of the Virginia Holocaust Museum, speaks to members of the Jewish Motorcycle Alliance.

in Europe," Goode said. "As the survivors are getting older, there are less of them around, and the main purpose is to bring awareness that these museums are out there and available, and to promote them through education of the community about the Holocaust."

The tour was an opportunity for Goode to combine his Judaism with his love of motorcycling.

"It blends the two of them together and allows me to develop and bring to the forefront the fact that the Holocaust happened and educate the young people about the dangers of going down the path of hatred and antisemitism

— for any group," Goode said. "... It's a threat to our society."

Mike Jaffe served as the ride captain for Tuesday's leg and also journeyed up Interstate 95 following the event. As a member of the JMA for 12 years, this summer gave him an opportunity to do something new. He also found importance in the North American tour.

"We're recognizing the work that the Holocaust museums are doing, which is critical to remembering the Holocaust in itself," Jaffe said. "As the entire world tries to erase that bit of history, it's extremely important that we emphasize the importance of re-

membering it."

Since Oct. 7, 2023, and the ensuing conflicts across the Middle East, Jaffe said the Jewish Motorcycle Alliance's work has become even more important.

"I don't think (the world) understands what Israel is about and the mission of Israel, and what it's like to be a safe place for Jews to live. If you think of the Jewish history, we've been thrown out of every country, or tried to have been eradicated out of every single country we've ever lived in," Jaffe said. "Israel is critical, and tying Holocaust education into the importance of Israel and the atrocities that took place on Oct. 7

"This is the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the camps in Europe. As the survivors are getting older, there are less of them around, and the main purpose is to bring awareness that these museums are out there and available, and to promote them through education of the community about the Holocaust."

Steven Goode, who organized the Jewish Motorcycle Alliance's stop in Richmond

— I think it's all intertwined. ... So, if the world doesn't understand why Israel exists and why it's important for the Jews to remind the world of the Holocaust, then our mission is failing."

Tuesday's event was not open to the public, and Goode did not say when the event in Washington would take place Wednesday out of concern for potential violence. During Tuesday's event, the museum displayed numerous security cameras, and a security official watched the motorcycles while the group was inside the museum.

"Unfortunately, what you saw here, this couldn't be a community event, because we couldn't put it out to the general public because we didn't want protesters and we didn't want any violence," Goode said. "We just wanted to give a gift."