

Dialogue is important ‘because it challenges us to look beyond our assumptions, learn from one another.’

— RABBI RICHARD CAMRAS



MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

SHAYKH SUHAIL MULLA of the Islamic Society of West Valley accepted an invite from a Jewish temple to hold Ramadan service there last month because his mosque was too small.

An act of interfaith goodwill ends in tears

A Jewish temple in the Valley opens its doors to Muslims for Ramadan, but then an uproar breaks out over Israeli hostage photos and a guest speaker

By Jenny Jarvie

It started with good intentions. When a Jewish temple in the San Fernando Valley opened its doors to Muslims for the holy month of Ramadan, its rabbis hoped to offer a model of interfaith outreach. “There is more that unites us than divides us,” Rabbis Stewart Vogel and Richard Camras wrote in an email to Hamakom L.A.’s congregation announcing their plan to rent their synagogue to the Islamic Society of West Valley, whose own house of worship was too small to accommodate everyone for the holiday. The rabbis understood that their plan was unusual, particularly at a time when death and destruction in the Middle East weigh heavily on Muslim and Jewish communities around the world. But they sought to transcend that. Their temple — formed last summer in the affluent neighborhood of Woodland Hills when two synagogues merged — would be a beacon of goodwill and understanding, a place where L.A. Jews and Muslims could gather in mutual toleration, appreciation and grace.

Hamakom is a strongly Zionist community that believes Israel has a right to self-defense and self-determination. Many in the congregation were shocked when they read the rabbis’ email. Some worried about security. Others were bothered that their evening programs and Friday Shabbat service would move to a different location. Most of all they wondered: Why were they notified the same day of the first Ramadan prayer service? The dissent might have ended there. But just a few hours before Muslim worshipers started to arrive at the temple, a photo began to circulate. It showed that a display honoring Israelis taken hostage by Hamas in its Oct. 7 attack had been covered. For many in the Hamakom congregation, the covering of Israeli hostages was a step too far. It represented an erasure of Israeli suffering and an unnecessary concession to political adversaries. “It reminded me of World War II when Jews turned in Jews,” said Ronald Freeman, 69, a real-estate investor and synagogue member for 40 years. [See [Synagogue](#), A12]

Settlement said to be near in state probe of Sheriff’s Dept.

Sprawling agreement is expected to address staffing, deputy gangs and jail conditions.

By Keri Blakinger

More than three years after the California Department of Justice launched a civil rights investigation into the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, the case is headed toward a sprawling settlement agreement expected to touch on issues including jail conditions, deputy gangs and staffing, according to sources familiar with the matter and emails viewed by The Times.

The investigative findings — which remain secret — span over 100 pages, and sources say they include controversial recommendations for deputies to curtail

making traffic stops, stop enforcing some drug laws and complete hundreds more hours of training. Initially launched in January 2021 under Xavier Becerra, California’s attorney general at the time, the probe came amid a string of controversial shootings, costly lawsuits, repeated allegations of deputy misconduct and then-Sheriff Alex Villanueva’s resistance to oversight. Though a new administration is in place, many of the same problems remain — some of which the state detailed when presenting the findings of its investigation to department officials and other stakeholders in a recent meeting, according to four sources who asked to remain anonymous because they were not authorized to speak on the record. Already, the findings and recommendations have sparked pushback, some [See [Sheriff](#), A5]

Millions in cash stolen in burglary

The Easter Sunday heist at money storage facility in Sylmar is among L.A.’s biggest.

By Richard Winton

In one of the largest cash heists in Los Angeles history, thieves made off with as much as \$30 million in an Easter Sunday burglary at a San Fernando Valley money storage facility, an L.A. police official said. The burglary occurred Sunday night at a facility in Sylmar where cash from businesses across the region is handled and stored, said Los Angeles Police Department Cmdr. Elaine Morales. The thieves were able to breach the building as well as the vault where the mon-

ey was stored, Morales said. Law enforcement sources said the burglary was among the largest in city history when it comes to cash, and the total also surpassed any armored-car heist in the city. Sources familiar with the investigation told The Times that a burglary crew broke through the roof of the Gardaworld building on Roxford Street to gain access to the vault. But it is unclear how they avoided the alarm system. The Canada-based security company has not responded to requests for comment. The operators of the business did not discover the massive theft until they opened the vault Monday. Video from a KABC-TV news helicopter showed a large cut on the side of the building covered by a piece [See [Heist](#), A5]

Saving a powerful tradition from obscurity

The Hawaiian steel guitar changed American music. One man is fighting to keep it alive.

By Stephanie Yang

KAILUA, Hawaii — Quincy Cortez plucks at a slim black box laid across his legs, his fingers flashing silver. Steel strings twang with each pull from the metal rings — wearable guitar picks — adorning his right thumb, index and middle finger. His left hand hovers over the strings along the neck, a cylindrical tube held between his thumb and middle finger that draws the metallic tones into a smooth glissando when it touches steel. A few minutes into the leisurely melody, the 16-year-old hesitates. Next to him, 67-year-old teacher and musician Alan Akaka swivels his desk chair from his computer screen to face Quincy with a pop quiz: “Have you been practicing



STEPHANIE YANG Los Angeles Times

LONGTIME player Alan Akaka, right, is on a mission to keep the influential Hawaiian steel guitar alive, teaching young students including Tai Misailidis, left.

with the music?” Quincy lifts his hands from the strings. “Kind of,” he says. With schoolwork and sports, sometimes it’s hard to find the time. The Hawaiian steel guitar started becoming a cultural force in America at the previous turn of the century, popularized by troupes of traveling musicians from the islands. It soon evolved beyond its association with a tropical paradise to influence new genres of music, including bluegrass, jazz and rock ‘n’ roll. But while the lap steel guitar can still be found in country and other types of music, the Hawaiian steel guitar garners little recognition today, even on the island of Oahu, its birthplace. That’s where students such as Quincy come in. He’s a recruit, part of a new generation of players trained by Akaka, who is working to [See [Steel guitar](#), A6]

Biden’s warning to Netanyahu

President says support for Gaza war depends on Israeli efforts to protect civilians and aid workers. **WORLD, A3**

A new way to bet on baseball?

Columnist Bill Shaikin examines Finlete and BLA, which say they let fans invest in prospects. **SPORTS, B10**

Who’ll succeed Disney’s Iger?

These four top executives are among the likely contenders to fill some very big shoes. **BUSINESS, A8**

Weather
Chilly, showers.
L.A. Basin: 59/41. **B6**

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