

War puts 2 girls’ bond to the test

The friendship of Jewish and Palestinian Christian teens holds up, bolstered by peace program’s lessons.

By KATE LINTHICUM

TEL AVIV — Two girls, both 16, sit shoulder to shoulder at a crowded Tel Aviv cafe. Each wears a cropped sweater, hoop earrings and a gold necklace, one featuring a Star of David, the other a cross.

It’s storming outside — big cracks of thunder, torrents of rain — and at the table the conversation also takes a tempestuous turn.

“Oct. 7 was not about land or the occupation,” says Adar, referencing last year’s deadly attack on Israel. “It was about hating Jews.”

Angelina snorts. Of course it was about land, she says. “I have a question: If someone came to you and said: ‘I want half of your house?’ Would you be like, ‘Yeah, OK, take it?’ ”

“Of course not,” says Adar. “But at the end of the day, it wasn’t like the Jews came here from the Holocaust and decided to open up a war. We didn’t have any place to go.”

Just then the waiter approaches, and asks if the girls are ready to order. For a moment, they shelve the debate and turn to the question of brunch.

[See Friends, A4]

How drug deals are managed by convicts

Prison-based Mexican Mafia oversees street sales with code words, illicit phones, \$50 tips.

By MATTHEW ORMSETH

When an imprisoned gang member used a contraband cellphone to ask Miguel Maciel Jr. if he wanted to make some money, the 18-year-old jumped at the offer.

“Of course,” Maciel told the prisoner, Carlos Guadalupe Reyes, according to WhatsApp messages shown in court. “I’m always interested in money.”

The messages made clear, according to prosecutors, that Maciel was signing up for an entry-level position that offered a lot of work for little pay. In one example, his cut for delivering \$900 worth of drugs and picking up the payment for his boss was \$50.

“This is just the beginning homie,” Reyes wrote to him afterward. “Don’t trip you gonna make way more just be patient.”

The messages — hundreds of which were displayed in court at a recent preliminary hearing — demonstrate how the proliferation of contraband cellphones in the California

[See Drug deals, A14]



Los Angeles Times



J. H. McCrory Los Angeles Times



Los Angeles Times

TOP LEFT: A salvage crew tries to dig out a gravel truck damaged by flooding along the Los Angeles River during the storm of March 1938. **Top right:** A postcard from Patt Morrison’s collection shows the destructive power of the L.A. River. **Above left:** Family members dig out a flood-ruined home in Van Nuys. **Above right:** Milkman Ray J. Henville secured himself a boat and boatman and made all deliveries on time and on doorstep.

Life in fast lane drawing nearer

Construction of a high-speed rail line is transforming economies and exciting residents in the Central Valley

By MELISSA GOMEZ | REPORTING FROM FRESNO

The piling rig was in position, ready to drive a concrete pillar 40 feet into the ground. Just beyond the rig on a winter afternoon, trucks and cars continued streaming down State Route 198 in Hanford, separated from the construction site by white dividers.

Then the pile-driving began. Foot by foot, the rig’s hammer slammed the pillar into the ground with the rhythmic beat of a metronome. With every blow, the ground shook and exhaust spewed. The beam would be one more in a network of pillars pounded deep into the earth to create the foundation for a high-speed rail line that in a matter of years will glide along tracks above the state highway, launching a new era in California’s Central Valley.

From earthmoving equipment to heavy trucks ferrying massive beams and bulldozers clearing piles of debris

[See High-speed rail, A20]



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

WORK CONTINUES on the California high-speed rail viaduct in Hanford in January. A 171-mile segment could be open by 2030.

Woodlands are a biofuel battleground

Pinyon pines and junipers in the high desert, scorned by some, are seen as a renewable energy source

By LOUIS SAHAGÚN
REPORTING FROM CALIENTE, NEV.



LOUIS SAHAGUN Los Angeles Times

LINCOLN County official Varlin Higbee wants pinyon-juniper woodlands converted to green methanol.

increasing interest as a source of renewable energy — such as in California’s Lassen County, where 150,000 tons of the trees are fed into the Honey Lake Power Plant each year to generate energy for customers including San Diego Gas & Electric.

Most recently, Higbee and other Nevada officials have proposed converting them into green methanol — a biofuel that could be used for such things as generating electricity and powering cargo ships calling on the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

In January, Nevada Gov. Joe Lombardo signed a declaration of understanding with Denmark to develop an industrial park in Lincoln County where methanol would be extracted from wood and used as a fuel additive to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from diesel engines.

To hear Lombardo tell it, it’s a match made in heaven. “This innovative and col-

[See Woodlands, A12]

How L.A. avoided a repeat of past floods

River’s concrete channel did exactly what it was built to do, with plenty of room to spare.

By RONG-GONG LIN II

As record rainfall inundated Southern California last week, the scene at the mouth of the Los Angeles River in Long Beach was dramatic.

The flow of water was ferocious — some 65,000 cubic feet per second at the terminus of the L.A. River’s flood control system.

That’s like 65,000 basketballs going by, every second, that are filled with water and weigh 62 pounds apiece, said Los Angeles County public works director Mark Pestrella.

Even more impressive was that for all the rain — nearly 9 inches over three days, the second-wettest three-day period on record for downtown Los Angeles since recordkeeping began in 1877 — the L.A. River was just at one-third of its capacity.

It could have easily handled a much bigger storm.

All that rain caused scattered, localized mudslides that damaged homes — including one shoved off its foundation — and closed roads.

But L.A. so far has avoided the massive flooding, earth movement, property losses and deaths that came with monster storms of California’s past.

It’s a reminder that a century of extensive, and at times controversial, public works projects have lessened the flood threat, but not erased it. As climate

[See Storms, A10]

Do’s and don’ts of pothole season

Learn how to file a claim, and what renters can do about flood damage after a storm. **CALIFORNIA, B3**

Colombians join Ukraine’s forces

Experienced soldiers from Latin America make good money fighting against the Russians. **WORLD, A6**

Are Trump and Biden impaired?

The question can be a teachable moment or an opening to politicization, Steve Lopez writes. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Going for broke in Las Vegas

Chiefs and 49ers each have something to prove as they meet in first Super Bowl held in Sin City. **SPORTS, D1**

Weather

Mostly sunny. L.A. Basin: 64/42. **B10**

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