



News & Events

University News & Information

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California

March 18, 2005

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Middle East Peace To Be Discussed in Dialogue Session

SAN LUIS OBISPO - A panel of Jews and Palestinians will gather at Cal Poly on Sunday, April 10, in a "Living Room Dialogue" concerning peace in the Middle East. The group will meet from 1 to 3:30 p.m. in the Pavilion of the Christopher Cohan Center on campus.

Panelists, facilitated by husband-and-wife team Len and Libby Traubman, will "speak from the heart" and share personal narratives in this free public forum. The Traubmans are founders of the Jewish-Palestinian Living Room Dialogue Group, which Len Traubman calls the "oldest sustained dialogue group of its kind in North America."

The group is known for bringing together people of diverse backgrounds and political opinions, and, by using face-to-face listening and relationship-building techniques, to engage them in dialogue aimed at promoting tolerance, education and understanding. The group has been profiled by CNN, MSNBC and NPR and has provided dialogue guidelines and videos to over 2,000 individuals in 564 cities, 42 states and 39 countries.

Panelists include Elias Botto, a Palestinian-American, and Robbie Franco, an Israeli-American.

Botto was born in Jerusalem. In 1948, when he was 16, his family moved to Bethlehem, in the West Bank, because of increasing violence in the region. In 1954, he immigrated to America.

Franco was born in San Francisco in 1949. Her maternal and paternal great-grandfathers, both rabbis in Czarist Russia, left that country because of religious persecution. In 1972 Franco moved to Israel to live on a kibbutz, returning to California in 1986 with her husband and three children.

Libby Traubman is a retired clinical social worker. In 1982 she co-founded the Beyond War Movement, now the Foundation for Global Community. She is also credited with helping organize the Beyond War Conference for Israeli and Palestinian citizens and leaders, which resulted in the historic signed document "Framework for a Public Peace Process."

Len Traubman recently retired after 36 years as a pediatric dentist. He is the author of "The Oreckovsky Family: From Russia to America," which chronicles his pioneer ancestors' immigration following the Russian pogroms of the early 1880s. He also writes and publishes articles on war and peace from the personal

experience of Russians, Americans, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Jews and Palestinians.

The event is sponsored by the Cal Poly Office of the Provost, the College of Liberal Arts, Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life, the Muslim Student Association, the Progressive Student Alliance, and the University Christian Community. For more information call (805) 756-1216.

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(NOTE TO EDITORS AND REPORTERS: No video recording equipment will be allowed "to preserve the integrity of the dialogue among audience participants.")

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