



Liora Ragozin, left; Misha Trubnikov, right.

Six to share their stories at Swampscott news website fundraiser

BY STEVE MARANTZ([HTTPS://JEWISHJOURNAL.ORG/AUTHOR/STEVE-MARANTZ/](https://JEWISHJOURNAL.ORG/AUTHOR/STEVE-MARANTZ/))

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(<https://www.freedmanfinancial.com/>)

Misha Trubnikov was 10 when he came from Ukraine to Massachusetts. He remembers the day he set foot in America.

“I call it my second birthday: Sept. 19, 1995,” said Trubnikov.

Helped by Jewish Family and Children’s Service, Trubnikov’s family settled in Lynn before moving to Swampscott.

“We left because of that whole American Dream, and concerns about our safety and wellbeing,” Trubnikov said.

Trubnikov, 39, will tell his immigration story March 29 at Swampscott High School as part of “Fish Tales,” a program featuring six local storytellers. Sponsored by the nonprofit Swampscott Tides, proceeds will help Tides launch as an online community newspaper, possibly this spring.

The lineup includes sportscaster Mike Lynch, journalist Anne Driscoll, restaurateur/fisherman John Ingalls, Haitian immigrant and poet/author Enzo Silon Surin, and Swampscott High senior Liora Ragozin. Local newscaster/television personality Kim Carrigan will emcee.

The program is modeled after NPR’s show “The Moth,” according to Driscoll, founding president of Swampscott Tides.

“Six storytellers will tell their stories from personal experience, without notes or props,” she said. “The storytellers will represent a cross section of the community.”

Trubnikov’s resume includes several “Moth” appearances. Tides promotional material describes him as “a Jewish Ukrainian immigrant raised in the small town of Swampscott, who discovered his inner voice through laughter and performance. Known as the class clown, Misha used humor to navigate his world, turning everyday moments into

opportunities for connection. It was through his antics and love for storytelling that he realized the power of self-expression.

What began as a way to fit in soon became a path to discovering his true passion for performance, ultimately helping him embrace who he really was. Misha's journey is a reminder that sometimes, laughter is the first step toward finding one's voice."

Trubnikov recalled that antisemitism was pervasive in Ukraine. "When my parents went to interview [for immigration visas], basically my mom told them, 'We would like to be able to practice Judaism, but it's not comfortable, and we don't feel always safe bringing up our heritage. That got them the stamp of approval. Because they did some terrible stuff to Jewish people in World War II and Ukraine understood that Jewish people didn't want to feel uncomfortable anymore."

A 2004 graduate of Swampscott High, Trubnikov has fashioned an eclectic career in marketing, renewable energy, acting, improv comedy and storytelling. Currently, he works as a security guard at the Peabody Essex Museum and as a tour guide in Salem. As a stand-up comic, Trubnikov couldn't pass up a one-liner when asked his age. "I'm exactly a year older than Chernobyl. Just not as radioactive."

Trubnikov's preparation for Fish Tales includes coaching the youngest speaker, Liora Ragozin, daughter of Congregation Shirat

Hayam's rabbi, Michael Ragozin. Ragozin will talk about how the birth of her younger sister changed her life. "Seeing wires attached to her tiny body due to a health scare inspired my passion for women's health," said Ragozin.

She said her interest in women's health, and her embrace of the Jewish value of Tikkun Olam, or duty to repair the world, motivated her to create a self-care station at Swampscott Public Library providing free menstrual and hygiene products.

Swampscott Tides recently was granted 501c3 nonprofit status, and "Fish Tales" will be its first public fundraising event. About \$115,000 has been raised so far through small gatherings at private homes, with a start-up goal of \$250,000. A major gift committee has been formed while the initial fundraising committee continues to seek support.

Tides is soliciting sponsorships, Driscoll said, with realtor Phyllis Sagan, WinnCompanies, and Eastern Bank already on board.

Trubnikov says he'll do his best to make "Fish Tales" a success.

"A good story is when you have a conversation with the audience," he said. "When you speak from the heart. You don't have to embellish or make up anything. If you speak from the heart, people can feel it, they know you're being honest with them.

“Sometimes we write out these long stories of what we want to tell, but it doesn’t always come out the way we write it. That’s okay, because what you’re meant to remember, you’re going to say. And if you forget something, that’s okay, because the audience doesn’t know what you forgot.”

“Fish Tales” will be held March 29 at Swampscott High School. Tickets are \$35 for adults, \$15 for students. Visit [swampscotttides.org](http://www.swampscotttides.org) (<http://www.swampscotttides.org>).

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