

## Cape writers pull out the creative stops with new works of history, fiction and humor

By [Melanie Lauwers](#)

STAFF WRITER

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**"Plato and a Platypus Walk Into a Bar: Understanding Philosophy Through Jokes,"** by Thomas Cathcart and Daniel Klein (Abrams Image, ISBN 978-0-8109-1493-3, 208 pages, \$18.95)

Secretary: Doctor, there's an invisible man in the waiting room. Doctor: Tell him I can't see him.

It's a joke, folks, but in the hands of Sandwich resident Thomas Cathcart and co-author Daniel Klein it's a way to get at German philosopher Immanuel Kant's distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal — a distinction I never got in Philosophy 101, and still don't.

Cathcart and Klein met as undergraduates at Harvard in the 1960s, but I don't believe a word of what they say they've been doing since. In "Plato and a Platypus Walk into a Bar," they try to take the mystery out of philosophy and replace it with bad jokes that nonetheless have philosophically telling punch lines. For those who love pictures in their philosophy books, there are plenty, along with a timeline featuring Great Moments in the History of Philosophy and a glossary.

**"The Lavender Hour,"** by Anne LeClaire (Ballantine Books, ISBN 978-0-345-46048-6, 295 pages, \$13.95)

Chatham resident Anne LeClaire has enjoyed a long career as a novelist, with such successes as "Leaving Eden," "Entering Normal" and "The Law of Bound Hearts." Her eighth novel tells the story of Jessie, a young teacher who is laid off and decides to come to Cape Cod to decide what she wants to do next. Into her life comes Luke, a fisherman who makes a startling request of Jessie. If she complies, she will violate the law; if she refuses, she will have to live with the consequences. The ethical and emotional issues threaded through the novel are colored by the lavender-tinged sunsets of our region.

**"Shooting Star,"** by Cynthia Riggs (Thomas Dunne Books, ISBN 0-312-37027-X, 272 pages, \$23.95)

Vineyarder Cynthia Riggs has reprised her best-known character, 92-year-old poet/police deputy Victoria Trumbull, in the seventh "Martha's Vineyard Mystery."

This time, the community's homegrown theater is dealt a serious blow when two cast members disappear as opening night approaches. When one turns up dead, cast members know this is more than first-night jitters. As additional cast members drop from sight, Trumbull must find the killer so the show can go on.

**"A Garden Lover's Cape Cod,"** by C.L. Fornari (Commonwealth Editions, ISBN 1-933212-34-9, 132 pages, \$34.95)

Cape gardener extraordinaire C.L. Fornari turns whatever she touches into an object of beauty. That's certainly the case with "A Garden Lover's Cape Cod," which takes readers into the backyards and

private sanctuaries of some of the Cape's most successful gardeners and landscape designers. From gardens full of whimsy to the most formal layouts, Fornari takes readers on a journey that delights with hundreds of color photos but also teaches the secrets of gardening with wind, salt and often less than ideal soil. Want to learn more? Fornari knows you do and dedicates this book to "the gardeners of Cape Cod. You make this lovely region an even more beautiful place."

**"Black Irish: A Novel,"** by Casey Sherman (iUniverse, ISBN 0-595-43080-5, 225 pages, \$15.95)

Cape resident Casey Sherman, a writer for WBZ-4 television, has turned his attention from nonfiction ("Search for the Strangler") to a novel set in Northern Ireland in 1981. "Black Irish" is a thriller that takes readers from the troubles between Catholics and Protestants to the Kennedy compound in Hyannisport. When twins Vincent and Michael Logan witness their father's killing by British commandos, one brother turns to the law for justice, the other to the IRA. Novelist Dennis Lehane says, "Casey Sherman has written a penetrating, incisive book that ultimately turned my blood to ice."

**"The Very Telling: Conversations With American Writers,"** by Sarah Anne Johnson (University Press of New England, ISBN 1-58465-594-1, 206 pages, \$19.95)

Sarah Anne Johnson, who teaches at Lesley University, has carved out a literary niche for herself teaching others the fine points of a skill she excels at: interviewing authors and getting them to talk about themselves and their craft. This is her third book in this vein, following "Conversations With American Women Writers," which won wide praise, and "The Art of the Author Interview and Interviewing Creative People." You'll immediately recognize many of the authors in this new work, which includes Michael Cunningham, who has a strong Cape connection. It's a question-and-answer format throughout, but readers will get two benefits — the writers' answers to probing questions and the way Johnson frames her inquiries for maximum result.

**"Cape Cod Harvest: A Gathering in of Cape Cod Stories,"** by Jim Coogan and Jack Sheedy (Harvest Home Books, ISBN 978-0-9672596-6-6, 208 pages, \$14.95)

Local historians Jim Coogan and Jack Sheedy have teamed up again for their third compilation of stories about Cape Cod. Previous books were "Cape Cod Companion" (1999) and "Cape Cod Voyage" (2001). Each has additional books to his credit. Sheedy writes in the foreword that this book should be seen as a "swapping of stories between friends," and isn't that how many of us have come to know the Cape? "Harvest" contains 96 stories gathered under headings for town life, politics, the sea, the land, Cape Codders at play and the extraordinary changes the 20th century brought to our narrow land.

**"Dangerous Junk for Sail: A John Harwich Adventure,"** by Sean Bunzick (authorhouse, ISBN 1-4259-4949-5, 323 pages, \$13)

Harwich resident Sean Bunzick has spent a good number of his adult years living in Southeast Asia and has turned his love for the region into a successful series of thrillers. The first two were "Missing in Asia" and "Air Thermae." This third in the "John Harwich" series has the title character, a Vietnam veteran, pulled into a game where human traffickers and pirates try to make a killing — literally — with a gladiatorial game video. Harwich, unwittingly drawn into the contest with three young American female tourists, must find a way to shut down the entertainment value of their enterprise.

**"21 Pounds in 21 Days: The Martha's Vineyard Diet Detox,"** by Roni DeLuz with James Hester (Collins, ISBN 978-0-06-117617-3, 229 pages, \$24.95)

It may be hard to think of Martha's Vineyard without musing on delectable fudge, heaping platters of seafood and fine wines. Weight loss? I don't think so. But Roni DeLuz, a registered nurse, naturopathic doctor and founder of the Martha's Vineyard Holistic Retreat, has found a way to combine the best of the Vineyard with healthy living and eating. Written with James Hester, a former record company executive who now works with DeLuz, "21 Pounds in 21 Days" takes readers on a journey to understand foods and the ways we process them, using the life experiences of real people to illustrate changes we all can make for better health.

**"Cape Cod Invasion,"** by Mark Penta (Commonwealth Editions, ISBN 1-933212-49-7, 32 pages, \$17.95)

Lifelong Falmouth summer resident Mark Penta has taken his considerable talent for illustration and turned it into a very funny book about the summer invasion of Cape Cod by — well, we'll let you discover that for yourself. Suffice it to say, you'll be surprised.

Penta is an accomplished artist who has taught drawing and cartooning at Rhode Island School of Design and whose work has appeared in Alfred Hitchcock Mystery and Asimov's Science Fiction magazines. You may recognize his art from the cover of Falmouth author T.M. Murphy's "Belltown Mystery" series.

**"Alone on an Island,"** by William J. Watson (authorhouse, ISBN 978-1-4259-7272-1, 225 pages, \$9.90)

Bourne resident William Watson is a longtime public safety professional who has now published his first novel, a mystery set on Whaler's Island, located off the coast of Cape Cod and east of Nantucket. This popular tourist destination suddenly comes under intense pressure when a Category 3 hurricane bears down on it and, simultaneously, a popular restaurant goes up in flames. Fire Chief Charlie Williams has his hands full and must cope with the fire and a potential flood as the hurricane's winds begin to rise. "Alone on an Island" is a fast-paced fictional look on how small-town professionals rise to the occasion when events heat up.

**"Chappaquiddick Lullaby: A Song of Martha's Vineyard,"** by Stacy Elizabeth Hall, illustrated by Judith Pfeiffer (Island Moon Press, ISBN 0-9755605-1-4, 36 pages,\$19.95)

It's past time to recapture Chappaquiddick as a place of deep blue skies and exquisite sunsets. That's what island author Hall and illustrator Pfeiffer have done in this brightly colored and sweetly detailed story that takes in the Chappy ferry, a house snug against spring storms and the sandy and surf-bobbing dreams of children. Of added value: a CD by island songstress Kate Taylor and musician Taylor Brown with three new songs related to the story.

**"In the Same Space,"** by Charles E. Soule (BookSurge, ISBN 1-4196-4914-0, 320 pages, \$15.99)

Nantucket resident Charles Soule has published his first novel after a long career in insurance. "In the Same Space" is fiction set in the Middle East, but the plot could be tomorrow's headlines. A peace treaty that would establish a Palestinian state is the target of a terrorist plot. Drawn into the action is Jack Kendrick, a Boston resident and family man who gets caught up the murder of a DEA agent and must prove his innocence as the terror comes ever closer to Boston and Nantucket.

**"Dristlemore: The Chronicles of Dristlemore, Volume I,"** by Brian Moniz (iUniverse, ISBN 0-595-40568-1, 317 pages, \$19.95)

Brian Moniz lives in Teaticket, but his world is Dristlemore, a planned fantasy series for which he has penned the words and the artwork. Actually, Dristlemore is a man, and he is being sought by the sorcerer Lord Mydoc and soldiers of the Twilight Union for a sinister purpose. Unfortunately, the people in the village of Geddington are in the way, and they must suffer at the hands of Mydoc. Moniz maintains his own Web site at [www.Dristlemore.com](http://www.Dristlemore.com), and is at work on the second book in this planned series, "Reflections of Time."

**Notes:** Nature writer David Gessner has had two essays included in "Landscapes With Figures: The Nonfiction of Place" (University of Nebraska Press, \$21.95), a compilation of writings that "document the impact a sense of place has on writing." Gessner's "Why I'm Sick, and What I'm Sick Of" is about his writing of the book "Sick of Nature" (2004), and the title essay is also included in the compilation.

*Cape Cod Book Scene* briefly introduces newly published works by Cape and Islands authors. Local authors interested in having their books included in the column should send them to Books page editor Melanie Lauwers, 319 Main St., Hyannis 02601. She may be reached at 508-862-1157 or by e-mail at [mlauwers@capecodonline.com](mailto:mlauwers@capecodonline.com).