

CALENDAR

One Band...One Island...  
Seven Towns...Seven Shows...  
**Kahoots**  
**The Island Tour '07**  
July 21-27  
Watch For Details

The Martha's Vineyard Times  
Designated  
"the official County of  
Dukes County newspaper"

**ISLAND HOUSE**  
casual dining

Tuesday-Sunday

**Live DJ  
Dance Party**

Monday, June 11

It's back  
**ISLAND NIGHT**  
"THE ISLAND'S  
FAVORITE NIGHT"

CIRCUIT AVENUE, OAK BLUFFS  
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**the Wharf**  
RESTAURANT  
AND PUB

**Lower Main Street,  
Edgartown**  
**508.627.9966**  
SERVING THE ISLAND WITH  
FOOD & DRINK YEAR-ROUND  
LUNCH & DINNER SERVED DAILY  
FRIDAYS: PRIME RIB NIGHT

Thursday, June 7  
**DJ Afreek**  
10:30-close

Friday, June 8  
**Chad Burtch**  
8-10 pm

**DJ D-DUB  
& Leon the Lion**  
10:30 pm-close

Saturday, June 9  
**Tristan Israel &  
Paul Thurlow**  
8:30-10 pm

**Money Shot**  
10:30 pm-close

Sunday, June 10  
**Sting Rays**  
9:30-11:30 pm

Monday, June 11  
**Karaoke w/A train**  
10:30-Close

Tuesday, June 12  
**DJ D-DUB  
& Leon the Lion**  
10:30-close

Wednesday, June 13  
**DJ Steve**  
10:30-Close

Thursday, June 14  
**Money Shot**  
10:30-Close

**IN PRINT**

*Making book on  
murders*

By CK Wolfson

"Double murder on Martha's Vineyard," by Cynthia Riggs. Vineyard Stories. 2007. 425 pages. \$16.95.

It came about with the fluency of something she might write, the characters unassuming in their routines, yet poised to intersect in a way that alters events. The author is trimming her hedges. A car drives up, and her friend, an affable, quiet-spoken man, gets out, greets her, and says he's heard her first two books are out of print. "Would you be interested in..."

She cuts him off. "Yes," she declares, and holds out her hand to make it official by shaking on it.

And so Vineyard Stories publisher John Walter with his co-publisher and wife, Jan Pogue, collaborated with Vineyard mystery author Cynthia Riggs, and in April, six months after shaking hands, released her first two Victoria Trumbull mysteries, "Deadly Nightshade" (2001), and The Crane-fly Orchid Murders (2002), in a single trade paperback (larger size and type) under the title, "Double murder on Martha's Vineyard."

Each book stands independently as first intended, but couple together as naturally as two visits from the same good friends, including of course, the feisty 92-year-old protagonist Victoria Trumbull, inspired by the author's indomitable mother, the late poet Dionis Coffin Riggs. Each is set on the Vineyard with the subtleties of insider details and regular Island haunts. "I think the Vineyard has a big impact with readers of the books, and the feeling comes through that I do know the Vineyard," says the author, a 13th generation Islander — and each offers

the crisp, authentic dialogue and clean prose Ms. Riggs has mastered so well.

"Victoria hustled back to the harbor master's shack as fast as she could move, along the beach, up the steep wooden steps that led to the top of the low bluff, holding the railing tightly. She walked through the parking lot, lifting her feet so she wouldn't trip, and stepped onto the catwalk that led to the shack.

By the time she reached the shack, the whale-watch boat was tied up to the bulkhead where the passenger ferry usually docked. Elizabeth was standing on the deck outside the shack, looking toward the boat, her hands in the pockets of her shorts, her feet slightly apart.

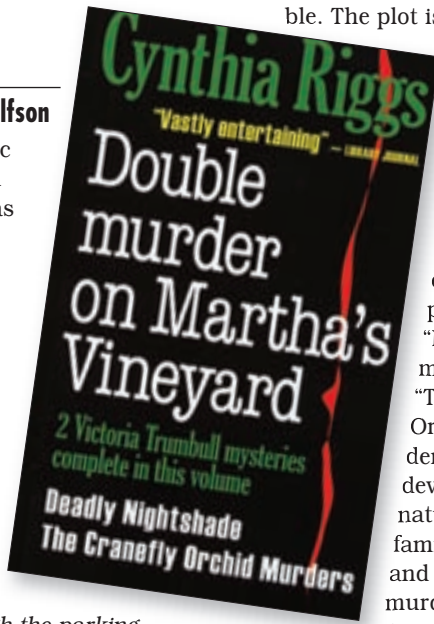
She greeted Victoria. "Did you hear what happened?" Passengers were walking slowly down the gangplank, not looking around the way debarking passengers usually did.

"Something serious, from the look of it," Victoria said. "They found a body."

Victoria sat down on the bench to catch her breath. "In the Sound?" she asked. "Anybody local?"

**Deadly Nightshade, 2001**

Deadly Nightshade was published when Ms. Riggs was 70. She began writing in 1998, in a Master of Fine Arts creative writing program at Vermont College. Deadly Nightshade is the third book she wrote, but the first one to be published. In it Victoria Trumbull teams with the Oak Bluffs harbor master to solve the murder of a nefarious town official and hotel owner, Bernie Mar-



ble. The plot is filled with eccentric Island characters and escalating intrigue.

The second book encompassed in "Double murders," "The Crane-fly Orchid Murders," involves developers and naturalists, family conflicts, and of course murder, this time in West Tis-

bury.

Mr. Walter says, "I think Cynthia fits comfortably into this type of cozy mystery: a simple premise, a human story." He continues, "Her particular hook is the idea of an older heroine who is attractive and indomitable is really appealing. And she's identified something that has a particular Vineyard ring to it." He adds, "Her own life and background and personality, all rolled into one, makes her interesting."

Indeed. Ms. Riggs graduated from Antioch College with a degree in geology, wrote and edited for the Smithsonian and for the National Geographic Society, traveled to Antarctica on a research vessel and again as a journalist, did public relations for the American Petroleum Institute, operated charters, lived on a 44-foot houseboat for 11 years, and worked as a rigger for Martha's Vineyard Shipyard. Currently, in addition to authoring seven books ("Shooting Star," which centers around the community playhouse, was released this past May), and working on the eighth, she operates a West Tisbury bed and breakfast, The Cleaveland House.

"This whole career came as a surprise to me. Each time I write a book I learn more, and learn to achieve effects." She compares it

to a violinist who gets better and better as practicing continues. "I don't plot. I'll have a vague idea, but fairly early on the characters introduce themselves and based on that they get into some kind of trouble and it's the authors job to get them out."

Mr. Walter says, "What makes this project stand out for us is that we never thought we'd be publishing fiction, and here we are, two years since we began publishing Vineyard Stories."

He credits Anne Bassett of Bunch of Grapes for telling him about the backlist, and Ann Nelson for coming up with idea of doubling up the book. He and Ms. Pogue then checked with Edgartown books and Sunporch Books in Oak Bluffs, all of whom encouraged them about the market for the book, that might possibly be the first of several.

Ms. Riggs has a long-standing list of plant names that she decided would lend themselves to her mysteries: "Poison Ivy," inspired by the Nathan Mayhew Seminars; "Bleeding Heart," the hospital; "Blood Root," Island dentists; and "Compass Rose," influenced by her work at Martha's Vineyard Shipyard.

"I've never gotten any flak," she says, of her fictional yet familiar characters and places. "Some people may think they recognize who the characters resemble, but I'm fairly careful to not become libelous. No one recognizes themselves as the victims."

Becoming serious, Ms. Riggs adds, "I want my books to be good literature. I'm not just aiming for popular appeal. And one of the things I'm trying to do is address social issues and among them, age-ism."

She says, "Writing these books is very therapeutic. First of all, I was very close to my mother and these books keep her alive for me." She smiles and with a laugh adds, "And it's a great way to take out negative feelings and handle them in a socially acceptable way. I don't have to kill people off, I can write about them." ♦

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- Acclaimed author, speaker, broadcaster and painter

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**Offshore Ale Co.**

**Thursday, June 7**  
7-9 pm  
**Eric Johnson and Al Shackman**

**Saturday, June 9**  
10 pm  
**Johnny Hoy and The Bluefish**

**Sunday, June 10**  
2-4 pm  
Live Jazz in the Afternoon with  
**The Jazz Fellowship**

**Tuesday, June 12**  
7-9 pm  
**Jeremy Berlin and Eric Johnson**

**Wednesday, June 13**  
LIVE Irish Session

**Open for lunch and dinner 7 days a week**