



# SUMMER READING

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WATCH OUT FOR comics series; and the zine *WILLY BOY*, was recommended warmly by everyone in the room, including its creator, Jayson Barsik.

Regardless of age, no one in the room seemed to have much trouble locating queer literature. Some even reported fairly accommodating high school libraries. Friends, they said, offer a good network for borrowing or trading books, and they listed their favorite bookstores as Laughing Horse Books, Reading Frenzy, Powell's, In Other Words, Gai-Pied and "even Barnes & Noble—It's the only thing in Vancouver."

Although this group of young queers reported no trouble finding queer reading material, Venae Rodriguez, the youth services manager for Phoenix Rising, says SMYRC (Sexual Minority Youth Recreation Center) is always seeking donations of queer books for their library.

Rodriguez also offered an interesting suggestion for summer reading. Her social work probably influences her taste, which leads her to "like 'em heavy all the time." The book she's reading and enjoying at the moment is *PUSH* (Knopf, 1996) by Sapphire. Rodriguez calls it an urban story of a young woman coming to terms with surviving incest, her HIV-positive status and motherhood. Heavy, indeed.

## The Indelible Alison Bechdel



### Confessions, Comix, and Dykes To Watch Out For

Barry Pack recently walked away from the heavy world of politics when he hung up his hat as the executive director of Right to Pride, leaving him to greet the summer with nary a worry and time to kill. Right now he's reading Michael Chabon's *WONDER BOY* (Random House, 1995). But for summer reading, *HEY, JOE* (Simon &

Schuster, 1996) by Ben Neihart comes to mind. "It's a great piece of fluff," confesses Pack. "[It's about] a 16-year-old kid who falls in love a dozen times."

Unable to dismiss his political roots, Pack also recommends Joan Didion's *THE LAST THING HE WANTED* (Knopf, 1996). "It tells the fictional

story of a woman caught in [the] Iran-Contra [scandal]," says Pack. "It's an engaging book." He also endorses Caleb Carr's historical mysteries, *ANGEL OF DARKNESS* (Simon & Schuster, 1997) and *THE ALIENIST* (Random House, 1994). "He's done his homework in terms of setting. ... The historical perspective is right on."

Despite his political tastes, Pack would offer a warning to anyone thinking of sitting down to *ALL'S FAIR: LOVE, WAR, AND RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT* (Random House, 1995), the autobiographical tale of politicos James Carville and Mary Matalin falling in love: "It was just a drag."

Trans activist Margaret Diedre O'Hartigan finds her current summer reading a drag as well. She's plowing through Oregon revised statutes, which she says she "wouldn't recommend." She's reading it in order to help a transsexual person file a court case.

When she has time for something a little lighter, says O'Hartigan, she turns to mystery writer Andrew Vachss, whose latest effort is *SAFE HOUSE* (Random House, 1998). "I like him because he has the best fictional transsexual character I've seen: Michelle," O'Hartigan explains. "She's never in the books enough to my liking, but I'm biased."

O'Hartigan exposes another bias in panning Daphne Scholinski's *THE LAST TIME I WORE A DRESS* (Riverhead, 1997). O'Hartigan has previously taken issue with the autobiography and its criticism of the Gender Identity Disorder diagnosis. Says O'Hartigan facetiously, "It's a great piece of fiction."

Like O'Hartigan, coastal Oregon's famous lesbian author Lee Lynch is also spending her summertime with less-than-recreational reading, spending her days studying the postal workers' exam book and dispelling rumors that her latest novel, *RAFFERTY STREET* (New Victoria, 1998), has brought her riches beyond her most indulgent



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