

90.7 PORTLAND

NEWS, PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND
MUSIC THAT YOU WON'T HEAR
ANYWHERE ELSE. LISTEN
FOR THIS WAY OUT
AT 6 PM EVERY TUESDAY.



SUPPORT COMMUNITY RADIO!

503/231-8032 • 20 SE 8th St., Portland OR, 97214
92.7 COLUMBIA GORGE • 100.7 WILLAMETTE VALLEY

CounterMedia

EVERY BOOK OF GAY EROTICA
ALWAYS IN STOCK!

- (NEW) *Hollywood Voyeur*. Eye-popping photos of LA men, incl. some mighty weird dudes. \$80.
- (NEW) *Assuming the Position*. Hustler's memoir: explicit sex and psychological truths. \$13.
- (NEW) *Sexy Japanese comix*. Very graphic s/m adventures of big, bearish men. \$30-\$35.

DOWNTOWN @ 927 SW OAK • 226-8141

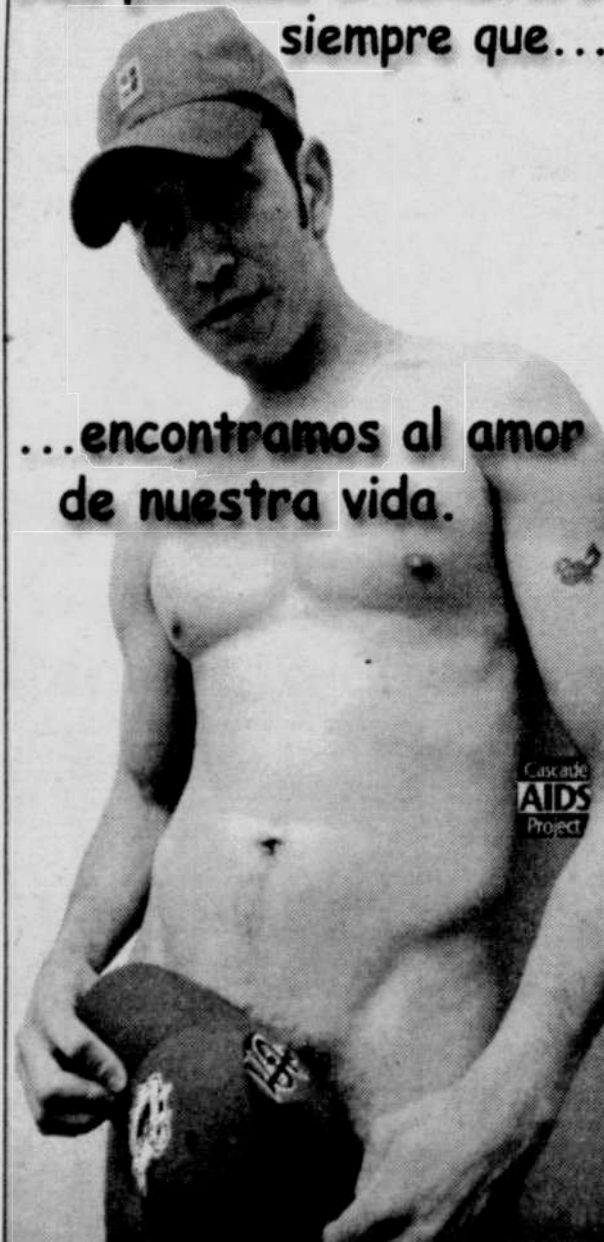
Northwest Women's Music Celebration April 26-28 • Music, Motherlode and Good Friends!

Guitar,
harmonica,
marimba,
drumming,
singing, line
dancing,
mandolin,
ukulele
and more



YMCA Camp Collins, 40 minutes east of Portland • \$150/person includes all workshops, meals and lodging
Reg. Forms at It's My Pleasure, In Other Words and Artichoke Music, or online at www.motherlodemusic.com

Nos ponemos el sombrero
siempre que...



...encontramos al amor
de nuestra vida.

Conversaciones
Los lunes de 6 a 8 pm
Abril 8, 15, 22, 29
Lugar: Cascade AIDS Project
Llame a Rafael 503-223-5907



IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN!

CRYSTAL'S GAY & LESBIAN CLUB DANCE

SATURDAY, APR. 13, 2002
9PM-2AM
AT THE PORTLAND METRO CLUB
(formerly PPAA)
618 SE ALDER STREET

DANCE TO YOUR FAVORITE HITS
FROM THE PAST & PRESENT

\$5 COVER
FULL SERVICE BAR
NON-SMOKING DANCE FLOOR
(SMOKING AREA AVAILABLE)

—SPONSORED IN PART BY—
TERRI POPEJOY & CELIA LYON
OF THE RE/MAX EQUITY GROUP

BOOKS

It's not easy being gay...

(not to mention being a gay icon)

THE BIG BOOK
OF MISUNDERSTANDING
by Jim Gladstone.
Harrington Park Press,
2002; \$17.95 softcover.

This first novel by
journalist Jim Glad-
stone begins with its
22-year-old gay narrator,
Josh, standing over a
sink debating whether
to swallow a bottle of
pills and asking, "Do I
have to end my life to
end my childhood?"

It's a tantalizing start,
one that keeps the reader anxious to discover
what led him to this point of desperation. The
answer, however, is ultimately dissatisfying, if
not bewildering.

The Big Book of Misunderstanding is set in sub-
urban Philadelphia, where the middle-class Roy-
altons unsuccessfully try to figure out how to
love one another despite their differences. The
father, Harris, is a successful lawyer so desperate
to give each family member (wife Becca and
sons Josh and Lewis) the kind of experience he
craved growing up that he ends up stifling them.
Eventually they each leave him (for career, for
school, for freedom), and he is left to face his
crumbled life by himself.

It's a bit of a stretch to believe a well-
intentioned but smothering father is sufficient
cause for suicide, and Gladstone doesn't precisely
articulate what drives Josh to such despair. What
sustains the book, however, is the tender writing
and the evocation of incidents both real and
refreshing. (One particularly sweet moment
involves the father refereeing a nightly game he
calls the Royalton Varsity Bellyfights in which
Josh and his brother bounce on their bed and
bump bellies until one of them loses his balance.)

There is no shortage of books on family dys-
function, and Gladstone tries to break new
ground by exposing the dark undercurrent
beneath a loving family. But it's hard to muster
a lot of sympathy for someone who suffers from
having been loved too much.

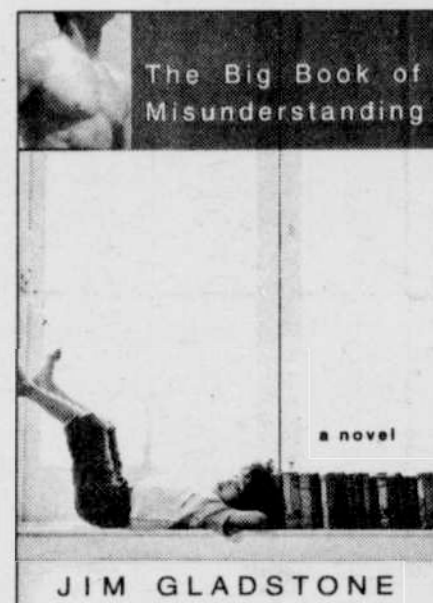
—Floyd Sklover

BITCH GODDESS
by Robert Rodi.
Plume, 2002; \$13
softcover.

What makes a
gay man's
female icon
most? Robert Rodi
breaks it down in
Bitch Goddess, a bit-
ting yet ultimately
redeeming satire of
pop culture's idols
and the gay men
who love them.

Failed novelist E. Manfred Harry is hired to
ghost the biography of B-movie actress turned
scandalous celebrity Viola Chute (think Joan
Collins with the soul of Tonya Harding),
recently rescued from obscurity by her role as
the ironically sweet-natured ingenue of a prime-
time soap opera (think *Dynasty*).

Her story told through various snippets of
modern media—e-mails, faxes, interviews, let-
ters, transcripts, etc.—Viola appears inextricably
bound to a swirl of gossip, innuendo, gushing



praise, damning condemnation and
the vacuous lingo of PR-speak. Rodi
exploits this technique to create mul-
tiple perspectives, extracting much
humorous irony and providing greater
insight into not only Viola but also
the cast of nutty characters who never
fail to want something from her.

With this and his previous novels,
Rodi probes deeply into the psychol-
ogy of gay archetypes—always incisive,
always funny and always touching.
He reveals human frailty and depth at
the core of the outwardly tough and
superficial.

—Kevin Moore

RAINBOW BOYS
by Alex Sanchez. Simon & Schuster, 2001; \$17
softcover.

Rainbow Boys, a refreshing new novel by
Alex Sanchez, tackles the subject of gay

male teen-
agers in a typical
public high school.
What could be an
utterly depressing
series of pitiful
sketches or simply
a too-sweet
romantic fable is
instead simultane-
ously painful and
optimistic.

Sanchez's plot
moves swiftly with
increasing energy
and tension. The
style is clear and simple, using a series of rotat-
ing third-person vignettes reflecting viewpoints
of each of the main characters. Although the
novel falls into the young adult genre, the story
will appeal to people of all ages, especially any-
one trying to understand what it means to be
young, gay and male in the United States.

Jason is a handsome jock who has a girl-
friend but is wrestling with secret gay feelings.
Kyle is a swimmer who passes for straight, but
he's a bit of a loner and feels like an outsider.
Kyle is secretly in love with Jason and believes
Jason is straight.

Finally, there's Nelson, the out queer boy in
school—"Nelly" to his peers. With his "weird"
hair, stylish dress and effeminate characteris-
tics, he's the school's whipping boy. Nelson
pines for Kyle and feels jealous every time Kyle
gets around Jason.

A Lambda Literary Award nominee in the
Children/Young Adult category, the book raises a
lot of interesting questions appealing to young
people. Will Kyle make a connection with Jason?
Will Nelson find true love? What is the future of
the proposed gay-straight alliance in the school?
How will Kyle come out to his parents?

Drawing on his own life experiences and his
knowledge of youth, Sanchez captures the
emotional pain—loneliness, shame and long-
ing—of being a gay boy in surroundings where
a casually homophobic attitude reigns.

While the story moves to its satisfying
conclusion, the characters become so
endearing one would like to know what will
happen to them next; the good news is
Sanchez is writing a sequel. *Rainbow Boys* is
a superb first novel, one that might well
become a classic. **J**

—Jack Turteltaub

