

**David Baer: About Books**

**Eccentric imperfectionists at a newspaper**

The author of the 2011 "The Imperfectionists" is Tom Rachman, who was a foreign correspondent for the Associated Press stationed in Rome.

From 2006 to 2008 he was an editor of the International Herald Tribune in Paris. He's done a wonderful job with "The Imperfectionists" and you'll find it well written and enjoyable in Rachman's interesting format.

The novel concerns a never-named English language newspaper founded in Rome in the 1950s by a wealthy American. I like books about newspapers, and I can't help comparing any paper to our fine Herald, though this book bears little resemblance to us. Over 50 years, the Rome newspaper's eccentricities had earned a warm place in its readers' hearts all over the globe. But as we tune in, circulation is down and the paper lacks even a web site.

The titles of each chapter are written as newspaper headlines. Rachman weaves the stories of 11 unusual, sometimes endearing characters who depend upon the newspaper. Often at odds with one another, they are united when the focus of their lives begins to fall apart.

You'll find the book to be moving, and funny, and sometimes sad as we learn about the individual writers and of their lives. I found this enjoyable book, though, to be about endings; the end of life, the end of a job, the end of sexual desires, the end of an era of a newspaper.

Specifically, you'll find that the writers really comprise a quite dysfunctional family. We meet them one by one in each chapter segment. The goal of the fine obituary writer Arthur Gopal is indolence, to publish as infrequently as possible and to sneak away when he thinks no one is looking. Poor Arthur meets tragedy as well as excellence as we read about him.

The corrections editor Herman Cohen has poured his soul into a specific style guide that is totally obsessive and also amusing. Business editor Hardy Benjamin is so desperate to hold onto her young Irish boyfriend that she'll ignore the fact that he's stealing from her.

The spinster copy editor Ruby Zaga will brush up against strangers in public just for human touch; much more about her, as well. Writer Lloyd Burko is 70 and has had four marriages; and has lost his sex drive; but his life is far from ended. And more, much more about other very interesting characters that we meet.

We read about the paper's Cairo stringer, Winston Cheung, and Editor-in-Chief Kathleen Solson, and everyone's troubles as we go through the pages.

And so one by one, chapter by chapter, these journalists are opened to us - the tightly coiled CFO hates talking to people on airplanes - but who'd guess an unexpected flight relationship would develop with a fellow passenger who makes her play Scrabble with him on the plane.

You'll find that Rachman is an observant and funny writer and that this bittersweet book will keep you very much involved. The Times labeled it as one of the best novels of the year. I would not go that far but I'd recommend you give it a try.

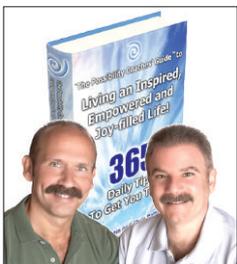
**Jdbaer1@verizon.net**

**Possibility Coaches will sign "365 Daily Tips"**

The Ramada Inn on Route 202 in New Hope will host a book signing and launch party featuring Jon Satin and Chris Pattay, authors of "Living an Inspired, Empowered and Joy-filled Life! 365 Daily Tips to Get You There!" The party is 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 10.

Satin and Pattay are life and relationship coaches. They assist people who are experiencing personal or professional challenges by guiding them to create workable solutions.

At this event, they will be discussing how their new book of 365 tips can immediately help anyone who wants positive change.



Copies of their book will be available for purchase and the authors will be present to sign copies.

Satin and Pattay of Doylestown are founders of The Possibility Coaches LLC. They bring over a decade of experience as "positive change experts" and strategists, teachers, workshop facilitators, speakers and guides.

Jon Satin and Chris Pattay will sign copies of their book on positive personal change March 10.

The Ramada Inn is at 6426 Lower York Road. Reservations are appreciated at coach-es2@comcast.net or 215-794-0135.

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**Special education advocate to speak**

Charles Huchet will speak on "Preparing for your IEP" at the next meeting of the New Hope-Solebury Special Education Parents Advisory Council at 6:45 p.m. Thursday, March 15. The meeting will be held at the Free Library of New Hope and Solebury.

The question and answer session, which begins at 7 p.m., following a meet and greet at 6:45 p.m., will concentrate on how parents can best prepare to be effective advocates for their children in the Individual Education Program process.

Huchet served for 27 years as director of Student Services for the Princeton Regional School District in New Jersey and maintained a record of zero due process cases. He graduated from Harvard University as a school psychologist. He has 35 years of experience working for special education students and their parents.

**Pet food drive benefits Upper Bucks SPCA**

Bags of dog and cat food and new toys are being collected for the Upper Bucks County SPCA.

Items may be dropped off in the foyer of Durham Nockamixon Elementary School in Kintnersville through March 21. The project is Junior Girl Scouts Troop 214.

Call 610-847-8291 for information.

Dr. Huchet believes the audience makes a valuable contribution to the learning of the group based on their own trials and errors, successes and challenges. The emphasis of the gathering is on practical IEP strategies that have helped other parents in what Huchet called a very challenging enterprise of "bottom line" importance.

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