

Local author teams with therapist on new book

By Ron Giofu

A local author has teamed with a therapist to author a new book combining the thoughts of one of the characters with advice from the therapist.

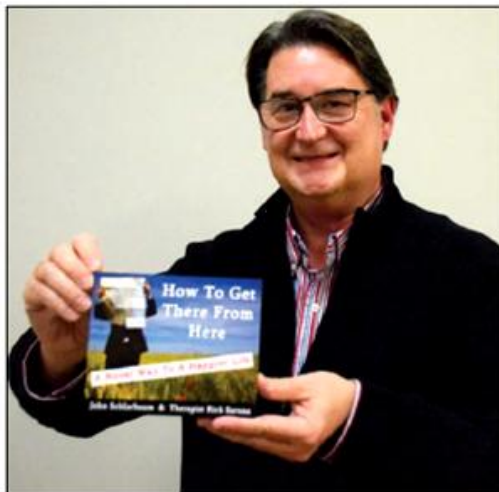
John Schlarbaum has authored a series of mystery novels with three of those novels centering around the character "Steve Cassidy" and his various exploits and personality traits. Cassidy is a private investigator and thoughts and character traits Schlarbaum has given him in the books "Barry Jones' Cold Dinner," "When Angels Fail to Fly" and "Off the Beaten Path" have been used to create the new book "How to Get There from Here – A Novel Way to a Happier Life."

The new book was co-authored with Windsor therapist and life coach Rick Saruna, a friend of Schlarbaum's, and they went back-and-forth with Schlarbaum providing selected glimpses from his previous three books into Cassidy's mind with Saruna countering with advice on what to do in those situations. "How To Get There From Here – A Novel Way To A Happier Life" is described by the authors as "an entertaining collection of personal growth advice to incorporate into the life you desire and deserve!"

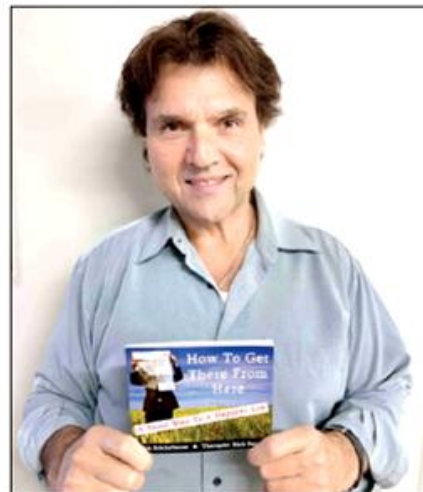
In a reference classic TV fans would relate to, Schlarbaum compares Cassidy to the character Jim Rockford from the TV series "The Rockford Files" and stated Cassidy has a lot of life experiences including being fired from several jobs and having his love life in shambles.

"Essentially, Steve has a lot of personal baggage," said Schlarbaum.

Schlarbaum spoke to a writers' group a few years



Schlarbaum holds his new book "How To Get There from Here," which combines quotes from his "Steve Cassidy" character with advice from local therapist Rick Saruna. Saruna is the other co-author on the book. RTT Photo by Ron Giofu



Windsor therapist Rick Saruna holds up a copy of the new book book "How To Get There from Here." He co-authored the book with Amherstburg author John Schlarbaum. Submitted photo

ago on the topic of writing a mystery featuring a private investigator.

"During my research for this, I ended up re-reading all three Steve Cassidy mystery novels in order and highlighted bits of wit or wisdom Steve gives readers, clients or subjects he is investigating and then made a list of the quotes," said Schlarbaum.

That led to the idea of the new book "How to Get There from Here" and he described it as a "stop gap between main novels." He then contacted Saruna to get his views on how he would advise Cassidy and "to give advice to the readers as if they were a client in his office."

Saruna's book "Thought Shifting" has become the foundation for those seeking a better, more positive way of living, Schlarbaum stated, adding Saruna is a counselor and psychotherapist that has worked

with thousands of clients, including the Ford Motor Company, professional athletes, and sports teams. He is considered to be one of the country's top anxiety/stress experts and maintains an ongoing practice specializing in emotional issues such as anxiety, depression, fears, negativity, trauma, PTSD, and other emotional issues.

"It's a self-help, motivational book," said Schlarbaum.

The book is set up where Cassidy's quotes are on the left-hand side with Saruna's responses on the right-hand side. There are 45 Steve Cassidy quotes with 45 corresponding evaluations from Saruna.

"If you have never read any of my Steve Cassidy novels, this book is still for you," said Schlarbaum. "Above all, Cassidy is human with his own unique set of regrets, hopes, fears, and goals he wants to accomplish to live a healthy and happy life."

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Schlarbaum, Saruna author new book

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"The result is How To Get There From Here – A Novel Way To A Happier Life where Fiction + Reality = Happiness!" he added.

Saruna indicated he hopes people are able to get help for their own issues through the book.

"I got involved because I thought it was a great way to help people with their own issues by relating to the issues of the fictional flawed character in John's books. Many people do not want to look at themselves and it is easier to relate to others and how they got through their problem situations. Also, John is a great writer and getting to work with him I knew it would be a fun and effective project," said Saruna. "My hope for this book is to help people through their own issues by seeing the solutions I offered to the fictional private investigator of John's novels. Storytelling is a way for people to relate and by offering

solutions to the various situations of the character people can take learnings and lessons into their own life. I treated my responses as if I was working with someone in my office. The advice is solid and people will be able to relate and create hope to their own issues."

Saruna called it a "unique project" and didn't believe he had ever seen it done before.

"I immediately saw it as a great idea and jumped on the opportunity. There is much wisdom in learning from others and this is the perfect way to do it. I would most definitely work with John in the future," said Saruna.

Stating that working with Schlarbaum was a great experience, he said the concept, designs and title of the book took teamwork and feedback from all involved but was an overall fun project.

"As a clinical therapist working with people for over 25 years this work has tidbits of advice for young and old. It will help people think a little deeper and reflect on their own behaviours. It is all about awareness. By looking at the fictional character and examining him it will then allow the reader to change their own character," he said. "An exciting idea and even a better book that can and will make a difference."

Schlarbaum pointed he has also written several novels on the Jennifer Malone character and said his next project is to turn a murder mystery he wrote into a novel or novella.

For more information, or to purchase a copy, please visit: <http://johnschlarbaum.com>. The book can also be purchased on Amazon.ca and Amazon.com, as well as fine bookstores including the River Bookshop in Amherstburg.

"We're very happy with how the book turned out," said Schlarbaum.