

Slice of Life

1934

From the South China Morning Post this week in: Compiled by Sandra Lowe

Two robbery cases reported on September 14 resulted in vastly different outcomes. Stable boy Wong Sam-hon, "who benefited to the extent of \$6.20, was sentenced to four years' hard labour". He pleaded not guilty to being one of an armed gang who robbed a man of goods and money value at \$126. Wong tried to change his plea to guilty "if the jury would be lenient", but the judge ordered the jury to be empanelled and proceeded on the original plea. The victim and his wife gave evidence that three men, including the accused, knocked on their door and were admitted as former acquaintances of the husband. After they were "entertained with tea, they suddenly produced arms and ransacked the house". The accused said he had been a stable boy at the Jockey Club and went to the complainant's home hoping to get a job. "He was surprised when his companions produced weapons", they ordered him to stand guard and threatened to shoot him if he disobeyed, the report said. They gave him \$6.20 as a share of the proceeds.

In the other case, Private Robert Booth of the South Wales Borderers was sentenced by the same judge to six months' hard labour for robbing a taxi driver at Repulse Bay. "The accused ... pleaded guilty. The sentence took into account a previous conviction in the Colony, bad record of the accused in the Army, the lengthy period which the accused had spent in prison awaiting trial and his illness from typhoid," the report said.

Hospital Sunday was observed at the Union Church, Hongkong, on September 16 for the Alice Memorial and Affiliated Hospitals, a report on September 17 said. Offerings from the day were donated to the hospital. The report gives an interesting history of the hospital, which dates back to 1887, when it opened on February 17 as a memorial to Alice Whitcombe, an English woman who was the first wife of Sir Kai Ho Kai. It was built to be a free



Absorbine Jr promised to give welcome relief to foomsore Hongkongers

hospital for people of all nationalities under the control of the London Missionary Society. The hospital was a pioneer of training doctors in the Colony, at which the Hongkong College of Medicine was based. In 1901, it had 51 students of whom the most famous would be the late Dr Sun Yat-sen. It also pioneered training for nurses and the first Chinese probation nurses were trained in this hospital. "In 1891, there grew a suggestion that nursing was not a respectable career for a woman, and there was much hostility. The first probationer nurse from the London Mission Girls' Boarding School and others who followed suffered persecution until the attitude of the people changed in 1916," the report said.

Footnote: Sir Kai Ho Kai was a barrister and physician noted for his key role in the relationship between the Hong Kong Chinese and the British colonial government.

"A group of Chinese financiers have got together and mooted a scheme, which ... will considerably brighten up the Colony. They have decided to erect an immense amusement park in Kowloon and, for a small fee, give the people out here a glimpse of Coney Island," the September 18 report on The Builder page said. Talks were under way for the lease of a piece of land (1,750 feet by 200 feet) owned by the Kowloon Canton Railway in Hunghom. The promoters hoped to include attractions such as see-saws, Ferris wheels, a swimming pool and sea bathing, and, if the land was available, a zoological park. "Hongkong may soon be brought into line with the great cities of the world with a pleasure park of its own," the report said.

A jury handed down a guilty verdict within five minutes of retirement on Keung Chi-pan, a young Christian convert who for three days had stood trial on a capital charge involving two men and a woman, a court report said on September 20. The chief justice sentenced Keung to death. The murder victim was Keung Wai-lan, also known as Cheung Sau-le, who with Yim Chun, her lover, was found naked and dead, stabbed to the heart, in a cubicle in a flat at Laichikok Road on July 21, the report said. The accused was committed for trial on the double murder, but the Crown proceeded only in the slaying of the woman because the defendant could not face trial for two such cases at the same hearing. "The defence pleaded provocation and, in his last word before the black cap was donned by the judge, he said: 'The woman was my wife and the man committed adultery with her. I did not intend to murder her but I discovered them both naked. I was in a rage and did not know how I stabbed.'"

CitySeen

with Clara Mak and Ben Sin. Send tips, tickets and invitations to clara.mak@scmp and ben.sin@scmp.com Andrew Sun is on holiday.



Making scents of it all is all in a day's work for perfume maestro

French perfume master Olivier Funel thinks everyone should have a unique perfume to match their personality. Funel, the fourth generation of the family to run the perfume business, made a brief visit to Hong Kong to introduce his latest adventure, Signature Perfume. Asked what had been the weirdest request from a client so far, Funel said a Chinese customer had asked him to make a perfume with the scent of steamed rice because he loved eating rice. He said he was very happy when he found the right scent for a client. A Korean customer broke into tears when he created a perfume that reminded her of the smell of her late mother. "Sometimes, when I successfully create a perfume that brings people some of their special and happy memories of their life, it feels very rewarding."

But if you are thinking of becoming a perfume master like Funel, a word of warning: the training is tough and it should start at a young age. "When I was six, I was asked by my mother to



remember all 4,000-something scents on the shelf in our laboratory. So every morning, I was asked to smell this and that ... it was the most difficult bit of my job and you need to be trained for at least eight to 10 years to become an expert."

Funel said his three-year-old son, Aksel, had already shown signs of inheriting the family skill. "He loves sniffing around. He sniffs everything. I can see that he will become a much better perfume master than me."

When Twitter fans lose their way, they tweet for help - then help local charity

The power of Twitter's real-time information flow was demonstrated well on Saturday night at TwestivalHK, a fund-raising gathering for fans of the micro-blogging service. Apparently more than a few people had trouble finding the venue (the Culture Club and Guru Indian restaurant in SoHo) and vented their frustration via - where else - Twitter. Those already at the venue immediately tweeted back directions; all this was made available to see via the live Twitter feed on display inside the Culture Club. "The ability to exchange information in real time between friends and strangers is what makes Twitter special,"

said organiser Jay Oatway, a digital journalist and, with more than 73,000 followers, the most popular Twitterer in the city. "It's a complete free-flowing form of communication."

All proceeds - from the ticket and beer sales and the auction of Twitter-related artwork - went to the FCC Language Training Programme charity. Oatway said: "We decided, in Hong Kong, to donate to a language-training charity because the ability to speak English here would benefit youth greatly." Organisers reported that Saturday's event, Hong Kong's second, raised more than HK\$30,000.



Sci-fi author drops by to promote new myth-busting documentary

French writer Bernard Werber, who successfully unites imagination and science, is coming to town. The former science journalist, now a science-fiction writer, is best known for his trilogy - The Ants, The Day of the Ants and Empire of the Ants - which was translated into 30 languages and sold more than two million copies.

Werber (left) is on an Asian tour to promote his latest book-turned-movie, Nos Amis les Terriens (Our Friends, The Earthlings), a documentary unveiling the

myths about the earth, men and women. Werber wore a new hat to direct the film, which is produced by Cannes' Palme d'Or-winning director Claude Lelouch.

"There are many similarities between a novelist and a director because you are still telling a story and making people dream," said Werber, who arrives in Hong Kong today. "But I am still more comfortable being a writer than a filmmaker because ... you have the space to yourself to be alone and free to be creative, whereas being a director, I have

CitySeen Diary

A sneak peek at the A-list's A-list

Today: Agatha's 35th anniversary celebration, 1pm, The Pawn, Wan Chai. Invite only

Tomorrow: The Art of Tease party, 9pm, Finds, LKF Tower, 33 Wyndham Street. Invite only

TOD'S Italian Touch book launch and cocktail reception, 5.30pm, The Landmark. Invite only

Thursday: Australian Film Festival opening night, 6.30pm, Arts Centre. Invite only

The Mira grand opening party with Katy Perry, 7pm, The Mira, Tsim Sha Tsui. Invite only

Rolls-Royce Ghost car launch and cocktail reception, 7pm, Jockey Club, Happy Valley Racecourse. Invite only

Arte's autumn/winter jewellery collection preview, 3.30pm, Landmark Mandarin

Friday: Harvey Nichols' autumn/winter Repetto collection presentation and cocktail reception, 6.30pm, Harvey Nichols, The Landmark. Invite only

Porsche's The Panamera car launch, 8pm, Grand Hyatt Hong Kong. Invite only

Monday: La Mer's The Most Beautiful 10 and 10th anniversary celebration, 6.30pm, Four Seasons. Invite only

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Advertisement for Money magazine featuring large text: 'show them the money', 'BW 27X4', 'Money', and 'Source: Synovate PAK Q1 to Q4 '05 report'.

Talkback The E-mail Forum

Should the drug rehab school get the Mui Wo premises?

I refer to the letter by Mary Koo (Talkback, September 12).

Ms Koo writes eloquently in reference to what she believes are the false allegations against the Christian Zheng Sheng Association and also describes the good work it has done in parts of the mainland.

However, she has not raised any points that justify why the needs of Zheng Sheng College for the school site in Mui Wo outweigh the needs of the children of southern Lantau to an equitable education. Nor has she explained why the college cannot accept one of the other 17 sites offered to them by the Heung Yee Kuk and continue their commendable work there rather than depriving the children of southern Lantau of their only available, much-needed school site.

Ms Koo has spoken of false allegations and also, in other papers, she has labelled the comments against the Zheng Sheng College as a "smear campaign".

It would be interesting to know her thoughts on the treatment of the residents of southern Lantau who have been labelled as "Nimbys" (not in my backyard) and have been demonised in the press unfairly.

The vast majority of these residents are not against the location of a drug rehabilitation school in southern Lantau and have for many years worked with the rehabilitated pupils from the Zheng Sheng College.

The real issue for these residents is their desperate fight to retain the site in Mui Wo for the much-needed educational rights of the children of southern Lantau.

Ms Koo speaks of second chances, but what second chances are the hundreds of children of southern Lantau being offered at present? Sally Chun, Lantau

What can be done with the alligator gar?

At last I know the name of a kind of mystery fish I have been observing over the last few years in ponds in parks around Hong Kong - alligator gar.

I first noticed them in the ornamental pond in the podium garden at stage eight of Mei Foo Sun Chuen.

At least three are still there, the largest being about 55cm to 60cm in length. Perhaps being in a private housing estate has saved them the fate that seems to have befallen those in public parks.

I next saw one or two, a few months ago, in the pond in Lingnan Garden in Lai Chi Kok Park.

I haven't seen them for a while, though, and the water is currently too murky to see if they are still there.

I have read that these fish can grow

One wonders ... whether anyone at the MTR Corp is willing to receive any feedback at all

Alvin Cheung, Sha Tin

to three metres in length, so I can see that their size could ultimately be a problem. But none that have been reported in Hong Kong ponds have been anywhere near that length and they appear to be slow-growing.

Like others who have written to these columns, I enjoyed watching them.

They were a welcome change to the miscellaneous varieties of carp that seem to be all that the government is willing to stock the ponds with.

If the government feels something must be done - and this government seems to believe it must be seen to do something, no matter how nonsensical, about everything that is brought to its attention - why not establish a size limit of, for example, 60cm?

Remove the ones larger than that, but please leave the others be. Benjamin Rees, Lai Chi Kok

What do you think of the revisions to the drug-testing scheme?

I think the revisions to the drug-testing scheme are appropriate.

Police will not be included under the new arrangements, so they will not know about students who test positive.

I think this is the correct policy to adopt, since the scheme is aimed at helping students to avoid drug use, rather than target them for prosecution.

Students who have taken drugs and tested positive will be given a chance to start afresh and turn over a new leaf.

Under the modified pilot scheme, teenagers who have tested positive will escape being labelled by the whole of society.

I believe the most effective way to help students stay away from drugs is through education.

Within the school environment, teachers and social workers can get across to pupils the importance of having the correct values.

L. Tam, Hung Hom

I support the fine-tuning measures that have been introduced before the drug-testing scheme in schools is implemented. They will ensure that students' privacy is protected.

It is important that a relationship of trust between students and the schools should exist. The new measures will help maintain that.

However, I am concerned that it will be less effective than the original plan.

Since it is no longer compulsory, it will be more difficult to detect those students who are taking drugs.

Pupils who are already abusing drugs will probably refuse to be tested. Also, the pilot scheme will be implemented only in Tai Po and youth drug abuse is a serious problem throughout Hong Kong.

If young people want drugs, they will still be able to find dealers.

Jacqueline Szeto, Ho Man Tin

On other matters ...

I was one of numerous passengers on the MTR's East Rail Line stranded at Mong Kok East station shortly after midnight on September 5 because of some problems at Kowloon Tong station.

Sadly, the manner in which station staff dealt with the situation was far from exemplary.

Not only did it take five minutes after the train stopped at Mong Kok East until any announcement was made about what had happened, but every single announcement relating to the incident was made only in Cantonese.

Indeed, the only announcements I heard that were made in English and Putonghua were pre-recorded announcements stating that the situation had been resolved - a full 20 to 25 minutes after the train stopped.

Perhaps someone from the MTR Corporation would also like to explain why, when I attempted to contact someone at the MTR Corp regarding this issue via its website, I was provided with a long list of telephone numbers (including a "24-hour hotline") with no human operators, but no e-mail address.

One wonders, in the circumstances, whether anyone at the MTR Corp is willing to receive any feedback at all.

Alvin Cheung, Sha Tin

Tomorrow's Talkback questions

What do you think of industrial safety in the city?

What can be done with the alligator gar?

Send your e-mails to talkback@scmp.com Please include your full name, address and telephone number, not necessarily for publication.

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