

# Outlook on Lifestyle

## Yellow thread mysteries

Australian author William Marshall carefully advises readers that the Hong Kong district of Hong Kong is fictitious, as are the people who, for one reason or another, inhabit it. He then goes on to provide a half page geographical and political description of Hong Kong which ends with the sentence "Hong Kong is on the southern side of the island and the tourist brochures advise you not to go there after dark."

The Yellowthread Street Police Station in the district of Hong Bay has been variously likened to Fort Apache crossed with Barney Miller. It is, in fact, a slightly more literate and exotic version of those video standbys and combines human muddling, with dollops of luck, terminal confusion with stark terror and a wholly convincing portrayal of the cultural stew that makes up Hong Kong - especially the stratum that lies underneath the tourist veneer.

Detective Chief Inspector Harry Peiffer of the Royal Hong Kong Police Force and his staff, Christopher O'Yee, pride of Erin, San Francisco and the Hong Bay fuzzi, Spencer, Auden, Constable Yan and W.P.O. Minnie Oh, all wrestle in their highly individual styles with the weird blend of human comedy and tragedy that staggers across their daily paths.

Marshall has a deft gift for characterization, realizing whole personalities in swift passages of dialogue. Auden said in Cantonese, "Who are you?" The man lowered his cigar and took up his watering can...

### 60 nursing beds for Halton region

Halton Region will receive 60 additional nursing home beds over the next two years, Lily Munro, Minister of Citizenship and Culture, and MPP for Hamilton Centre, announced this week on behalf of Health Minister Murray Elston.

The ministry will be issuing a request for proposals shortly from those interested in operating 60 beds in Burlington, either in existing or new nursing homes. The Ministry will give preference to proposals from non-profit organizations.

The addition of nursing home beds for Burlington was recommended by the Halton District Health Council. "The ill and the elderly want to stay in their own homes as long as possible," Dr. Munro said. "The introduction of the new integrated homemaking services demonstrates this government's commitment to home care. But the very success of home care programs, in helping keep people at home longer, means many of those people tend to be older with more serious health care problems when they finally need long-term institutional care."

We must be certain that the right mix of services is available in each community," she added. "With this increase in nursing home beds for Halton and the announcement last summer of 38 chronic care beds for Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital as well as the other 158 chronic care beds that have been allocated in the region, we have moved to meet the challenge of combining home care needs with intensive long-term care."

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### Library review

Gardener. Unless you are trying to find someone." He lifted up his cigar. "In which case, I'm Ong the Cigar-Smoker" he said. "Ong the Gardener is a very ignorant fellow; the Cigar-Smoker on the other hand, like all cigar smokers is slow, thoughtful and a man of opinions." Auden said, "Huh."

"Or, if it's something to do with the apartments, I'm Ong the Fourth Floor Resident. Gossip by the bucketload." He said happily. "Ong the gardener for information about gardens. Ong the resident for gossip about the apartments and Ong the Cigar-Smoker for careful, thoughtful opinions." He said. "Speaking of which, who the hell are you anyway?" Auden said, "Auden the Cop."

His narrative pace is brisk, his description economical but engaging as when he chronicles the war over the soul of Woodcarvers Road. "A battle of urban landscaping raged daily. Wall posters exhorting the end of the capitalist system appeared overnight on top of carefully lettered placards in English pointing out that Mr. Yung the Woodcarver gave the best low-rent based camphurwood carved bargains in Hong-Kong."

The annals and travails of the Yellowthread Street Police station have been chronicled by Mr. Marshall in some dozen or so titles so that once hooked you have lots to plow through. And if I should ever make it to Hong Kong I expect to feel like I've been there before.

—courtesy Betsy Cornwell, Halton Hills Libraries

## Garden Gossip

By MADGE WHITFIELD  
Herald Special

Rock hard clay, small space, no trees? The new home owner and would-be gardener is faced with a real challenge but not one that is insurmountable.

First the new home owner should assess the needs of the family that will use the back-yard garden. Do you want a quiet retreat, a children's play area, an entertainment centre, a beautiful garden with a profusion of flowers, or a combination of all of these?

With careful planning it is amazing how well even a small back-yard can be utilized to meet the requirements of the family. A pencil, some paper and ideas to make a plan and a project for the whole family to create your own private garden.

Try to keep the BBQ, eating and entertainment area convenient to the kitchen, but, remember the wind direction, you don't want the smoke blowing into the house. A stone or cement patio or a wooden deck edged with window boxes or patio pots filled with flowers makes an attractive and practical BBQ and eating area. A trellis or arbor covered with vines will provide shade and privacy.

Vines can be annual, such as Morning Glory, Sweet Pea or Scarlett Runner. A more permanent screen can be provided with perennials such as Clematis, Trumpet Vine, Virginia Creeper, Ivy and many others. Climbing Honeysuckle is hardy and colourful as is Trumpet Vine. Placing the children's sand box on a stone or cement base will

help keep the area clean and the box can be more easily moved when no longer needed. A vinyl cover for the sand box is a good idea protecting it from rain and snow and pets, especially cats (they love sand boxes).

If your ground is rock hard consider raised beds for flowers and vegetables - it is probably easier in the long run no more expensive than trying to condition the soil, which is a long slow process and not always satisfactory.

Other ideas, a small reflecting pool to give an illusion of space, or a screened gazebo. Low voltage outdoor lighting creates a lovely atmosphere at night and extends the enjoyment time.

A special invitation to new home owners to attend the meetings of the Georgetown and District Horticultural Society, 3rd Wednesday of each month at Knox Presbyterian Church for three landscaping ideas. The annual plant sale will be held May 23 at Knox Church and provides a good place to obtain plants and shrubbery for your garden. Good gardening.

Please send questions, ideas or comments to Garden Gossip c/o the Herald, Georgetown.

—Courtesy of the Georgetown and District Horticultural Society

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