

VERDE
INDEPENDENT

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Camp Verde Marshal Nancy Gardner

Marshal confident skull will be identified

By BILL HELM
Staff Reporter

CAMP VERDE – On July 18, the Camp Verde Marshal's Office responded to a report of a skull found by three teenagers fishing in the Verde River near the Camp Vere Community Library.

The teens, fishing just north of Black Bridge, found no other skeletal remains, nor any other human remains. And neither did the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) dive team, which spent a few hours the morning of July 20 in the river, as they aided the CVMO and Copper Canyon Fire and Medical Authority in-

vestigation.

According to Marshal Nancy Gardner, the Marshal's Office will continue to work with the Yavapai County Medical Examiner's Office in Prescott, "where Dr. M. Fiscioni as well as others who specialize in the examination of bones will examine it and have it x-rayed."

Also involved in the investigation, the Federal Bureau of Investigation will keep the Camp Verde Marshal's Office informed. Such information would then be forwarded to the Yavapai County Medical Examiner's Office, Gardner also said.

"The goal is to identify the skull and put closure to the family members of the deceased," Gardner also said.

How and what is done to find out who the skull belongs to?

According to Marshal Gardner, this will be the role of the Yavapai County Medical Examiner's Office or the University of Texas, the place where the skull will be sent.

"This will be done through DNA and dental records," Gardner said. "The state holds a data bank where the DNA can be compared to that of missing persons and unsolved homicide cases."

How long does this take?

"The hope is that DNA or dental records is able to be matched with a victim and if that is the case it could be relatively quickly," Gardner said. "Unfortunately, the answer to this question is that 'it depends,' and could be as long as a

year or more."

What are the odds the skull can be identified?

Marshal Gardner said she is "very confident" that the skull will be identified.

"Forensic science has come a long way, and it is amazing what can be determined," Gardner said. "The only way that the skull would not be able to be identified would be if the person was never reported missing or reported as a victim."

Last week when the dive team searched the Verde River at Black Bridge, the Marshal's Office said that it would also investigate the skull's possible connection to any

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Pack to School



Saturday, the Old Town Mission will partner with several community groups to give away backpacks filled with pencils, notebooks, etc. to children from kindergarten through 12th grade.

Old Town Mission gives children backpacks, school supplies – and a day of fun

By BILL HELM
Staff Reporter

COTTONWOOD – The history of Old Town Mission dates back to 1989 when two couples served hot soup to the hungry from the back of a pickup truck.

Last year, more than 35,000 people received a great many services from the Mission, including food, clothing, and supplies – even legal advice.

For the past several years, Old Town Mission has expanded its commitment to the community by giving away backpacks filled with supplies to Verde Valley children through its Operation Back to School program.

This year, the annual event will be held from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. Saturday, July 30 at the Clemenceau Museum at 1 N. Willard St.

Old Town Mission will partner with several community groups to give away backpacks filled with pencils, notebooks, etc. to children from kindergarten through 12th grade.

A single mom, Old Town Mission General Manager Kellie Wilson understands as both giver and receiver what the annual event means to the community.

"It's such a blessing to me," Wilson says. "I know how hard it is to get all that your kids need. And you can see the joy in the kids' faces. We can't do this without the

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New book offers critical analysis of Yavapai College service to Verde Valley

By BILL HELM
Staff Reporter

VERDE VALLEY – Bob Oliphant says his new book "Wake Up, Verde Valley" is educational.

But anyone who knows Oliphant would likely consider it more persuasive.

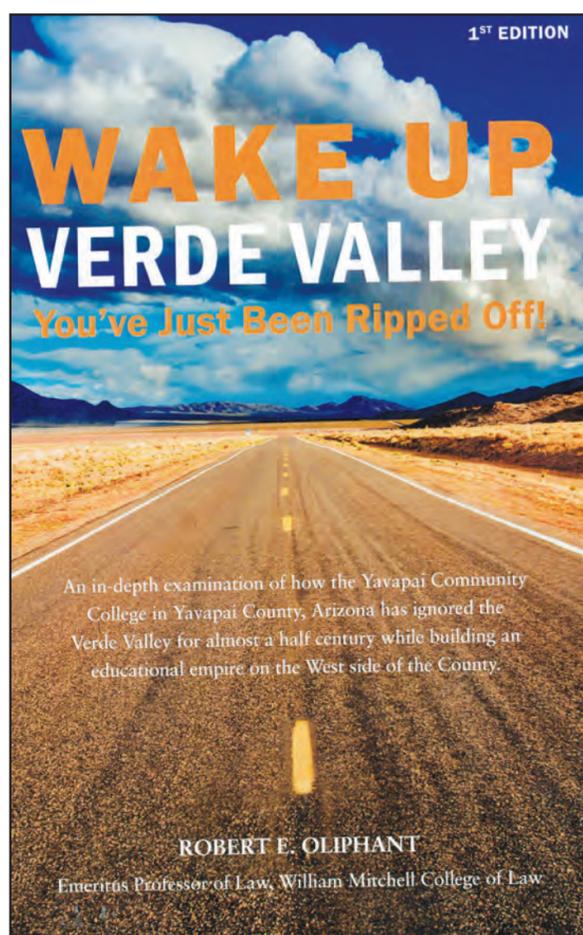
The points he makes in the book are so important to Oliphant that he is giving a free copy of his book to just about anyone "who is seriously concerned."

"To try to make people aware of what has happened the past half-century," Oliphant says. "It's almost been 50 years since the idea of Yavapai College."

In 2014, Oliphant resigned a year and 20 days into a six-year term, the only member to vote against continuing to support the draft of a facilities master



Bob Oliphant



plan he believed had neglected the needs of the Verde Valley's education-minded people.

"You sort of see the situation as being one of hopelessness, and you work very hard and prepare thoroughly, but I simply give up," Oliphant said when he resigned.

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Midgley Bridge to get suicide barrier

Five total suicides in 2015-16 prompt Sedona, ADOT to take action

By TOM TRACEY
Staff Reporter

SEDONA – In response to a total of five people jumping to their death from Midgley Bridge this year and last, Sedona City Council during a July 26 meeting voted unanimously to approve design plans for a suicide prevention barrier.

City government approached the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) in Feb. of this year requesting that a barrier be installed on the steel truss bridge located about one and one-half miles north of downtown Sedona. By April, ADOT had agreed to design and install a physical barrier to impede people from jumping off the bridge and down into rock-strewn Wilson Canyon some 350-feet below.

Proposed is a 10-foot high fence to be installed on both sides of the



The number of suicides at Midgley Bridge during the year 2015 was four in three months, equaling the number of fatalities over the previous four years combined, according to Coconino Sheriff Office data. While total suicides at the bridge this year remain at one, 11 people have jumped to their death from the bridge over the past decade. (VVN/Vyto Starinkas)

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Driver crashes through wall at Sedona restaurant

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