

D'Anna: 'Nancy Drew' and the case of the mystery Mesa machine



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(Photo: The Republic)

For more than a month, Kim Nelson of the Mesa Transportation Department has been doing a Nancy Drew impersonation, trying to solve The Mystery of the Mysterious Machine.

Back in September, someone reported finding a large, unidentified piece of machinery on the side of the road in Northeast Mesa. It was so heavy it took a crane to lift it and bring it back to the Mesa utility yard.

"I'm amazed that whoever lost it didn't notice when it fell out," Nelson tells me. "The police department does not have any reports from anyone saying they lost a heavy piece of equipment or part or whatever it is."



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[Do you know anything about this 'mystery machine' found in Mesa?](http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/mesa/breaking/2015/11/05/do-you-know-anything-mystery-machine-found-mesa/75205814/)

[\(http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/mesa/breaking/2015/11/05/do-you-know-anything-mystery-machine-found-mesa/75205814/\)](http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/mesa/breaking/2015/11/05/do-you-know-anything-mystery-machine-found-mesa/75205814/)

So Nelson did a little sleuthing on her own. She sent pictures out to city employees, and someone said it might be part of a press used to make pharmaceuticals. From there Kim learned there was a pharmaceutical manufacturer on McKellips Road, not far from where the machine was found, that went out of business a couple of years ago.

So far, everything else has been a dead end, but check out pictures of the device at <http://www.mesaaz.gov/residents/transportation> (<http://www.mesaaz.gov/residents/transportation>). If you know what it is or who it belongs to, e-mail me at the address below or contact Kim at kimberly.nelson@mesaaz.gov (<mailto:kimberly.nelson@mesaaz.gov>).

A few weeks ago I threw down a challenge to the community to start their own food drives to help United Food Bank this Thanksgiving, and so far the response has been amazing. One of the fine institutions that took me up on the challenge was Mesa Community College, which invited me out to the Red Mountain Campus this week to take part in their annual hunger awareness campaign.

I was paired up with Sally Harrison from the Mesa Chamber of Commerce and chef Sergio Gonzalez of Flancer's to compete in a chef challenge that consisted of whipping up a gourmet meal using a food box of items that a family might receive from United Food Bank.

My primary role was to stand and be amazed as Sergio whipped up an amazing salad with a pasta, chicken and tomato sauce creation.

Our team competed against four others featuring chefs from Il Vinaio, The Grille at Las Sendas, Nando's and Echo 5. Mesa City Councilman David Luna was on the Echo 5 team with chef Mitch Aiton, and MCC student body president Aron Mixon was teamed with Las Sendas Grille's Robert Eckhardt.

Unfortunately my team didn't win the challenge, but it was a great time working alongside expert chefs from locally run restaurants that really care about their community, especially on an issue like hunger, which unfortunately is all too prevalent in our land of plenty.

Right here in the Southeast Valley, one in four children experience food insecurity, meaning they don't always have access to adequate nutrition. And 2 million Arizonans are considered working poor, meaning they live below the federal poverty standard.


My friends at United Food Bank are dedicated to fighting those numbers, and they do it by serving 51,000 people a day. But the need is more than they can serve. Which is why I'm asking folks to start their own food drives. It's really not that hard. Heck if I can do it, anyone can. All you have to do is contact the food bank at unitedfoodbank.org (<https://unitedfoodbank.org/>) or call them at 480-926-4897.

Was a little surprised to see that so many override and bond issues passed in the Southeast Valley. Is the education tide finally beginning to turn?

Sending warm wishes and a get-well-soon to the conscience of Mesa, Denise Heap. Denise serves on Mesa's Human Relations Advisory Board, which works to prevent discrimination and promote understanding in the community. She's been laid up with some health issues recently, but here's hoping she'll be back in the trenches soon.

John D'Anna writes an occasional column in the Southeast Valley editions when he's not busy with his other duties, which largely consist of emptying wastebaskets for all the top editors. To suggest an item for him to write about, write it on a box of trashcan liners and send it to him. Or just e-mail john.danna@arizonarepublic.com. Follow John on Twitter [@azgreenday](https://twitter.com/azgreenday).


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