



LAURA GOSS/Emerald

Jackie, 10, holds a propeller engine while Leila, 13, re-wires a battery-operated buzzer Wednesday at "Geek Chic."

Science: Attendees disassemble radios

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made it less intimidating.

"Several kids wouldn't have come if it were boys and girls because it would mostly be boys," she said.

Johnson claims that this type of setting encourages girls to be more aggressive, which is essential to the hands-on learning approach.

The girls took apart telephones, radios and a computer by using screw drivers and hammers. And sometimes, when all else failed, they opened the machines by dropping them. The students also

rebuilt some of the machines and tested them with special equipment to find out if they were successful.

"Although there are a lot of programs for girls in science, there are not many that focus on physics or engineering," Johnson said.

In addition, Johnson predicts that less than 20 percent of engineers are women and "it is time for a change."

Johnson hopes to get a grant from the National Science Foundation next year in order to offer the program throughout Oregon.

State Republican convention to discuss new abortion plank

At issue is a proposal to punish candidates who do not oppose partial-birth abortions

By Charles E. Beggs
The Associated Press

SALEM — Abortion is expected to be the issue at center stage this weekend when the Oregon Republican Party holds its biennial platform convention in Portland.

The spotlight also is to include Bill Sizemore, the GOP's nominee for governor, who plans to put on a solid presence at the meeting.

Despite criticism of his past business practices and turnover among his campaign management, Sizemore persistently has said he isn't about to quit the race.

He's scheduled to speak to the convention as it opens with a

breakfast meeting Saturday.

Sizemore said Wednesday he didn't seek out the forum to affirm his candidacy because there's no doubt he's running.

"That's been put to bed. I wanted to speak because I'm the Republican candidate for governor and I should be able to speak," he said.

State GOP spokesman Joel Cole estimated 200 to 250 delegates will attend from the around the state.

Much of Saturday will be spent reworking the party platform.

Cole said it's an "ongoing document" that doesn't have to be renewed at each meeting. Only additions and deletions are proposed at the conventions.

The existing GOP platform includes several anti-abortion provisions. But Cole said he expects an additional one this time.

"I see a call for an end to partial

birth abortions," he said.

The late-stage abortion procedure involves a legs-first birth and draining the fetus' skull.

A platform plank opposing the practice would seem likely to sail through the convention. But more fireworks could develop Sunday when the Oregon GOP Central Committee is to take up a resolution to punish Republican candidates who refuse to support the partial birth abortion ban.

Several state Republican parties have adopted that policy, although the GOP National Committee refused to do so.

In fact, the Oregon GOP rarely gives any cash donations to candidates. But Cole said denying state party help to contenders who wouldn't support the abortion ban would raise questions about such non-cash party aid as voter lists and efforts to get out the vote.

Movie stirs old war memories

By Amanda Riddle
The Associated Press

GILBERT, Ariz. — Ed Porter cried at the scene in "Saving Private Ryan" in which a soldier walked across Omaha Beach, clutching his own severed arm.

For the first time in years, Porter recalled the horrific moments he endured as a staff sergeant more than a half-century ago. Tears came with memories of the soldier he found lying on that beach, also clutching his severed arm, looking up at Porter as if asking what to do.

Porter's only answer was a dose of morphine, easing the soldier's death.

"It brought back stuff that I'd never remembered, stuff that happened that I'd brushed out of my mind," said Porter, a retired Tacoma, Wash., policeman now living in suburban Phoenix. "It brought it back like a flash. Like I was there."

Director Steven Spielberg has said the film's graphic re-enactment is his tribute to those who fought and a message to viewers about the real brutality of war.

Harry Pruden of Albuquerque, N.M., who was a crewman on a Navy landing craft at Utah Beach, said Spielberg's movie was an exceptional picture. But, he added, there always will be a difference between his experience and a war brought to the screen by Hollywood.

"It was a good movie, but I wouldn't say it made me feel like I was in combat again," Pruden said. "We

knew going in that this is a movie, and no movie can really do that."

But for some D-Day veterans, the movie is a visceral reminder of what they lived through decades ago. And for those like Porter, it is too graphic, too real.

"I don't know why they put a film out like that," he said.

Joe Perotti Sr., a World War II paratrooper now living in Tombstone, Ariz., agreed.

"I was hoping I would find a lot of fault with it," said Perotti, who landed behind German lines before the Normandy landings. "I want to say that it's just a war movie, but it's too close to being realistic."

Anticipating emotional reactions, the Department of Veterans Affairs kept a telephone hotline open over the weekend and received more than 100 calls by Monday night.

VA spokeswoman Laurie Tranter said the 1986 debut of the graphic Vietnam War film "Platoon" was the only other time the department used its hotline to field calls from veterans upset about a movie. The hotline, which distributes benefits information, is normally closed over the weekend.

Nancy Scott, a psychologist at the VA Medical Center in Phoenix, suggested that veterans avoid war movies that can trigger painful memories.

"Just the colors, the movements — all of those — will be very strong symbols of remembrances of what it was like," Scott said.

Student body president arrested after four months on the run

The Portland high school student was wanted in connection with 19 armed robberies

By Amalie Young
The Associated Press

PORTLAND — After spending months on the run with a little help from his friends, a high school student body president wanted in a string of robberies was arrested Wednesday in Las Vegas on a tip from his own father.

Tom Curtis was in the lobby of the Tropicana Hotel, calling his father in Portland to say he was ready to give himself up after he was featured on "America's Most Wanted." At the same time, his father was also on the line with authorities, who moved in and arrested the teen before he could

hang up.

"My feeling was he was tired and there was no place to go," said Portland police Detective Kelly Krohn. "He had kind of hit a dead end."

The 18-year-old homecoming king had been a fugitive since April, accused with classmate Ethan Thrower in a string of 19 armed robberies dating back to 1996. Investigators said the teens weren't desperate for cash; they robbed for thrills and bought cars and jewelry with the money.

Curtis' first stop on the run was Mexico, where he partied last month in Mazatlan with dozens of classmates who refused to tell authorities where he was staying. From there, he traveled by bus to Mesa, Ariz., where he worked in a deli until abruptly leaving last weekend when his story made national television.

The FBI said it had received dozens of calls after the "America's Most Wanted" story aired, and they were already closing in on him when they were contacted by Curtis' father.

James Curtis, a lawyer, told police he got his first call from his son immediately after Saturday night's broadcast and they discussed plans for his surrender. But Curtis didn't hear from his son again until early Wednesday.

That's when the elder Curtis called police on another line, and his voice was patched through to the FBI.

Agents were only about five minutes away by foot, and arrested Curtis while he was still discussing his surrender with his father on the telephone.

"Everything just came together," said FBI agent Gordon Compton. "Their plans for surrender

weren't finished, and we were never sure it was more than just talk."

Krohn said the show probably persuaded Curtis that he couldn't start a new life before facing justice.

"My intent on going on 'America's Most Wanted' was to let him know there was no place to hide," Krohn said. "And I think I accomplished that."

Although Krohn said Curtis was cooperative and composed when he was taken into custody, he emphasized that an arrest was clearly made. The boy's parents released a statement Wednesday saying they are "grateful that Tom had the strength to turn himself in."

Krohn said Curtis' father was torn — his son was wanted by the

law, but he did not want him to get hurt.

"His goal was the same as mine — to bring him back in safely," Krohn said.

Curtis was to appear in court early Thursday in Las Vegas. He is expected to waive extradition and be returned to Oregon by the end of the week to face robbery charges.

Thrower, 19, was arrested after he accidentally shot himself in the groin during an alleged robbery that went awry. He has been jailed since his arrest April 16, the same day Curtis fled.

"When you conduct your life at the expense of everyone else, there is a price to pay," said Donna Nelson, co-owner of a market that was robbed three times. "My thought right now is that his life from this day forward will be a different experience for him."

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