

# Editorial

## Air problems shown in Delta mishaps

The recent string of mishaps and close calls by Delta Airlines has brought back the issue of flying safety. The deregulation of the airlines in 1978 has hurt the industry more than it has helped it and created an atmosphere for potential accidents.

The Federal Aviation Administration currently is investigating Delta Airlines after several near-misses this month. In the past weeks a Delta airplane almost crashed in the Pacific Ocean when a pilot accidentally shut off the engines, another airplane landed at the wrong airport during a stormy night, planes have almost hit each other while taking off, and one plane came within 100 feet of another when it strayed off course.

However, these problems are integral to the wider concept of air safety. Delta has had an unusually high amount of close calls, but so have other airlines. They should not be singled out and used as a scapegoat when searching for ways to solve the problems. Because of all the airplanes in the sky and the lack of trained personnel, these incidents should come as no surprise.

Before 1978 the Civil Aeronautics Board used to regulate the airline business. It set the fares and routes and determined who could enter the business. When it was dismantled the door was open for new air companies and price wars.

In theory the competition created from the new businesses would provide customers with a greater selection of routes and keep the prices down. Free enterprise would be promoted. Unfortunately it hasn't met this ideal.

More people did start to fly as a result of the new companies, but this resulted in an increase in the number of planes in the air. The air traffic controllers' strike in 1981 proliferated the problems of the overworked employees and unsafe flying conditions. When President Reagan fired the controllers, he solved the problem of the strike but severely limited the amount of qualified workers.

But Delta's problems also are from inexperienced pilots. They are trained extensively and tested on flight simulators, but this cannot compare to the hands-on experience needed to handle emergencies in the sky.

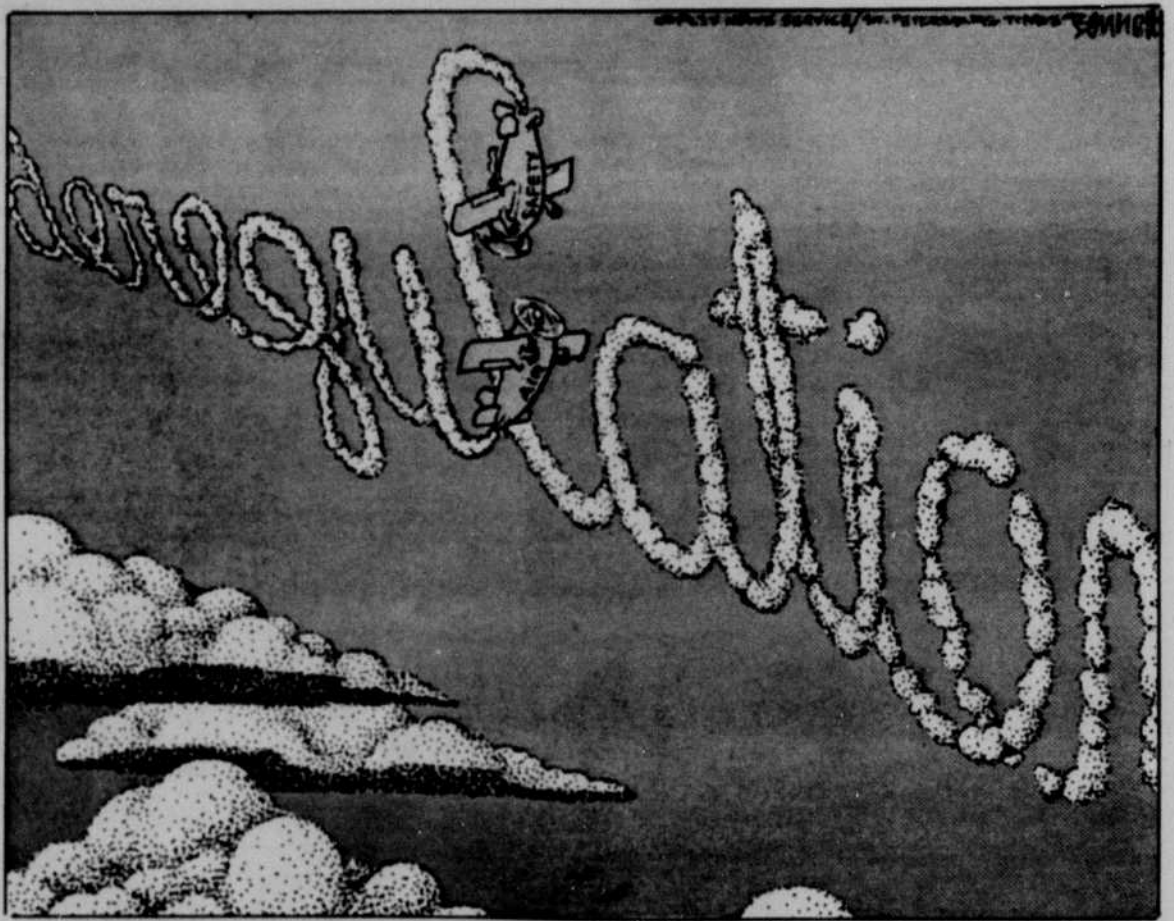
Despite all the hazards of flying, people still insist on boarding planes. It is a quick way to travel, no matter what the danger. However, the increase in consumers flying only encourages the problem. The airlines take advantage of the demand and more flights are created.

The FAA recognizes the problems and the potential for major accidents and is working to fix them. In May they designed a computer capable of tracking planes around the United States on a single screen. Air traffic controllers now have the ability to follow a plane through every stage of its flight. The FAA hopes air traffic controllers will be able to use the computer during rush hour times and see problems and delays before they happen.

The computer system is a step in the right direction but will not solve the entire problem. Stricter regulations are needed to keep the air companies in line and reduce air traffic. If there are fewer planes in the sky, then many of the accident and delay problems will be solved.

Deregulating the airlines was a noble goal. But no matter how good it looked on paper, it hasn't and won't work in reality. The air business has turned into a competition plagued with safety problems.

The near misses of Delta Airlines have emphasized the problem. They should not go unchecked and ignored. The airline business is an accident waiting to happen. Unless something is done soon, somebody will get hurt.



## Letters

### Evidence

In response to the article by Bert Tryba (ODE, July 14), I will briefly comment. Bert says, "...courageous men and women knew and clearly stated, 'God does not exist.'"

By fundamental laws of reasoning, it is not sufficient to say that something does not exist simply because there is no evidence to support its existence. (I learned that in high school!) There must be absolute evidence that there is no God, and since the God of the Bible Bert is speaking of never claimed to be a physical being, one can't disprove his existence using physical measurements.

If a person says, "I don't think there is a God" he may not be a fool, for this may be a very rational thing to believe. A man who says, "there is no God" is a fool, for the reason stated above. Simple eh?

Bob Weigel  
Physics

### Priorities

Your lead story July 28 claimed that the State Board of Higher Education "boosted morale" by approving a million dollars of tuition waivers for athletes.

No doubt morale rose in Mac Court, but over here in PLC and elsewhere on campus you'd be hard pressed to find any enthusiasm. The merits of the tuition waivers aside, we are all aware of dozens of pressing needs for academic program improvements. Shouldn't they take priority over financing intercollegiate athletics.

Daniel Pope  
Associate Professor, History

### Hitting home

I'm concerned about the funding for the governor's mansion. Should a mansion be built for the governor or are there other things we need?

Let's split that question into two parts. First, should a mansion be built for the governor? Yes, the governor should have a nice home to hold social functions in.

However, there are other things we need such as housing for the homeless.

I know the governor has a tough decision to make. Let's just hope he makes the right decision.

Erin L. McKenna  
Ridgefield, Wash.

### Thank you

Thank you for your front page coverage of the Nicaragua

Friendship Day celebration held in Skinner Butte Park.

The amazing amount of volunteer energy that made this year's Fiesta happen, and the fact that so many people from the community and even from other parts of Oregon braved the wet weather to make such a strong show of support is a front page story in itself. All these people deserve congratulations.

You noted that the boat-load of wheat and the medical supplies for which we are raising money would be sent to "victims of violence" in the Nicaragua.

Although this is true, we should all be aware that despite the pain Nicaragua is experiencing at the time as the result of Contra violence, there is also a hopeful side to the story.

There are more doctors, more hospitals, more schools and more opportunities to take advantage of these basic needs than ever before in Nicaragua.

When we support Nicaragua we not only help to ease some of the pain, we help to build a healthy new society as well.

Thank you all for your support.

David Salem  
Volunteer Coordinator  
Council for Human Rights in Latin America

## Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403. Daily publication will resume with the fall term.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices on the third floor of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

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The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing fair comment on topics of interest to the University community.

Letters to the editor must be limited to 250 words, typed, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned in. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style. Letters to the editor should be turned into the Emerald office, Suite 300, EMU.