

# Oregon giving A-10s a post-Cold War shot

Putting the so-called "peace dividend" into practice has taken a creative but strange turn in Oregon.

A pair of surplus Air Force A-10 jets — originally designed for destroying tanks and other armored vehicles — is being transferred to the U.S. Forest Service, which will use them to fight forest fires.

Fighting a forest fire is, in some ways, similar to flying over a battlefield. The pilots of retardant-dumping planes fly through vicious updrafts, turbulence, smoke, and, when they're done, drop their ordnance on the target — in this case, a fire.

Apparently, someone decided the ungainly A-10 would be a good candidate for the job. It can fly as slowly as 90 miles per hour or as fast as 500. If nothing else, the plane will be able to respond to any hot spots quickly.

The plane is unusually maneuverable, which the Forest Service believes would make it an ideal warrior in the fight against forest fires. It's also durable; American pilots in the Persian Gulf war were constantly showing off the battle damage their A-10s could sustain and still fly. Putting out some fires and dealing with flames and smoke should be no sweat.

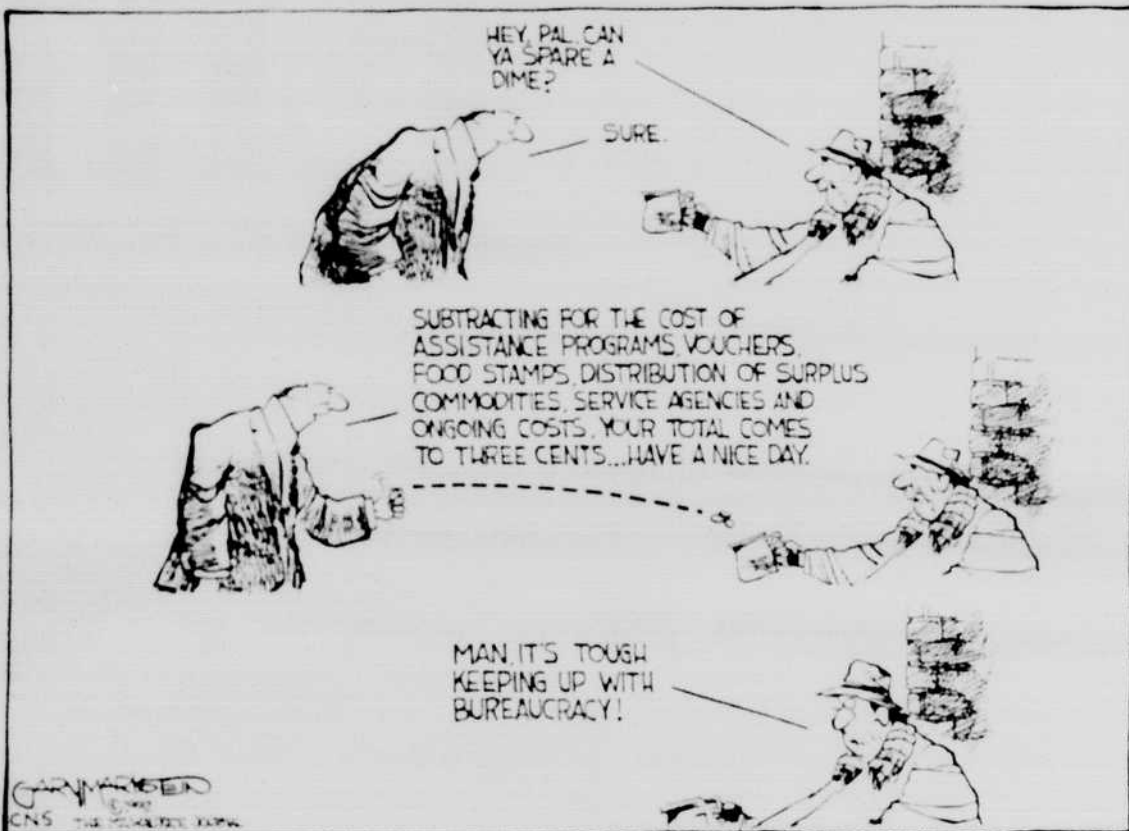
The planes will be fitted with 1,200-gallon tanks to carry water or fire-retardant chemicals. If the aircraft prove they have the right stuff to fight fires this summer — expected to be a long, hot one after six years of drought — as many as 100 could be swooping over the forests of Southern and Eastern Oregon within a couple of years.

With the Cold War over, and the Pentagon hopefully headed for massive cuts, much of the U.S. military machine will end up on the scrap pile. Considering how much money has been sucked into it over the past 10 years, doing so would be a monumental waste. The A-10 project will at least offer hope that some of the technology will make the world a better place to live in.

It is a shame, however, that no one could have applied the A-10's maneuverability and durability to peaceful uses in the first place. For decades, the government has been obsessed with finding better ways to kill, eating up a quarter of the federal budget in the process.

Obviously, some of the Reagan-era toys — battleships, nuclear weapons and cruise missiles — are good for nothing but death, and a B-1 bomber would make a crummy jetliner. It's anybody's guess where we'd be as a nation if we had put our resources and technology to more constructive use years ago.

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## LETTERS

### Transplant

In response to Earl Gosnell's letter about abortion (*ODE*, April 8):

Get a uterus — then we'll talk.

Jennifer Collison  
Geology  
Jennifer Howe  
Music

### No joke

I do not know with what malice you allowed Tammy Batey's article to be published in the April 8 edition of the *Emerald*. In the same breath that the gay community accuses the movie industry of casting stereotypes, the gay community demands to be shown in a favorable stereotype.

As a filmmaker and editor of the *Filmmakers' Club* magazine, I am abashed by the hate directed at people of my profession. Sue Dockstader, LGBA co-director, is quoted "When you serve up stereotypes, you exclude the possibilities. It's a veiled sort of thought control." Other quotes from Dockstader, Morgan Wolf and Ron Gregg expose the ignorance and racism of the gay community.

The homosexuals in *Prince of Tides* and *Meanstreets*, for example, fulfill the expectations of their filmmakers, as do the homosexuals in *Basic Instinct*, *JFK*, and *Silence of the Lambs*. It would be detrimental to the movies (and the movie industry) to change these roles because of heterophobia. If the gay community doesn't like my portrayal of homosexuals in my screenplay *Aryan Ninjas from Medford*, you know what they can do! This is no joke.

Bryan Westby  
Student

### Friends

I want to talk about my friends at Oregon Hall. They are good friends who care about me and only want to help me, each in their own special way. Sometimes I want to go over there and beat their faces in, but I remember they only want to be kind to me, so I can have a great day!

I make mistakes, too! Just last term I rode my bicycle on the sidewalk. Good thing Mr. Bicycle Nazi was there to remind me that this is not something a helpful young man would do.

I'm not the only one who forgets, though! Oregon Hall forgot I already paid my money. Then they forgot three more times. Oops! The crazy quackers! I was glad to see my friends so often. I hate them. They were glad to see me as well, because each time I walked in the door at Oregon Hall, the goofy geese put out a sign with big letters. It read: Welcome to Oregon Hall! Bend over and grab your ankles! At first I didn't remember good, but now I do and they don't even have to remind me. Thank you nice buddies! You are a bunch of neat goats!

Cory Larvik  
Student

### People, too

I just read Neal Skorpen's *Oscar the Freshman* in the April 9 *Emerald*. In it, Skorpen pokes fun at three more-or-less well-known individuals of the community (who are hardly disguised), as well as an average college student — all of whom he refers to as "screwballs."

The college student represents no one in particular and is therefore harmless, but the other depictions clearly represent specific people commonly seen near campus and are far less innocuous. These portrayals are insulting, insensitive and inexcusable. Does Skorpen have no supervising editor, or is this person equally insensitive?

The three non-student people Skorpen displays are just that — people, with feelings and a right to dignity, believe it or not. His disrespectful cartoonish "wilding" does little but perpetuate stereotypes of psychological disturbance and homelessness.

Skorpen, this is not funny. This comic is sad, for it demonstrates how dangerous someone with a pencil and a medium can be, even if he thinks he is a riot.

Michael Bryant  
Graduate student  
Psychology

### Think first

The current petition that proposes a 10 percent reduction in student fees is not only deceptive, but if passed would be extremely harmful to programs which make this a diverse and pro-active learning institution. University student groups contribute to the livelihood of both the University and the community. Such proposed cuts would be highly detrimental to both these groups.

If this ballot measure passes, the consequences for safety and equity programs would be severe. For example, a 10 percent cut to a group such as Saferide would mean they could not run as much, or as efficiently, as they might need to. Currently, Saferide turns away an average of 10 women each night. This number would increase dramatically if funds were cut. Is jeopardizing women's safety really worth it?

Furthermore, a 10 percent cut to groups would affect student stipends that are already extremely minimal. If they are reduced even more, low-income students would have limited access to student leadership positions. Should such positions only be available to those students who can afford them?

Please ask yourself these questions before you sign any petition. Student groups are founded by students, for students. Don't be fooled by deceptive information. Think before you sign — it will affect us all.

Keiley McCreery  
Saferide

## CORRECTION

Ron Schlittler's commentary in the April 10 *Emerald* should have read, "While the OCA is using the slogan that gay and lesbian citizens should not be entitled to 'special rights,' the gist of the initiative would be to require the state to adopt a right-wing, Christian fundamentalist view in all levels of government toward gays and lesbians."

The *Emerald* regrets this error.

# Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. BOX 3189, EUGENE, OREGON 97403

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices at Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

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