

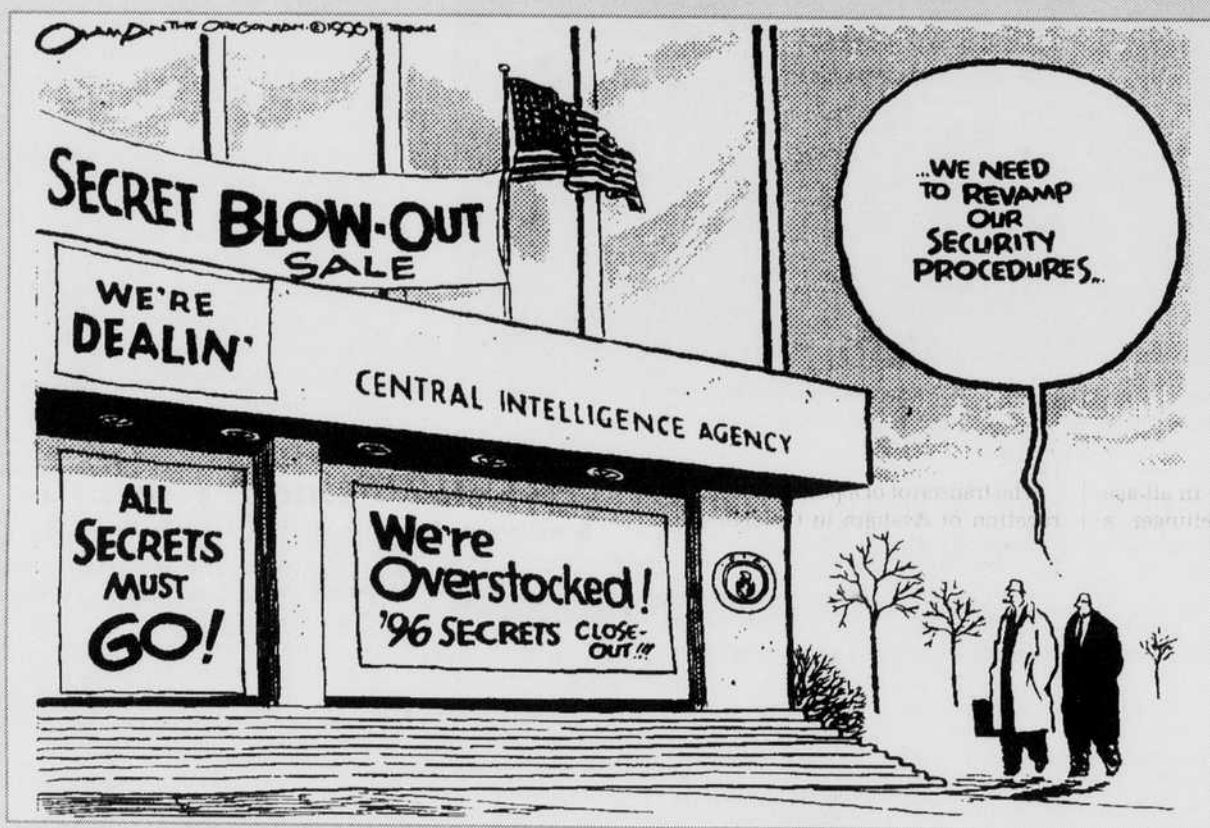
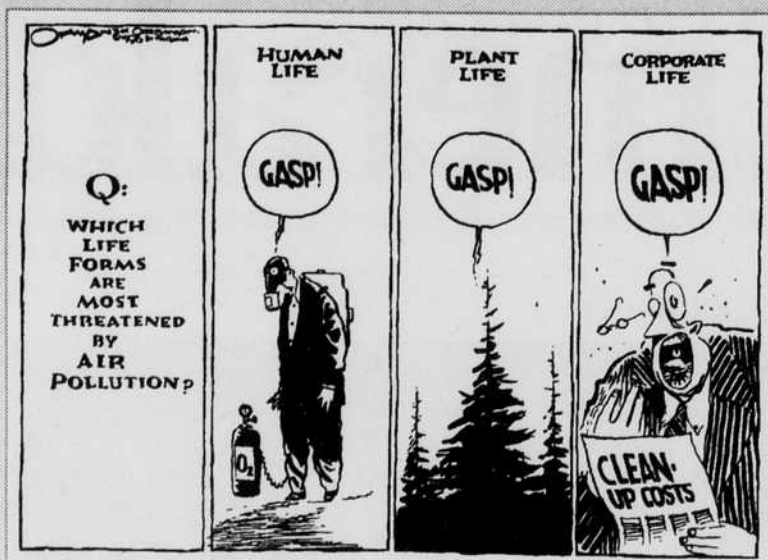
SOUND OFF
How are you going to celebrate the holidays — Christmas, Hanukkah, New Year's, etc.? Let us know.

OPINION

editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

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LETTERS

Making amends

Thirty-four years have passed since I graduated from the University. It was to have been a time of celebration since I was the first of my immediate family to graduate. Though family and friends came, there was no joy for me. Instead, I only had the memory of my tightly-held secret that I had cheated in order to receive my degree.

It all began during fall quarter of my senior year. I was faced with taking U.S. History, a class I had dreaded and put off. I took an incomplete to avoid the final exam. But when spring quarter came around, the exam could no longer be avoided. What a surprise it was when, arriving at the professor's office, I was told I could go wherever I wanted to write the exam. Knowing how unprepared I was, I walked into the women's lounge, opened my book, took out my notes and wrote the exam.

For years, I tried to justify my behavior by blaming the professor for giving me the opportunity to cheat, but in my heart I knew I was responsible and had violated my family's standard of honesty. Though I was successful in my profession, I often thought "if only they knew the truth."

After two years of taking an intense moral inventory, I was challenged by the truth that one day I would stand before God and give an account of my life. I also realized that I had violated a sacred trust with my family, friends and university. I knew that I not only needed to tell the truth, but also make resti-

tution in order to be set free from the consequences of cheating.

With this resolve, I called the University, told the truth and requested a plan of restitution. Immediately, I experienced great relief and deep peace.

The writing of this letter, as part of my restitution, has given me a new understanding of what happened when I cheated. Cheating is not a single act without consequences. For when I cheated I had to cover it with a lie and deceive others into believing I was someone I was not. I had also set in motion the principle of "sowing and reaping," for when one cheats, lies and deceives, he or she will be cheated, lied to and deceived.

Recently a psychologist, after hearing my story, told his listening audience I had abnormal guilt that would require years of therapy. Because I was never able to balance out one bad thing with all the good things I had done, he said, I couldn't come to peace with my action. What an outrage. He totally ignored the truth that what I had done was wrong and that I was responsible for my behavior.

The psychologist publicly gave permission to do whatever we want as long as we balance it out with doing good. This is a lie that has permeated our society, and I am living proof that it does not work. Following his advice would keep us living the lie, deceiving others and ourselves in order to believe it. There is only one way to get freedom from the consequences of cheating. It is by telling the truth, seeking

forgiveness and making restitution.

Linda Russell
Alumna, '62

Teens need reason

I commend Brian Diamond on his wise column regarding drug education (ODE, Dec. 2). He clearly understands one of the fundamental problems with this country's failed attempts at reducing the problem. If our leaders who create our drug policy were as understanding as Mr. Diamond is of teen drug use, they could perhaps become more useful in their efforts.

To add to Mr. Diamond's observations, I would also like to say that conflicting messages also hurt drug education. For example, amphetamine prescriptions for students who allegedly suffer from "attention deficit disorder" do no one any good. This and other socially condoned uses for "good" drugs lead young teens to an inescapable conclusion: certain drugs can be useful to enhance your life or solve a problem.

Kids are better learners than we give them credit for. I can understand how many may lose faith in society's often arbitrary and even hypocritical position that says drugs are okay. Until we create a reasonable approach to drug use in this country — including "legal" drugs such as medications, alcohol, nicotine, and caffeine — our children will continue to be confused and suffer from ill-informed decisions.

Brendan Kane
Law