

# Thoughts on Cheney's speech

by Nathan Mushana  
Collegian Staff

Former chairwoman of the National Endowment of the Humanities Lynne V. Cheney presented the lecture "Telling the Truth: Why Our Culture and Country Have Stopped Making Sense" last Thursday night.

Her main message was that our generation, especially those of us currently attending college, needs to be presented a more objective view of the world around us. She stated that too many people, especially college professors, journalists, and politicians, adopt the idea that "the truth is whatever you want it to be."

Cheney held a different view: "The truth is out there," she said, making reference to the popular television show, *The X Files*. It is too liberal to believe the new notion that the truth is "not out there. That it's in us." She also dismissed the idea that "you define and create the reality that you want".

"What has happened to the notion of truth has allowed colleges to use classrooms to promote political agendas. The humanities are about more than politics. They are about truths

that can be transcended through race, class, and gender." She concluded this part of her speech by stating that "higher education should be about the pursuit of the truth."

From this point on, Cheney's lecture seemed to lose its direction. Of course, she may have been talking over my head, but she seemed to be very disorganized after speaking on the topic of objectivity and truth.

Her topics of discussion seemed to be selected at random, and her discussion was convoluted. Most of the time I could not discern which ideas were her own and which were those of the people she quoted during her lecture. This might be because I had never listened to her speak before. Apparently, neither had anyone else sitting in the Reed Commons with me, because they also appeared to be very confused during the question and answer session following her speech.

This is what I gathered from the remainder of Cheney's lecture: she dislikes the subjective mainstreaming of the media. "The notion that truth doesn't exist is present in the media,"



Lynne V. Cheney says too many professors impose political agendas in the classroom.

Cheney said. "The problem with the media is that many journalists do not think that objectivity has any place in journalism."

I suppose that she would hate this article on her lecture. Cheney

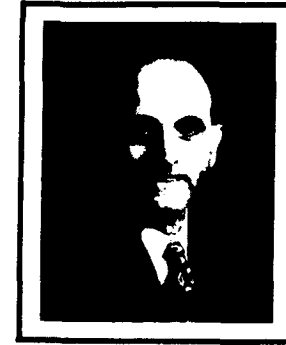
went on to seriously deride politics and the lack of truth present in the political arena.

At one point, she said that politicians "don't want to bother people with the reality of the situation. They just want to fix the problems that don't really exist." Now there's a harsh comment, especially when it comes from the wife of a former U.S. Secretary of Defense, Richard Cheney. Sorry about that, Dick.

One of Cheney's ideas that I did agree with was her concluding remark. She said the young people are presented with a very negative outlook of America and their future in this world. She recognizes that there are "bad things" in this world, but "too much negativity is being presented to young people today."

My only question to her is what if negativity is part of the truth, as it often is? But I didn't bother, worried that I might blow her whole theory.

She wrapped up by stating that everyone needs to present a more optimistic picture of the world to the next generation in order for them to succeed in the future.



Penn State Erie  
The Behrend College  
will celebrate the life  
of longtime Athletics Director

Herb Lauffer  
1941-1997

in a service on Sunday, April 13, 1997  
2:00 p.m.

Reed Union Building Commons

Following the service, the family will greet  
students, colleagues, and friends

## EDUCATION TODAY

by Teresa Thorne

There is no question that parents need some form of help in order to put their kids through college. Tuition, room and board, and books are at an all-time high, making a higher education difficult to attain for many families.

When the federal government got into the business of making low-interest student loans, the intent was exactly that — to provide aid for those who wanted a college degree but had trouble paying for it. Unfortunately, that program has been a disaster. The government did a shoddy job of collecting on those loans, leaving literally billions of dollars in bad debt. This isn't a good thing for taxpayers, who are stuck footing the bill.

Now the president has proposed more spending on education, including a plan to extend high school to include the first two years of college. In theory, that sounds like a great idea. In reality, it's just not feasible.

Adding two years onto the current system means creating more bureaucracy, more of a burden on taxpayers, and more socialization, if you will, of the education system.

There is much to be said about the ineffectiveness of continuing to throw money into the education system in order to fix it. As I've said until I can't even stand to hear myself anymore, money is NOT the answer.

Money isn't going to solve the problem of teachers who are more interested in a child's self-esteem than correcting his papers or grading his work. For example: A teacher asks a student how much 3 plus 2 equal. When the student replies 6, the teacher then asks how he came to that conclusion. There is no attempt to

correct the student, since that may damage the child's self-esteem.

Throwing dollars at the system isn't going to change the fact that many children aren't taught the correct spellings of words or the use of grammar. It isn't going to help those students who aren't learning basic history. (I'm appalled to report that in many high schools, history is an "elective.")

If the solution were as simple as throwing more and more dollars into the system, why are parochial schools so much more successful at educating their students at a fraction of the cost?

Quite frankly, I don't know what can be done about the astronomical costs of a college education these days, other than tax credits. I do know that further institutionalization of the system, requiring more taxpayer dollars, is going to be more of a disaster than we already have on our hands.

By the way, on a related subject, the president proclaimed in the State of the Union speech that everyone should be entitled to a college education. That is a nice platitude but just not true. College is not for everyone and lowering the standards to accommodate "remedial" courses has already significantly "dumbed down" our children over the past 30 years!

Share your views with us. Send them to Education Today, King Features Weekly Service, 235 East 45th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017. Manuscripts must be no more than 520 words and will not be returned. There is no remuneration for this. We simply solicit your opinions.  
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## Carl Rowan's Commentary

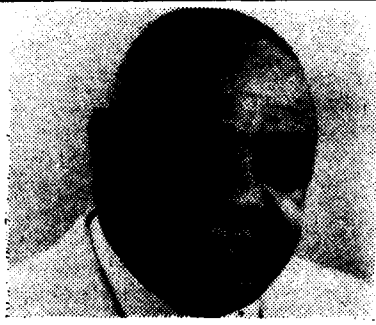
For as long as I can remember, FBI agents have posed as something they were not in order to catch people engaged in egregiously unlawful behavior. Do you remember the "sting" in which G-men posed as wealthy Arabs ("Abscam") to get the goods on bribe-taking congressmen? Or the many cases where federal agents have masqueraded as drug dealers in order to convict some of the most venal peddlers of dope?

For even longer than I can remember, journalists have posed as something they were not in order to expose atrocious social abuses and criminal offenses. They have feigned insanity in order to give eyewitness reports on snakepits passing as mental hospitals, and have joined the Ku Klux Klan in order to enlighten the public about violent manifestations of racism. Such journalistic impostors have generally been hailed as heroes.

But now comes a jury in North Carolina, unduly influenced by a judge of doubtful impartiality, saying that ABC must pay Food Lion Inc. \$5.5 million for a 1992 telecast accusing Food Lion stores of selling spoiled meat, tainted fish and rotten produce, and of other insanitary practices.

The verdict in this ABC case is no victory for Food Lion. The jury gave it only \$1,402 in compensation for the wages paid the ABC pretenders, and was inclined to order nothing in punitive damages until the judge pressured it to come up with something. The \$5.5 million settled on was described by some jurors as "a slap on the wrist," given the fact that the possibility of a billion dollars in punitive damages had been under consideration.

Food Lion has not won a declaration by the jury or anyone else that it



is innocent of the awful practices that ABC charged in its television show, which I personally found shocking. But it is good that ABC is appealing even this "wrist slap," because a principle of great importance to the nation is at stake. If it is unlawful for a newsman to pose as someone or something in a journalistic expose, can it be lawful for a federal agent to pose as someone or something in a drug bust, or a pretended payoff to kidnappers?

The comments of some jurors are instructive: "If the media are going to do undercover operations, just do them in a legal way." And "They have to go about gathering the news in a different way." Those are easy sermons that could also be preached to the law enforcement people who know that without a bit of deception they would never be a match for the criminals and crooks who use every ploy imaginable to prey upon innocent people.

I feel confident that an appeals court will find that the American people and the cause of truth were the great losers in this Food Lion decision, and that the court will give the go-ahead for FBI stings and journalists pretending to be insane — or whatever is necessary to protect the people.

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## Cards, cards, cards

Leading credit card issuers, ranked by outstanding loans as of Dec. 31, 1996, in billions of dollars:



"Almost everything I have hurts, and what doesn't hurt doesn't work."



## EARN MONEY TUTORING!

The Penn State Educational Partnership Program needs tutors. They are seeking college students to tutor middle school and high school students any day of the week. Please call Kathy at 871-6689 for information! Don't wait!! Call now!!

## EDUCATION LOAN FUND FOR WOMEN

The PEO Education Loan Fund makes loans to qualifying women who desire higher education and are in need of financial assistance. Maximum amount available: \$5200. Each applicant will be evaluated by PEO trustees who will determine exact amount to be awarded. For more information, contact the Financial Aid Office at 898-6162.

**Tonight, at 7:30 p.m., Dr. Roger Knacke will host an Astronomy Open House with special guest, Comet Hale-Bopp**

## The Behrend College Collegian wants YOU!

Join the staff Thursdays in Academic 501 at 6:30 p.m. to learn more about **YOUR** student newspaper. No experience necessary!

Call the office anytime at 898-6488 or email the editors at [JenColvin@juno.com](mailto:JenColvin@juno.com)

## LEARNING ASSISTANCE CENTER SERVICES

203 Library

Monday 12 - 4  
Tuesday 10 - 2, 6 - 8  
Wednesday 12 - 4, 6 - 8  
Thursday 10 - 1, 6 - 8  
Sunday 4 - 7

Math assistance also available in the LAC during the evening and Sunday hours and Tues. & Thur 12 - 1.

## University Scholars Program Nominations Due April 1

Fourth semester students with excellent academic abilities interested in undertaking independent study and research at the junior/senior level may be considered for nomination to the University Scholars Program. Only as a Scholar can a student earn a Penn State honors degree. Call the Provost's Office at 898-6140.

From *The Collegian*:

## LOOK FOR THE COLLISION

TO PUT YOUR ANNOUNCEMENT OR ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING IN THE CALENDAR, IT MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE COLLEGIAN THE MONDAY PRIOR TO PUBLICATION. SUBMISSIONS AFTER THIS DEADLINE WILL RUN THE FOLLOWING WEEK. CALL THE OFFICE WITH ANY QUESTIONS: 898-6488

30 - SUNDAY

## HAPPY EASTER

MOVIE - 10:00 PM  
HEAR NO EVIL

31 - MONDAY

27 - THURSDAY

REALITY CHECK  
5:30 PM REED 112  
NEWMAN  
8:00 PM REED 3  
SOCIETY OF WOMEN ENGINEERS 12:30  
NICK 165

MOVIE - 10:00 PM  
HEAR NO EVIL

28 - FRIDAY

IVCF  
2:00 PM REED 113  
BRUNO'S: THE BAND  
AIRBRUSHING

MOVIE - 10:00 PM  
HEAR NO EVIL

29 - SATURDAY

MARTIAL ARTS  
10:00 AM  
NIAGARA BASEMENT

MOVIE - 10:00 PM  
HEAR NO EVIL

1 - TUESDAY

PERSONAL GROWTH GROUP FOR WOMEN  
6:00 PM  
COUNSELING CENTER

2 - WEDNESDAY

COMPUTER COUNCIL  
1:00 PM REED 112

SGA MEETING  
5:15 PM REED 114