

Biased media hinders well-rounded opinions on news, politics

gennifergeer
sports editor

Think all the way back to October. Who caused the government shutdown? Well, the answer depends on where you got that information.

Liberals pinned the shutdown on unpromising Republicans, and conservatives accredited it to President **Barack Obama** stubbornly refusing to negotiate the Affordable Care Act.

But these news sources are objective, right? They report the cold, hard facts without any bias.

In reality, the only cold, hard fact is no second-hand account is totally unbiased. No news report, especially political news, is without political slant. Even seemingly nonpartisan news sources slip in mild propaganda — an adjective here, a descriptive verb there.

With this subtle political slant, media can change your outlook on almost anyone in the government.

Simply by running a story about one politician giving back to the community or

replaying a clip of another civil servant with his foot in his mouth can greatly affect your view of that politician — or of his or her party overall.

Not only that, but we can be cut off from important issues by exposing ourselves only to media we know will just feed us our own opinions and interests.

Sure, by scouting liberal media, you'll reaffirm how terrible that conspirator **Chris Christie** is with his web of lies and plots to extract revenge, complete with clips of Christie stroking a cat and laughing maniacally.

But you won't catch word of Obama purging top military officials whose strategies had a triumphant trend. At the same time, coverage of poverty and protests can affect your perception of social issues in our country.

Hearing about teens on the Plaza resorting to violence because they have nothing better to do could lead you to support youth programs, whereas hearing the story of an innocent attacked by those same teens could lead you to support severe restrictions.

And if you're more of an E! News kind of person, you're still susceptible to the media's influence. Paparazzi tells you who to like, and celebrities you like can tell you who to vote

for. After all, Obama owes a huge portion of his presidential campaign to the one, the only, **Oprah Winfrey**.

I'm not saying your morning news anchor determines everything you think about politics, but the information from any given source can draw focus on some topics and avoid others.

All people are capable of making their own decisions — drawing reasonable conclusions is one of the human race's prime qualities.

But reasonable conclusions are hard to make when you only see the side of the story the media wants you to see.

So, mix it up. Don't always watch the same station and get the same bias. Read into foreign affairs, domestic issues and even celebrity gossip. Be aware impartial sources can still give you colored information.

Everyone is entitled to their own opinion on politics, but there's always reason to be ambivalent.

If you see how the other half lives and you still don't agree, then your opinion is all the better thought out — and maybe you won't be so quick to believe news illuminated in just one light.