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OPINION

Don't believe all you hear; do your own research

By **NOAH LEVIN**
Opinion editor

It seems that since the 9/11 attacks, there has been a boom in the conspiracy theory movie industry. Countless movies have been made purporting to expose how the Bush administration and previous administrations conducted grand far-reaching plots to control vast wealth. Some of these independent films seem to carry some credence to their claims, while others are just outlandish or outright ridiculous. And now, with a new administration, there is a new spat of conspiracy theorists who claim President Obama has something

tricky up his sleeve. These tricks range from being the Anti-Christ to a complex scheme, generations in the making, to create a new world government.

My beef is not with the conspiracy junkies and critics of the new president. It is well within these people's rights to publish their thoughts, however outlandish they may be. My problem is with people like myself, who surf the Internet and find these documents and films, but instead of watching them and then thinking over the purported facts given, many viewers of these movies take them as fact, as gospel truth. These same people then begin to tell friends and family of the

shocking truths they have learned, without doing any meaningful research of their own.

The major problem with this is that if they are in fact being given false information, then this disinformation spreads like wildfire, preying on the insecurities and fears of the population. Essentially, these movies are propaganda, and whether or not you align yourself with the left or right, propaganda is not factual evidence, and they are published with an agenda in mind. As American citizens, we are all given a unique civil liberty where we are free to pursue research any information to our heart's content. We have a responsibility to not

squander this right granted us by our government, and we should constantly be fact-checking and researching every bit of news, propaganda, or information that does not come directly from the source.

In this age of consumer technology, the ability to alter the flow and legitimacy of information is unprecedented. Anybody with the know-how and time can create fake news articles, interviews, or videos. This is where individual responsibility is very important. If I were to write a piece claiming to quote our president, in which he declared war on Canada, I am curious as to how many people would believe it

without question.

I am not saying that people are stupid and gullible, or that journalists and documentary filmmakers should not be trusted. I am saying simply that we are given a lot of information, and what we do with that information can have drastic effects on not just our day-to-day lives, but on the course of our nation as a whole. This country was built on informing the population accurately, but our nation was also founded on the ideal of freedom of expression. What we choose to do with our freedoms are subjective, but I believe it is a fool who disregards the powers we have as intelligent individuals.

Little-known cancer is a big threat if untreated

DEAR EDITOR:

I am a two-time breast cancer survivor yet I had never heard of Inflammatory Breast Cancer—until I was diagnosed. Who would think a seemingly harmless itchy right breast was the initial warning of IBC?

Inflammatory Breast Cancer (IBC) is a rare but an especially aggressive breast cancer that gets little press. Unlike the more common forms of breast cancer, IBC often has no lump and it may not show up on a mammogram, so early detection is extremely difficult. IBC

affects women of all ages, particularly African-American women. It's the least understood or talked about breast cancer. At a Berkeley breast cancer support group, an IBC patient inquired, "How many of you 12 women know about IBC?" Only three of the 12 ladies ever heard of it.

There are a number of symptoms that hint at the onset of IBC. Breast itchiness is an IBC warning, as is redness, swelling (one breast larger than the other), warmth, ridges and thickened skin and nipple retraction. IBC grows and spreads on the surface of the skin. Symptoms

develop quickly, so pay attention for changes in appearance.

With IBC, the abnormal cells rapidly infiltrate and clog the lymph vessels in the skin over the breast. The blockage in the lymphatic vessels causes skin reactions. IBC can be mistaken for the breast infection mastitis, which is treated with antibiotics; therefore some women are missing weeks of proper treatment.

Many primary care doctors have little experience with IBC. Therefore women are encouraged to request an oncology appointment, followed up with a painless

breast biopsy to determine if IBC is present.

Dr. Julie Gralow from the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, WA comments, "Within a few weeks, IBC has most likely spread to nearby lymph nodes, much faster than other types of breast cancer." IBC is especially aggressive and is classified as either stage IIIB, locally advanced; or stage IV breast cancer that has spread to other organs. Survival rate for IBC is about 50 percent which is lower than more common breast cancers. This alone is reason to be on the lookout.

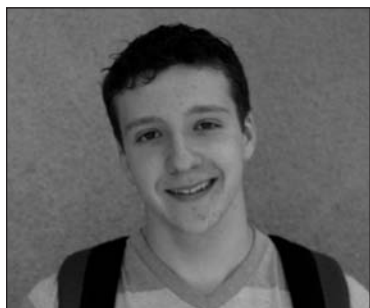
IBC treatment varies, but most oncologists recommend both local and systemic treatments. Typically this is chemotherapy, surgery, radiation and possibly hormonal therapy. Early diagnosis and improved treatments are increasing survival rates. But it's up to you to recognize IBC symptoms, and hopefully Breast Cancer education and advocacy will include more information on IBC.

My motto is: Cancer is a disease, not a death certificate.

Sincerely,
Lynne Orloff-Jones

CAMPUS COMMENT >>>

What did you do for your Spring Break?



Nick Tashjian
MUSIC
"Being able to do nothing."



Khushboo Chabria
PUBLIC HEALTH
"Going to Berkeley for four days and partying!"



Fred Alvarez
BROADCASTING
"Go-karting!"



Eva Griffen
ASL INTERPRETING
"I celebrated my good friend's birthday and exchanged gifts."



Aaron Prisco
COMPUTER SCIENCE
"I got money for my birthday and paid my credit card bill."