

Opinions Based on Beliefs and Misinformation vs Conclusions Based on Facts and Data

by Peter Kilkus

A common response (actual quote) to criticism is, "Meantime, could you manage to discuss this proposal without engaging in personal attacks? There is no need to demonize people whose opinions differ from your own."

Although this may seem true on its surface, it is also a deflection from the importance of the issues being discussed. The Lake Berryessa Revitalization Program debate is not about "opinions" - it is about facts, data, research, and truth. "Opinions" themselves really bear no weight in this discussion

Back to basics - the Oxford dictionary definition: *o·pin·ion* (/ə'pɪny(ə)n/): noun: a view or judgment formed about something, not necessarily based on fact or knowledge. Some common synonyms of opinion are belief, conviction, persuasion, sentiment, and view. While all these words mean "a judgment one holds as true," opinion implies a conclusion open to dispute.

There's a difference between the truth of a credible persuasive argument and the "truthiness" of an implausible but appealing "opinion". Popularized several years ago on the Colbert Report, "truthiness" refers to the quality of preferring concepts or facts one wishes to be true, rather than concepts or facts known to be true. Many people actually seem to prefer truthiness to veracity, prevaricating while pontificating.

A simple thought experiment: Is the color red lighter than the color blue?

Say you are in a closed room, and someone brings in two balloons - one red and one blue. You have not studied any science nor had any experience with balloons - unlikely unless you are an indigenous person from the Amazon basin. Remember this is a hypothetical thought experiment! You hold the balloons in front of you and drop them both at the same time. The red balloon rise to the ceiling, but the blue balloon floats to the floor. Your first uninformed thought might be that the color red makes the balloon lighter than the color blue. Say they make you, an intelligent aborigine, do the test several times with the same result. Would it be reasonable, absent any other information or experiment, for you to develop an opinion that red things are lighter than blue things?

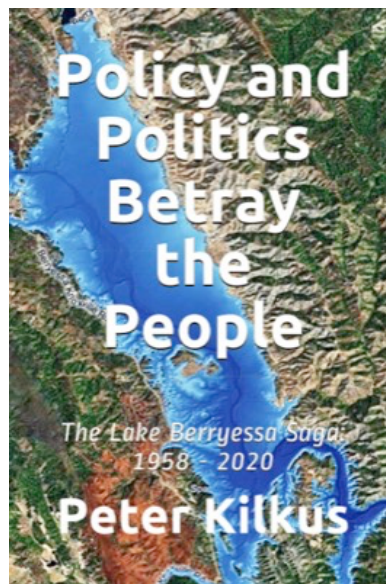
I know it's a silly example, but somehow it seem as if there are many folks who develop their "opinions" this way.



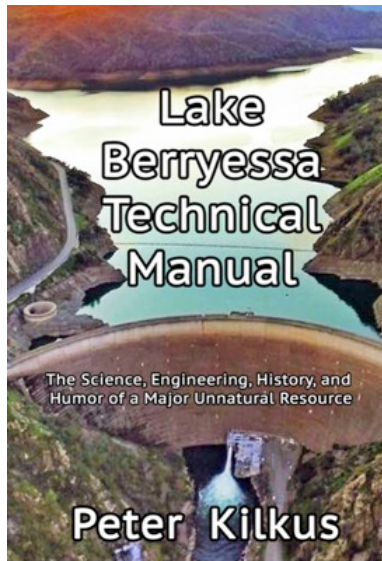
"Honey, come look! I've found some information all the world's top scientists and doctors missed."

If people wish to participate in a discussion of the future of Lake Berryessa and its political and natural history, they need to read. Many people ask me about the history of the process that led to the present situation at Lake Berryessa. When I explain what happened most become incredulous and can't believe the government could have done something so stupid. "How could they have gotten away with that?" they exclaim. A good question! When I start to explain they stop me and say, "Can you give me the 5-minute version?" The answer is no! If you care, you must read. If you wish to participate in discussions on Facebook or Nextdoor, you must read. If you wish to make informed public statements at a Napa supervisors meeting, you must read! Sorry.

You should read these books. This is not an advertisement; it is a recommendation. (I make very little royalty on book sales.) If you read these books, you will become an expert on most Lake Berryessa issues.



https://www.amazon.com/Policy-Politics-Betray-People-Berryessa-ebook/dp/B08MFSQDBR/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=peter+kilkus&qid=1604774826&sr=8-1



https://www.amazon.com/Lake-Berryessa-Technical-Manual-Engineering-ebook/dp/B0C21DZ9M9/ref=sr_1_3?

The best must-read report about Lake Berryessa's recreation potential (including "nature-based") is still the Ragatz Report:

<https://www.lakeberryessanews.com/resources/References-PDFs/2017-Ragatz-Report-Full.pdf>

The basic core documents are available for download at:

<https://www.lakeberryessanews.com/styled-3/>