Noitall Seeks New Horizons

Science. Dr. Noitall, you are the man for all issues, the Leonardo da Vinci of modern journalism, the man who rushes in where wise men fear to tread, the man who has the courage of his convictions even when he has no facts.

Noitall. A vast understatement of my true worth.

Science. Dr. Noitall, I hear you are retiring from Science. Are you angry and staging a protest?

Noitall. Nothing of the sort. Science is a great journal, but it has only 800,000 readers per week. There are 4.2 billion people on the Earth. That leaves 4,199,2 billion to struggle through their lives without any help from me. The state of the world shows what happens when people lack my advice. They need me.

Science. But, Dr. Noitall, although you have been very helpful to Science, it’s not clear that the other billions want you.

Noitall. I have single-handedly rescued Science from itself. You are a bunch of supercuous, peer-reviewed conservatives.

Science. I think you go too far. Science is a product of many people with multiple talents.

Noitall. Nonsense. I dare you to name one the equal of me.

Science. Well, to begin, there is John Brauman, our deputy editor who, with the help of our physical science editors, was able to get first-rate physical science articles for Science. For example, we received the quantum corral paper of Crommie et al., the cascade laser paper of Faist et al., and many other landmark papers in the physical sciences.

Noitall. Physical sciences are going nowhere. They haven’t done anything since I laid down the Second Law many years ago.

Science. Second, there is Tom Cech. He has helped Science as an author and as a deputy editor, in conjunction with our biological science editors, to maintain a steady stream of top quality papers.

Noitall. Biology is a passing phase.

Science. There is Phil Abelson, who turned over to present management a fine journal, and then continued to contribute good advice and excellent editorials.

Noitall. A man who thinks for himself. Such men are dangerous.

Science. And then there is the whole Science team and their contributions, mentioned in the editorial of the 10 March 1995 issue, led by those incomparable managers, Monica Bradford and Ellis Rubinstein. And there are the AAAS Board of Directors and its executive officer, Richard Nicholson, who Science have. And there are the letters editors, Christine Gilbert and Steve Lapham, who let the public speak when we made a mistake or even when we didn’t.

Noitall. The world is run by solemn asses! None of those people fit the description and, except for me, you have not been able to recruit a single solemn ass in the last 10 years.

Science. We are not sure that we want too many people just like you, but we are pleased you are looking forward to a new life helping the struggling citizens of the world.

Noitall. My mission is to continue in the same tradition I have established at Science, but on a universal scale.

Science. Dr. Noitall, aren’t you afraid of being rejected by your new constituency?

Noitall. Quite the contrary. I am afraid of not being noticed.

Science. A flamboyant character like you not being noticed?

Noitall. Science is based on truth, consistency, and the facts. Here, I stand out from the crowd. The “outer darkness,” as Mark Twain would say, is just the opposite. Out there I’m liable to be mistaken for a presidential candidate.

Science. I agree about science, but is your description true about other areas?

Noitall. Out there they reject DNA evidence, tell Mexico it faces disaster if it doesn’t face facts while the United States doesn’t have to face the same facts, and believe overpopulation and waste disposal will go away if we don’t think about them. Out there, fiction is more powerful than facts. I’ll fit in perfectly.

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