

SCIENCE

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EDITORIAL

Making Wolves Lovable

Science. Dr. Noitall, you are the great public relations expert of the International Deer Association, the man who got deer to be considered a great, lovable species that should not be shot or harmed, the man who commissioned the book *Bambi* to humanize the deer, the man who arranged for the wolf to be the villain in *Little Red Riding Hood*, the man who arranged to have reindeer draw Santa Claus's sleigh.

Noitall. A vast understatement of my true worth.

Science. How do you view the news that various animal lovers want to reintroduce wolves into parts of Alaska and elsewhere?

Noitall. A truly shocking development, which I am sure the deer lovers of the world will oppose vigorously. We have labored for years, introducing the phrase "the wolf at the door" as a symbol of the last elements of desperation and introducing the phrase "wolf in sheep's clothing" to indicate the ultimate deception. It seems inconceivable that anyone would want to increase the power and numbers of wolves.

Science. We understand your point of view, but the International Wolf Association told us that they were planning to hire you as a public relations expert for their association. Are you telling us that you wouldn't possibly accept their money?

Noitall. Why of course I would accept their money. It is easier to create principles than money. Now that I think of it, the wolves have been the subject of species harassment, with a consistently negative image in the literature never portraying wolves as the kind, lovable creatures that they really are under the fur. Given that they have never had any decent, positive appraisals, you can understand how they would become outlaws and view people as enemies. People forget how wolves raised Romulus and Remus, thus beginning one of civilization's greatest periods.

Science. But I thought you were saying that wolves were the enemies of deer.

Noitall. Well, now that I think about it, there really are too many deer, and they are carrying Lyme disease and eating up shrubbery and gardens all around the world. If we can't shoot them, we can at least introduce a predator.

Science. But if you say the wolf will continue to be a predator, will that not change the quality of life in Alaska?

Noitall. Of course it will, but for the better. Instead of children having a long, boring walk to school, they will have to jump on dogsleds, which will careen through the streets of Alaska closely followed by howling, ravenous wolves. The kids will find going to school more exciting.

Science. But what about the kid who misses the dogsled, or can't run fast enough?

Noitall. That will be a great benefit to the species, too, because only the brightest and quickest will survive, thus providing selection pressure on *Homo sapiens*. As you know, the wolves and the caribou have a mutual selection system in which only the best wolves and best caribou can survive the trans-Canada migration of the caribou.

Science. Won't some of the effects be negative? For example, people will no longer be able to have picnics in the woods.

Noitall. Of course they will be able to have picnics, but they will have to bring guns along to protect themselves. Wolves are nearsighted and may believe some children are actually little sheep.

Science. But the handgun problem is terrible, and a justification for handguns will cause an increase in violence.

Noitall. No one else has found out how to stop people from shooting each other. This new outside threat will bring the human species together. Also, we can have a big education campaign with the slogan, "Shoot wolves, not people."

Science. Even a great public relations expert like you may have a hard time making wolves both feared and loved. Are you trying to get us back to the incredibly wonderful nostalgia of caveman days or create a new utopia in which all species live together in perfect harmony?

Noitall. Logical consistency is the enemy of public relations. I do have a final strategy, which I might develop if the fees are large enough. It is to claim that wolves are only shaggy dogs—and homeless to boot—and therefore that they are deserving of the love and affection that we lavish on the human species. I can develop public relations for any cause, as long as it pays handsomely.

Daniel E. Koshland, Jr.