

1923 Nobel Prize in Physics with Fletcher.

References

1. B. Alberts, *Science* **327**, 12 (2010).
2. See *APS News*, August/September 2006, p. 2.

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■ **Philip Wyatt's commentary** on authorship was quite interesting. I help to maintain the authorship lists for two large collaborations in particle physics. I have three comments that may be of interest:

► High-energy physics collaborations have authorship rules that may conflict with the guidelines of the journals, and most authors may not be able to defend the conclusions in the paper. *Physical Review Letters* states "Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to the concept, design, execution or interpretation of the research study. . . . Other individuals who have contributed to the study should be acknowledged, but not identified as authors" (http://www.aps.org/policy/statements/02_2.cfm).

► Remarkably, I am in a field where people have not, on average, read a majority of their own papers.

► I have no realistic solution.

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■ **The commentary by Philip Wyatt** presented intriguing data confirming the evolution of increasingly multiple authorship. It prompts speculations on the social psychology of science. During five decades as a university professor, I experienced that evolution, both in the authorship of astrophysics and planetary-science papers and in research modes used by our graduate students.

Throughout my career I strove to create new physics ideas, in contrast to new data or calculations. Those single-author publications primarily involved seeking new interpretations of phenomena, and by virtue of being original they did not lend themselves to multiple authorship. My large number of single-author papers seems out of step today.

I observe that my single-author papers are not as heavily cited as my multiple-author works, and that my single-author papers are often uncited even by researchers that use the ideas from them. I suggest that the evolution to multiple authorship occurred in part



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Journal of American Chemical Society, March 2011

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