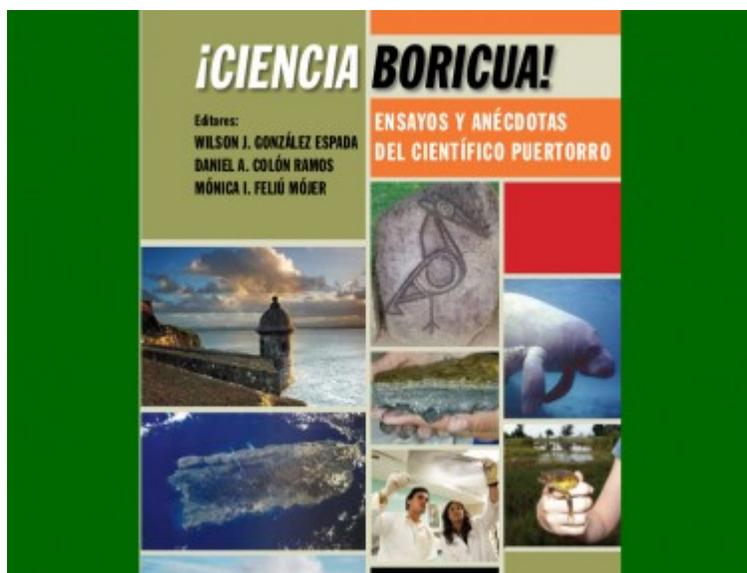


The desire to write about science and how I became a volunteer for CienciaPR ^[1]

Submitted by [Wilson Javier Gonzalez-Espada](#) ^[2] on 15 April 2016 - 4:53pm



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The publication of the book "Ciencia Boricua" is one of the initiatives in which Wilson has been closely involved.

March 20th, 2007 is a unique day in my career. That day I published my first lay science article in El Nuevo Día, Puerto Rico's largest newspaper, entitled "Domestic birds a target for the bird flu" ^[3]. Three weeks later, on April 2nd, my third article was published. This one, entitled "Pluto goes to the psychologist," ^[4] is special because it was the first of many in which I used science fiction and humor to educate about science concepts, in this case why Pluto was demoted from being a planet.

These two articles, nor the hundreds of others I have written and have appeared in newspapers such as El Nuevo Día, Diálogo of the University of Puerto Rico, Claridad and Nuevo Periódico de Caguas, would have been possible without the collaborations ^[5] that Ciencia Puerto Rico had established with those and other media outlets in Puerto Rico.

How am I sure that those articles would not exist without Ciencia Puerto Rico? Because in 1998 I

tried to get published in El Nuevo Día and it did not happen. Here's the sad story.

In May 1998 I finished my school year as a professor of physics and mathematics at the Puerto Rico Technological Institute in Ponce. I had already been accepted for the doctoral program in Science Education at the University of Georgia at Athens. But, being the kind of person that always goes where he's not invited and an opportunity seeker, I decided I wanted to do something different that summer. Without second guessing my decision, I wrote a letter to the editors of El Nuevo Día indicating my willingness to do some kind of summer internship where I could write scientific notes. Along with my resume, I sent the letter in an envelope and waited for an answer...

And waited...

And waited...

I don't remember if they answered or if I called one afternoon and someone at the newspaper told me that they didn't have the kind of internship I wanted.

But that thorn at my side, about writing lay articles on science and researchers from Puerto Rico, remained stuck in my subconscious. I was frustrated to see that almost all articles in the science section were written by people outside Puerto Rico and the sources were organizations like The Associated Press and EFE. They were interesting, but described distant lands and foreign scientists, and very few times I read about a local researcher or a Puerto Rican scientific enigma.

It is not until late 2006 that I learned about Ciencia Puerto Rico. I started talking to Daniel Colón-Ramos, Mónica Feliú-Mójer and Marcos López-Casillas. Marcos contacted me to write a biographical profile on my career and, in particular, an article I wrote which was published in the professional journal Physics Education. That article explained how the conductive and insulating properties of certain materials, along with conduction, convection and radiation heat, made the igloos of the Eskimos stay relatively warm inside even though the outside temperature was extremely cold.

That's where I learned that Ciencia Puerto Rico was looking for scientists to write articles in El Nuevo Día and they shared my view that scientific communication, from the island's perspective, is essential for the education of society. Immediately I felt a cramp in the old thorn, reminding me that it was still there.

Turns out that the newspaper articles were the beginning of a productive collaboration with Ciencia Puerto Rico. Then came projects like the book "[Ciencia Boricua](#)" [6], [workshops for teachers](#) [7], publications, and many other initiatives that fill a void and educate students and the general public about science, the excellent quality of science made in Puerto Rico and the scientists who are at the forefront of it.

Today I celebrate the 10th anniversary of Puerto Rico Science and thank them for the opportunity to collaborate with them through my humble journalistic contributions. I know they have an impact; several scientists have contacted me thanking me for promoting and giving visibility to their research. Other scientists, professional journalists and bloggers now write scientific articles,

something that was not common before.

The moral of the story? Never leave subconscious thorns unresolved nor dreams unrealized.

If you are a scientist or science buff, you can become a member of Ciencia Puerto Rico and collaborate with the initiative of writing articles for newspapers. Contact me at w.gonzalez-espada@moreheadstate.edu [8] for more details.

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