

Another Fine Week

Written by Alex Baer

Friday, 12 February 2016 16:46 - Last Updated Friday, 12 February 2016 23:25

It's been a heckuva week or so for Science lately: Watching as black holes merged, observing gravitational ripples and waves, proving correct more of Einstein's theories...

That was just for openers. We also learned that electrons in the metal graphene can behave like a liquid -- a real first -- and that the explanation for the Yellowstone supervolcano may need to be revised.

Plus, it also looks like Earth might have been formed by the collision of two early bodies -- and, for good measure, hundreds more galaxies have been discovered playing peekaboo behind our own Milky Way.

There have been major scientific downsides recently as well:

- An Indian man is believed to be the first person killed by a meteorite;
- The European Space Agency says after 60 hours of operation after a jarring landing, it's now bidding farewell to its Philae comet lander after no response; and
- An Alaska woman says her 6-year-old Happy Meal refuses to decompose.

There have also been developments somewhere in the middle:

- Scratch-and-sniff posters have been hung in NY subway cars, to give riders an olfactory break from the environs;
- LA's mayor has recorded an R&B video to alert residents of a road closure; and
- A city in Switzerland has cancelled plans to allow a silent disco to carry on all night long.

That last one requires a bit of explanation, but it's really unsurprising: While the music is broadcast to listeners via headphones, and not through outdoor loudspeakers, residents say the disco is anything *but* silent -- because party hounds can't help but sing along with the music in their headphones. (Probably a herd of tone-deaf coyote yelps, at that, too.)

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There's no doubt a lot of really loud incidental conversation that always goes with headphone use as well -- commentary which tries to punch through conversationalists' headphones sound levels and be heard, such as *THIS IS A GOOD ONE!* and *I SAID, I THINK THIS IS A GOOD ONE!* and *YES, I THINK THIS IS A GOOD ONE, TOO!*

*

Meanwhile, I'm pretty sure that science (and climate change) denier Lamar Smith (R-21st Moon of Texas), Chairman of the U.S. House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, who oversees \$39 billion in funding for science-heavy organizations such as the EPA, the FAA, NASA, the Department of Energy, and the National Science Foundation, and who is a graduate of the Southern Methodist University School of Law, and who is a Christian Scientist practitioner-and-teacher, has found this story a stunning breakthrough:

- *A Russian orthodox church has settled part of its debt with an area business by promising those bringing suit that it will pray for the health of the claimants.*

The church ran up a bill of \$11,500 with a local construction company which had been asked to design a heating system for a church building. However, the church was able to pony up only about half of what it owed, so it was sued for the remainder.

Luckily for the church, the owners were believers, so the church was able to write off half its debt in exchange for promised prayers of good health for the business owners.

I expect the House Science Committee will be rushing teams of researchers into this promising new area of debt relief right away. Look for more information, and increasingly lurid details, very soon from the Tea Party Office of Management & Budget Advisory Task Force and Wiffle Ball Support Group.

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We should be able, with serious national effort, to get the national debt down to a couple hundred bucks by Black Friday, if we get the National Office of Prosperity Praying up and running -- or down and kneeling -- by St. Patty's Day.

*

Taking a cringing look at politics for a moment, we again see proof positive that we absolutely need another method of discovering who our President *maybe-might-could-be*.

In Iowa, some counting errors have cropped up, affecting the way delegates are apportioned, while in New Hampshire, the vote count doesn't really matter, because of the way delegates are apportioned. *Yes*.

At this point, I'm thinking *rock-paper-scissors* would be a rocket-science leap forward in Presidential Election and Detection Technology, but I'm not sure Lamar Smith can be bothered to plunge head first into such an intense, decades-long research program.

*

There are an awful lot of *WHY ARE PEOPLE SO ANGRY THIS ELECTION YEAR?* stories in the media -- I can hardly turn around without bumping into two or three more of them, *making me feel like I want to rip off the tops of their take-out espressos and Jolt colas, pouring Prozac into their ...*

(No, it's fine, really -- thanks for asking...)

It's just that there are a lot of speculative headlines and cause-and-effect stories about what-means-what and which-means-which, and other heady statistical subset possibilities, such as *The Top Ten Things The Primary Tells Us*, or *Fifty Irrefutable Things Iowa* (or New Hampshire, or Astrology, or Chicken Bone Chucking)

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Tells Us...

However, nowhere in these rundown articles do I see any of these incredibly obvious items on their lists:

1. The new sense of *Serves You Right* entitlement built up by 25+ years of right-wingnut media finally strikes back, slipped right off its "New Classic Koch" leash
2. Brand new report: "Peer Pressure in the Golden Caucus Years"
3. *Tinnitus* from exposure to too much TV (and, for dog-lovers, *Rin-Tin-Tin-Tinnitus*)
4. A combination of lowered expectations after seeing the field, and deflated self-esteem from the cancellation of the miniseries, *Charlie's Angels Meet Gilligan's Munsters and the Golden Girls on Deadwood Island*.
5. Bad reactions to the effect of poppy seed muffins on employment drug tests
6. Quote from Middle America: *The Donald, and Prosperity Christianity, and Rush, and Fox, all say I deserve to be a billionaire, too -- but, so far, it's not happening, so, like, what am I doing wrong, besides living in a country with too many Democrats?*
7. Misplaced anger at do-nothing sesame seeds on burger buns
8. Momentary lapses in the nation's Thorazine supply
9. Clandestine monkey-gland testing in Republicans
10. Overt testing of so-called "early warning Zombie forehead strips" in non-Republicans
11. Correlations of junk-food dieters and crappy, really unclear thinking
12. Pre-Zika virus triggering a new Retroactive Distress Anticipation Shiver-Fever Thingie
13. Frustration at not first thinking up hot-selling tee-shirt: *Nonsense is the New Intellectualism, You Big Stupid!*
14. This is the Year of the Inverted Loon, in Pastafarianism -- so, what did you expect?
15. The number 67... vertical stripes... and that weird, new bluish-gray color.
16. It's Pants-Backwards Year (any year equally divisible by 2016, or by One), so we scrape the bottom of the candidate barrel first, *before* we check to see who floats to the top!
17. Berserk is the new Orange
18. Magic *Funny-Peculiar* Spores in the Water Supply
19. Scarcity of aluminum foil, creating a shortage of tinfoil protective hats
20. Successful, undetected test within our borders by North Korea of a Moron Bomb
21. A theoretical situation in which an evolving natural phenomena is developing, regarding Survival of the Hardest-of-Thinking -- or else, maybe, the number of people who fell for the *Caution Wet Superglue s* ign-joke on the toilet seat.
22. New strain of mental fungi
23. *Does anyone else taste metal burning -- or know what it means when I do?*
24. Americans are notorious practical jokers, in things political, going all the way back to the Manhattan Project

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25. Lockjaw and bit lips (a reaction to the nation being out of stock this year, on those leather bite-tabs patients usually get before electroshock...)

26. Meandering attention spans in the absence of any bona fide religious miracles or deity-like candidate selections, or *really obvious holy stuff, like a Big Hand coming down and touching somebody's head, with, like, choirs, and sunbeams, and things like that...*

27. Magic *Funny-Ha-Ha* spores in the nation's contaminated ice-cube-machines

28. Filming of the controversial new docu-drama, *Redshift*, which attempts to prove we live in a very large, expanding place called a *universe*

29. Discovery of a "lost" Kinky Friedman album, *Live at the GOP Jamboree No-Hole Bar!*

30. Publication of the new book, *Here's Waldo, Getting Much Needed Treatment*

*

Speaking of reasons to leave the U.S.: It turns out more people than ever before are chucking in their citizenship and handing over their passports.

Originally, when I came across the story, I thought peple might have been fleeing as a reaction -- silly me -- to the GOP's *Presidential Chorus Line and Really Traumatic Family Wedding Gauntlet Handshake-and-Hug Rhumba Line*.

No, it's just about money, ever since a law went into effect trying to get The Unbelievably Wealthy to pay a little tax, for a change -- but, many smaller fry were instead shoved, as always, in between the rocks and hard places in that attempt.

Later on, I ran into an explanation I found myself rooting for instead, as a possible explanation for people leaving America behind: they've taken up residence in a small town in Slovenia, where the council has ram-rodged through a plan to build a fountain which cascades real beer, instead of mere water.

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Zalec is known for its hop plantations, after all. The beer fountain won't be finished for a while, so there's ample time for selling Everything You Own and departing at a leisurely pace.

Meanwhile, another Einsteinian concept is proven, regarding the relativity of time, and clocks slowing when waiting for good things to happen... and where *Y* is the standard political question and *X* marks the spot, right here, on this beer coaster.

Yes: Another fine, fine week in the bag, and me, chasing it right in there -- *cheers*.

A Few Resources:

Meteorite: <https://www.rt.com/news/331687-india-man-killed-meteorite/>

Scratch:

http://www.upi.com/Odd_News/2016/02/10/Artist-uses-scratch-and-sniff-posters-to-improve-New-York-subway-smells/6061455128667/?st_rec=8481455131230

Unhappy Meal:

http://www.upi.com/Odd_News/2016/02/09/Alaska-woman-claims-McDonalds-Happy-Meal-has-nt-aged-in-six-years/6091455040526/?spt=trc

Road music: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-35512025>

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Disco howls: <http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-35501473>

Pray debt away! <http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-35561164>

Iowa count:

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2016/02/05/Report-Errors-found-in-audit-of-Democratic-low-a-votes-party-official-confirms-discrepancy/5571454719850/?spt=hsv=tn_us

NH count:

<http://www.npr.org/2016/02/10/466283748/how-hillary-clinton-is-actually-winning-in-n-h-even-though-she-lost-big>

Expat turn-ins: <http://www.bbc.com/news/35383435>

Font of Beer: <http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-35533639>

BONUSES:

Sir Van: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-35494713>

Coollest Dad Award:

http://www.upi.com/Odd_News/2016/02/10/Dads-excuse-note-cites-Springsteen-for-daughters-tardiness/8481455131230/?spt=hsv=on

Redshift (a very cool name for a growing indie band, one would think) and such:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Redshift>

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