

Best of Last Week – 'Self cleaning' car, discovery of cold star and the SensaBubble

April 28 2014, by Bob Yirka



This image shows users interacting with SensaBubble. Credit: Bristol Interaction and Graphics group, University of Bristol

(Phys.org) —It's been a great week for applied science with researchers coming up with all sorts of ways to enrich the human experience. One example is [Nissan's first "self cleaning" car prototype](#). Imagine never having to wait in line at another carwash. Another example was the announcement of the [SensaBubble](#). It's a bubble, but not as we know it—images can be projected onto them, and they release a scent when they pop—perhaps a great act at birthday parties. And as if that wasn't

enough, a [Finnish inventor rethinks the axe](#)—it's lever-based, and the head is on the side, requiring less human energy expenditure to chop firewood.

Also, perhaps a little less practical, at least in an immediate sense, a team of researchers at George Washington University has come up with [High-performance, low-cost ultracapacitors built with graphene and carbon nanotubes](#)—their super-small size will almost certainly come in handy as engineers seek to make ever smaller electronic devices, like phones that can be embedded in your body perhaps, rather than carried around.

Less fun comes news from a team of bio-researchers working with so-called superbugs—bacteria that are immune to current therapies. They've found that [our homes are now 'reservoirs' for superbug MRSA](#)—that famous Methicillin-resistant bug *Staphylococcus aureus*, more commonly known as MRSA has been found to be taking up residence in our residences. They're responsible for causing things like pneumonia and [bloodstream infections](#). Great.

On a more positive note, a [a star is discovered to be a close neighbor of the sun, and the coldest of its kind](#)—it's the "coldest" brown-dwarf ever found and is just 7.2 light-years away!

Even more positive, researchers in Canada have found that [you may have billions and billions of good reasons for being unfit](#)—genetic material in our mitochondria is highly variable across individuals, and may have an impact upon our health—for example, an association between the level of modification of RNA and our basal metabolic rate—meaning it's not your fault if you're overweight—maybe.

In a more esoteric vein, a team of researchers in Germany is [proposing](#) that spacetime might actually be a type of fluid—and they mean it literally—that would allow for thinking of general relativity as an

analogue to fluid hydrodynamics.

And finally, it's not all in your head: [Research shows people are bummed when they get unfriended on Facebook](#). Also, it turns out that most people who get unfriended are old highschool chums—who'd a thought.

That's it for this week's recap. Please remember that you can customize your reading at *Phys.org* and *Medical Xpress* by [creating a ScienceX login and profile](#).

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