

Best of Last Week—An alternate theory of how life started, SpaceX's mission to Mars and the problem with narcissism

October 3 2016, by Bob Yirka

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(ScienceX)—It was a big week for Earth science as a team at Washington State University found evidence that [reservoirs play a substantial role in global warming](#)—taken together, the group found,

they are responsible for 1.3 percent of all human-caused greenhouse gas emissions. Also, a team led by explorer Krzysztof Starnawski announced that [the world's deepest underwater cave had been found in the Czech Republic](#)—going at least 404 meters deep and maybe more. [A biologist commented on a startling new finding in climate change research](#)—Donatella Zona with San Diego State University published a commentary piece in the journal *Nature* outlining recent work that has shown that a chain reaction occurs as permafrost melts, emitting more greenhouse gases than was thought. And a team at the Scripps Research Institute found [evidence for an alternate theory of how life arose](#) on planet Earth—involving both RNA and DNA evolving at the same time.

In space news, [SpaceX's Elon Musk turned to science fiction for a planned Mars spacecraft](#)—he announced ambitious plans for sending a rocket to Mars, which he is considering calling "Heart of Gold"—an homage to the starship in the comic series "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy." And a team at Cornell University announced plans for the first shoebox-sized "CubeSat" to orbit the moon based on [making space rocket fuel from water, which could drive a power revolution on Earth](#)—the same technology could be used to power cars and trucks.

In other news, a team working in Japan announced that they had made a [quantum computing advance with control of entanglement](#) by sustaining the lifetime of "qubits" up to 60 times that of other techniques. Also, a team at Brigham and Women's Hospital found that [memory changes may occur in women decades earlier than previously thought](#)—due in part to the onset of menopause. And a team at Stanford University found that [iron nanoparticles make immune cells attack cancer](#)—and they are already available as a nutritional supplement.

And finally, if you are the type of person who has found that you can get others to follow you by focusing on the great things about you, you might be in a for a shock as a team made up of researchers from Poland,

the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States found that [narcissists may start out popular, but people see through them in the long run.](#)

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