

Best of Last Week – Magnetic tunnel surrounding our solar system, swarming legged robots, a new way to treat diabetes

October 25 2021, by Bob Yirka

Left: A curving tunnel, with lines formed by the tunnel lights and road lane markers, forms a similar geometry to the proposed model of the North Polar Spur and Fan Region (photo by Pixabay/ illustration by Jennifer West). Right: The sky as it would appear in radio polarized waves. Credit: Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory/Villa Elisa telescope/ESA/Planck Collaboration/Stellarium/Jennifer West

It was a good week for space science as an international team of astronomers used NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite to [watch as a white dwarf switched on and off](#). Also, another team made up of astronomers from several Canadian institutions announced that they had found evidence that [a 'magnetic tunnel' surrounds our solar system](#). And a team at NASA released a video of its Perseverance Mars rover that included audio, allowing viewers to [hear sounds captured from Mars](#).

In technology news, a combined team from Brown University and the University of Maryland announced that they had developed [a new material that could pave the way for better and perhaps safer batteries](#) based on polymer tubes derived from wood. Also, a team at MIT found that [the human brain seems to be wired to calculate the 'pointiest' path, not the shortest one](#), when navigating. And a team at Technische Universität Dresden, developed [a technique for automatically generating hardware components for robotic systems](#). The technique is based on field programmable gate arrays. And a pair of engineers, Yasemin Ozkan-Aydin, with Notre Dame University and Daniel Goldman, with the Georgia Institute of Technology, built [a swarm of four-legged robots](#) that were able to conduct collective behaviors.

In other news, a team led by a group at Barcelona Institute for Global Health found evidence that [COVID-19 is a seasonal infection](#) linked to humidity levels and lower temperatures. Also, a team at Cambridge's Cavendish Laboratory backed up findings by a team last year working on Hcb experiments at CERN, that boosts [evidence for a new fundamental physics](#).

And finally, if you have type II diabetes, you may want to check out the work being done by an international team working at Technion-Israel Institute of Technology—they have taken [a novel approach to treating type II diabetes](#) based on autograft of muscle cells engineered to take in sugar at increased rates—thus far, it has shown prolonged normal blood

sugar levels in patients after a single one-time procedure.

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Citation: Best of Last Week – Magnetic tunnel surrounding our solar system, swarming legged robots, a new way to treat diabetes (2021, October 25) retrieved 3 July 2024 from <https://sciencex.com/news/2021-10-week-magnetic-tunnel-solar-swarming.html>

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