

Best of Last Week – Milky Way massive bubbles, cleaning solar panels, mild side effects of COVID vaccines

March 14 2022, by Bob Yirka

The NASA visualization team created a superposition of an image of the Milky Way, taken by the European Space Agency's Gaia space observatory, and a visualization of the simulations of the eRosita and Fermi bubbles prepared by Karen Yang (lead author of the study and an assistant professor at the National Tsing Hua University in Taiwan) in cooperation with the co-authors of the paper Mateusz Ruszkowski (University of Michigan) and Ellen Zweibel (University of Wisconsin). Credit: ESA/Gaia/DPAC, CC BY-SA 3.0 IGO

It was a good week for space science as a collaborative at the University of Michigan and the University of Wisconsin found evidence of [massive bubbles at the center of the Milky Way caused by a supermassive black hole](#). Also, NASA announced that it was [opening a sample taken from the moon 50 years ago](#). The tubes of material had been sealed to allow for later study by more advanced instruments. And a team at the Leiden Observatory in the Netherlands working with data captured by the Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array in Chile discovered the [largest molecule yet in a planet-forming disk](#).

In technology news, a team with members from Yonsei University, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Fudan University and Peking University developed [retina-inspired sensors for more adaptive visual perception](#) in surveillance systems, robots or other technologies. And a team at MIT developed [a new cleaning method that can remove dust on solar installations in water-limited regions](#), improving overall efficiency while preventing unnecessary loss of water. Also, a collaboration team of researchers from Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico and Brown University developed [RoboKrill](#)—a crustacean-inspired swimming robot for marine exploration. And a team at the University of Cambridge created [tiny "skyscrapers" to help bacteria convert sunlight into electricity](#). The high-rise nano-housing grew quickly, and the researchers were able to extract waste electrons from them.

In other news, a trio of researchers with Baylor College of Medicine found that glycine and N-acetylcysteine, commonly known as the [GlyNAC supplement, extended the lifespan of lab mice](#). Testing in their lab showed mice given the supplement lived on average 24% longer than control mice. And a small international team of researchers found that [relocating farmland could turn back the clock 20 years on carbon emissions](#) by cutting the carbon impact of global croplands by 71%.

And finally, a team at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control found that

[most mRNA COVID-19 vaccine side effects are mild and temporary.](#)

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Citation: Best of Last Week – Milky Way massive bubbles, cleaning solar panels, mild side effects of COVID vaccines (2022, March 14) retrieved 19 May 2024 from <https://sciencex.com/news/2022-03-week-milky-massive-solar-panels.html>

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