Best of Last Week—glaciation terminated by Earth tilt, a safer way to share online, small groups eat most of the beef

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It was a good week for Earth science as a trio of volcanologists and geologists from Lithium Americas Corporation, GNS Science and
Oregon State University reported that the McDermitt Caldera, on the Nevada/Oregon, border, may host some of the largest known deposits of lithium on Earth. Also, a small team of Earth scientists with members from the University of California, Santa Barbara, Harvard University and Brown University found that the Late Pleistocene glaciation was terminated by Earth's axial tilt rather than orbital eccentricity. And an international team of climate scientists found that domestic fire lighters emit more black carbon than all biomass fuels put together.

In technology news, a team of computer scientists at the University of Massachusetts Amherst developed an open-source tool that dramatically speeds up the programming language Python. Called Scalene, the new tool allows programs written in Python to run faster. And an international team of computer engineers developed a decentralized, blockchain-based messaging network that provides safer communications, and also allows users to keep control of personal data and other information that is shared online. Also a team of robotics engineers at the University of Coimbra in Portugal designed, built and demonstrated a soft and scalable robotic hand that they claim would be less expensive and easier to produce than other types of robotic hands. And a team with members affiliated with multiple institutions in China developed an affordable and scalable strategy to fabricate efficient silicon heterojunction solar cells.

In other news, a team of medical researchers at the Medical College of Wisconsin, found that LDL is not the be-all, end all factor in heart disease, heart attacks and stroke. A team of internal medical specialists and dentists from around the globe conducted a review of the evidence of associations between periodontitis and inflammatory bowel disease and followed it up by proposing a multi-hit hypothesis to explain how it works. And finally, a team of researchers with varied backgrounds from Tulane University, the University of North Carolina and the University of Texas Health Science Center, found that just 12% of the population
eats approximately half of all beef consumed in the U.S. every day.

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