

# **Best of Last Week – Nobel awards announced, Sans Forgetica and a link between periodontal bacteria and Alzheimer's**

October 8 2018, by Bob Yirka

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It was a big week for science—the Nobel prizes were announced:

[Arthur Ashkin shared the prize for physics with Gerard Mourou and Donna Strickland](#). Ashkin received credit for his contributions to the development of optical tweezers that manipulate single atoms. Mourou and Strickland won for their work developing ultra-short optical pulses.

[Frances Arnold, George Smith and Gregory Winter won the chemistry prize](#) for their work applying evolutionary principles to the development of proteins used in a host of products.

Immunologists [James Allison and Tasuku Honjo won the award for medicine](#) for their work in getting the immune system to better fight cancer.

It was a good week for space science, too—after careful study of 740 of the brightest supernovas in the sky, a team at the University of California, Berkeley, [ruled out black holes as the source of the universe's missing dark matter](#). And NASA reported that [Voyager 2 could be nearing interstellar space](#)—an increase in cosmic waves from outside the solar system was detected. Also, a trio of researchers, Scott Sheppard, Chad Trujillo and David Tholen, announced that they had found [a new, extremely distant solar system object during their hunt for Planet X](#).

In other news, a team at Penn State University found new evidence suggesting that [particles detected in Antarctica don't fit the Standard Model](#)—sensor data from IceCube appeared to agree with data from the Antarctic Impulsive Transient Antenna. Also, a team at The University of Texas at Austin announced that they had developed [a new molecular programming language called CRN++](#) to be used for synthetic biology applications. And a team at IBM announced that they had [developed a new, brain-inspired architecture that could improve how computers handle data and lead to advanced AI](#). Also, a team with members

affiliated with several institutions in the U.S. suggested that [a certain wild plant could be the next strawberry](#)—researchers have been using genomics and gene editing to customize groundcherries to make them easier to mass produce. And a team at Dartmouth found evidence that associated [children's violent video game play with increased physical aggressive behavior](#). Also, a team at Australia's Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology announced that they had come up with [a font that helps you remember what you read—Sans Forgetica](#). The font is more difficult to read, forcing the reader to be more focused.

And finally, if you are worried about developing Alzheimer's disease when you get older, you may want to take a look at work done by a team at the University of Illinois at Chicago—they found evidence that suggested [periodontal disease bacteria may kick-start Alzheimer's](#). This means you might improve your odds by visiting your dentist more often.

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