

For the record

My family didn't expect it and don't like it

European Space Agency scientist **Matt Taylor** quoted in the Guardian

Taylor, who in 2013 became lead scientist on the Rosetta asteroid mission that ended in September, says he was surprised it garnered so much interest and that he "wasn't expecting" the interest in him personally.

It took me a long time to get over it. I was shafted

Rita Schulz, former Rosetta lead scientist, quoted in the Guardian

After 17 years working on the Rosetta mission, Schulz was replaced in 2013 by Taylor – a move that she says has been "tremendously damaging" for her career.

We have to be smarter than the dinosaurs

John Holdren, director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, speaking at a NASA event in Maryland

Holdren was defending NASA's plans to develop the technologies capable of capturing a bolder from an asteroid and bringing it into orbit around the Moon.

Researchers are very good at not wasting money and also not good at making any discoveries

2011 Nobel laureate **Saul Perlmutter** from the University of California, Berkeley, quoted in Times Higher Education

Perlmutter was commenting on the current funding climate in which research that is deemed too risky is not supported.

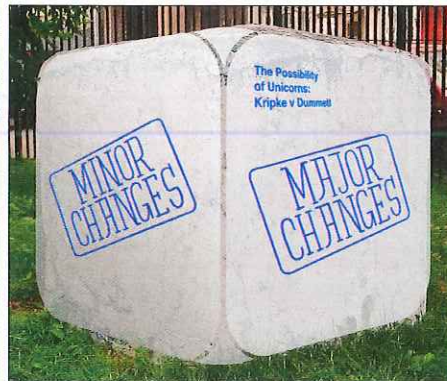
If candidates do [connect science to a hot policy issue] they run the risk of making science a wedge issue

Michael Lubell, director of public affairs at the American Physical Society, writing in APS News
Lubell was commenting on why politicians shun science on the campaign trail.

Cyclotrons might not save the world, but the kids who built them will

Physicist **Timothy Koeth** from the University of Maryland quoted in the Washington Post
Students at the university are building what will be the world's largest cyclotron that they will use to conduct nuclear physics experiments.

Seen and heard



Igor Chirikov

A monument to peer review

To celebrate those hard-working people who peer review research papers, Russian sociologist Igor Chirikov from the National Research University Higher School of Economics in Moscow had an inspired idea: to build the world's first monument to their efforts. He raised \$2521 via 123 backers on Kickstarter for a sculptor to turn an "ugly" block of concrete outside the university's Institute of Education into a die. Not any ordinary numbered die, but one that reads "accept", "minor changes", "major changes", "revise and resubmit" and "reject" on its five visible sides. Chirikov, who is also based at the Center for Studies in Higher Education at the University of California, Berkeley, US, told *Physics World* that he wanted to acknowledge the role of peer reviewers and use it to "have a good laugh" about the peer-review process. "I hoped that academics would like the idea but was a bit surprised how fast we've reached the fundraising goal," says Chirikov. "It means that there are common challenges in [the] academic profession across the world and disciplines. It also means that scholars have a good sense of humour."

Music for aliens

Still on crowdsourcing money for new projects, a proposal to reissue Carl Sagan's golden record, which was attached to NASA's Voyager 1 and 2 craft, has so far raised a whopping \$1.1m, smashing its \$198000 goal. The campaign was created in September by David Pescovitz, editor and managing partner at the technology news site *Boing Boing*, after teaming up with Timothy Daly from Amoeba Music in the US, who was the original producer of the record, as well as US graphic designer Lawrence Azerrad. The original LP, which was created in 1977, contains sounds of the Earth along with recorded

greetings and a mix of music, yet it has been unobtainable for decades having been available only on CD-ROM in the early 1990s. Now that the cash has been raised, the golden record will be released next year as an LP to mark the 40th anniversary of the Voyager launches. So how much will it set you back? Yours for only \$98. Bargain.

Kitty for the kitty

Officials at the International Linear Collider (ILC) – a proposed successor to the Large Hadron Collider at CERN – have come up a clever way to secure more backing for the project, which is set to be built in Japan. To tackle its huge costs, ILC staff have turned to Hello Kitty to help promote the collider. Unless you have had your head buried under a cultural stone, you will know that Hello Kitty is a fictional cat character produced by the Japanese firm Sanrio, whose merchandise is sold in more than 70 countries. So for those not tempted by a Hello Kitty scooter, soft toy or suitcase, how about getting your hands on a Hello Kitty ILC paper folder, featuring the cat sat on an ILC cryomodule with equations in the background. Perfect for storing that five-volume ILC Technical Design Report, we reckon.

Aerial Cirque

**An aerial pitch drop**

Readers may remember when researchers at Trinity College Dublin finally managed to record a drop of tar pitch falling after more than 70 years of waiting (see September 2013 p3 and May 2014 pp26–29). Tar pitch appears to be solid at room temperature but actually flows like a liquid, albeit very slowly – with a drip occurring around once a decade. One of Ireland's top "aerial dancers", Ria Murphy, who studied physics at Trinity, was so inspired by the experiment that she has now created her own piece about it. Performed at the Dublin Fringe theatre festival in September, the dance explores a young woman's psyche as "she waits year after year for the fall of her dark companion". Apparently the pitch "preoccupies her every waking hour, possessing her mind and calling into question the unsettling subjectivity of time through moments of psychosis where the very core of her reality is brought into question". Sounds like your average day in the physics lab