>>NEWSMAKERS

Q: Are you confident that last year's problems won't happen again?

R.K.: I think CPRIT has ... reassessed its leadership and procedures, and is ready to move forward with its mission. ... I have great confidence that [Chief Scientific Officer] Margaret Kripke will build on the tradition of excellence that Al Gilman and [former Scientific Review Council Chair] Phil Sharp established and help CPRIT succeed and continue to fund excellent cancer research.

Q: Will you be able attract the same caliber of reviewers?

R.K.: Virtually all of the previous reviewers I have contacted have expressed a strong interest in participating as reviewers again.

Frankly I think it is attractive to review grants under circumstances where you know that most if not all of the worthy grants are likely to get funded.

FINDINGS

More Incoming!

February's window-shattering explosion of a meteor over Chelyabinsk, Russia, suggests such encounters are far more frequent than astronomers expected, scientists report this week in *Nature*.

Planetary scientist Peter Brown of the University of Western Ontario in London, Canada, and his colleagues used the Chelyabinsk airburst—observed by video cameras, seismographs, satellite sensors,

Random Sample

Whose Brain Is It Anyway?

Many scientists have tried to find out where, in the winding topography of the human brain, genius resides. For instance, in the middle of the 19th century, German anatomist Rudolf Wagner collected the brains of numerous professors to study them in detail. The star of the cerebral collection, examined many times in the past 150 years: the brain of German genius and "Prince of Mathematics" Carl Friedrich Gauss.

But when Renate Schweizer of the Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry in Göttingen, Germany, recently examined the brain in the University of Göttingen's collection labeled "C. F. Gauss," she noticed a rare anatomical feature in the left hemisphere: a bit of brain tissue bridging the central fissure between the frontal and parietal lobe.

"My first thought was, 'Wow, Gauss had this rare feature,' " Schweizer says. Her second thought was: Wait, I've seen this exact central fissure before.

Her conclusion, published last month in *Brain*: The brain labeled as Gauss's was that of a doctor, Conrad Heinrich Fuchs, whose brain Wagner had also examined. In fact, Wagner had used it to describe for the first time the very anatomical feature Schweizer had noticed. Exactly how and when the brains were mixed up is still unclear, but Schweizer says the culprit was probably Wagner's son Hermann, who compared the brains for his 1864 doctoral thesis—meaning that generations of scientists have examined Fuchs's brain instead of Gauss's. No textbooks will have to be rewritten, however. Anatomically, Gauss's brain is even less exceptional than its long-term substitute, Schweizer says.



Switched. The brains of Conrad Heinrich Fuchs (*left*; fissure in yellow) and Carl Friedrich Gauss (*center and right*).



Fireball. A witness's photo of the February 2013 Chelyabinsk meteor.

and infrasound detectors—to calibrate the 20-year-long record of airbursts from incoming asteroids. The team found that Earthimpacting asteroids 10 to 50 meters in size have arrived about 10 times the rate estimated from telescopic searches alone.

Planetary astronomer Alan Harris, a NASA consultant in California who came up with that low, search-based estimate, acknowledges that the rate could be several times higher. But 10 times higher? Too few large airbursts like Chelyabinsk, he says, have been detected to persuade him that the threat is *that* great. http://scim.ag/Chelbursts

Early Music Lessons Reduce Hearing Loss

It's a well-worn tale of woe: After spending thousands of dollars on music lessons and instruments, parents often watch in dismay as once-coveted flutes, clarinets, and violins are unceremoniously abandoned. Such investments in early musical education aren't wasted, however, a new study in this week's issue of *The Journal of Neuroscience* suggests. Even after going decades without practicing their instruments, adults aged 55 to 76 who studied music for 4 to 14 years when they were young have better "neural timing" than people who never played an instrument, researchers at Northwestern University report.

Neural timing is a type of auditory processing that is key to the ability to interpret speech, and it often declines with age. The more years that participants in the study had spent playing an instrument, the crisper their hearing was even 40 years later, says neuroscientist Nina Kraus, who led the study. Although previous studies have shown that playing music can improve hearing skills, this is the first to show such long-term benefits, she says.



Join us on Thursday, 14 November, at 3 p.m. EST for a live chat on **robotics and neuroprosthetics. http://scim.ag/science-live**