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The annual Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting always crackles with intellectual electricity. But the timing of this year's gathering — dedicated to physics — gave it an extra jolt. On 4 July, the 27 laureates and nearly 600 young researchers gathered on the beautiful German island of Lindau in Lake Constance watched a live announcement by CERN, the high-energy physics laboratory near Geneva, Switzerland, of the almost certain discovery of the Higgs boson. Many of the laureates at Lindau had been involved in laying the foundation for this discovery — David Gross was particularly enthusiastic, punching the air in triumph after the announcement — while other laureates and young researchers were huddled in groups, excitedly discussing its implications.

This *Outlook* celebrates the spirit of the Lindau meeting. The opening talk, by astronomer Brian Schmidt, described work on the dark energy that is driving the expansion of the Universe, for which he was awarded a share of the 2011 Nobel Prize in Physics. We look in more detail at dark energy — and what new tools might help probe its nature (page S2). We have Q&As with five of the laureates who attended the meeting, including theorist Martinus Veltman who, despite contributing to the mathematical framework that contains the Higgs boson, talks of his mixed feelings about its discovery (S10). And we present a conversation between astronomer John Mather, a 2006 prizewinner for his investigation of the cosmic microwave background radiation, which holds clues to the early Universe, and Minnie Mao, who recently took a position as a postdoctoral researcher at the National Radio Astronomy Observatory in Socorro, New Mexico. Mather and Mao discuss future strategies for observing our cosmic past (S5).

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Michelle Grayson

Senior Editor, Supplements

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