of stishovite. Little is known about the effects of impurities and load rate on the formation of this high-pressure polymorph of quartz, but equilibrium-phase relations indicating a transition at 90 kilobars do not rule out volcanic processes. The retrogressive failure of the gravitationally stable north slope at Mount St. Helens is an indication that shock disruption was brought about by a preceding explosion at depth. This was confirmed by the far-field signature of the seismic event some 10 seconds earlier. This earthquake had azimuthal uniformity in P-wave polarity and depressed S-wave amplitude. The fact that P-wave first arrivals were up indicates that decompressive volcanic "explosions" are as mythical as those K/T impact sites whose abundance on the earth exceeds, for some people, that of volcanoes. The throw velocity of the north slope indicates that pressures some 5 kilometers beneath Mount St. Helens were many hundreds of kilobars.

Kerr appears to interpret the steadied progress and cautionary presentation of the work of Neville Carter and his colleagues (who have joined the decade-long debate in just the past couple of years) as an indication of doubt that multiple-shock lamellae will ever be found in association with volcanic activity. He might have reported instead the caution of the volcanic proponents that the annealing temperatures of magmas would mean that they are not a source of shocked minerals: such things must come from the surrounding country rock. Further, he does not not inform the reader that the Manson crater does not coincide with the K/T event (*1*); nor does he reveal that multiple lamellae have been reported in mafic breccia dykes (*2*) and that coesite, another high-pressure polymorph of quartz, has been found in purely tectonic settings, such as the Caledonides, the Urals, and the Alps, indicating endogenous pressures above 30 kilobars (*3*). Finally, Kerr does not discuss the fact that the decline of the dinosaurs took place over millions of years, which would call for a rather slow-landing meteor.

That iridium and shocked minerals may have a connection with mass extinctions is perhaps the most important scientific discovery of the decade, and the initial suggestion of an impact as causal is certainly an educated guess that has been extremely valuable in stimulating much effort in astronomy, astrophysics, and paleontology. But in some quarters this interesting guess has not been allowed the natural scientific evolution that would have at least retained for it some glory as the progenitor of more advanced thinking. Instead, it appears to have been immediately accorded the deity of something that also seems as rare as the unicorns to which Kerr alludes, a "death star." Why so many people have attached their wagons to this star will provide much material for behavioral scientists, historians, and others for decades to come.

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Erratum: Leslie Roberts' article "A corrosive fight over California's toxics law" (News & Comment, 20 Jan., p. 306) incorrectly states that chloroform is used to chlorinate drinking water. Chloroform is formed during the chlorination process.

Erratum: Because of a transmission error, the West German government's position on Europe's genome program was incorrectly stated in David Dickson's News & Comment article "Genome project gets rough ride in Europe" (3 Feb., p. 599). The Bundestag has given its qualified approval to the program. It has not endorsed the views of a parliamentary committee that opposes the effort, as the article stated.