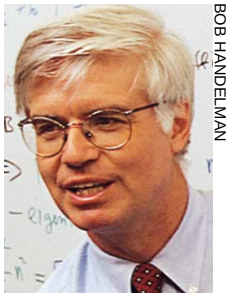
Sanchez (D-Calif.) as a congressional fellow, he expected to work on education issues. But he ended up being a point person for Sanchez on homeland security when she took leave from the House Committee on Education and the Workforce to serve on the newly created House Select Committee on Homeland Security. Beck also became Sanchez's staff person in charge of Medicare, Medicaid, and other health-care matters. "It reminds me a little of doing research," he says. "You kind of follow research where it leads, and I follow this job where it takes me. I'm finding it's easy to get fired up about Medicare legislation."

Christian



BOB HANDELMAN

Whittaker

The 2002–03 APS congressional fellow, particle physicist Benn Tannenbaum, spent his term in the office of Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.). He handled arms control and nonproliferation issues, veterans' affairs, and science and technology—and will work on many of the same topics in his new position at the Federation of American Scientists. "The day I started [my fellowship], the House was debating the Iraq use-of-force resolution," he says. "A week later, North Korea shouted, 'We've got the bomb.'" Markey has hosted fellows for more than 20 years and, says Tannenbaum, he "is not afraid to let a couple of PhDs run rampant in his office."

Jeff Haeni, the 2002–03 congressional fellow sponsored by OSA and the Materials Research Society (MRS), says New Jersey Democratic Rep. Rush Holt's attitude is similar. "If you have an idea, and get Rush's approval, you can run with it," says Haeni, a materials scientist. Haeni has worked for Holt on NASA, R&D funding, energy policy, revival of the Office of Technology Assessment, and a bipartisan R&D caucus. "Just about any scientific issue you read about in the paper," Haeni says, "you can bet I'll be dealing with it that week." As a science fellow, he says, "you immediately become the person in the office responsible for giving advice" on all matters scientific. This month, Haeni starts a position in the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs.

Illa Amerson, AGU's 2002–03 fellow on Capitol Hill, chose an assignment for which her professional background was directly applicable. An environmental scientist who has worked as a consultant on air and water quality, she handled water and energy issues for Senator Kent Conrad (D-N.Dak.). The topic of water in North Dakota is "vastly complicated," she says, involving border issues with Canada and Minnesota, the integration of wind energy and hydropower, and Native American land concerns. Amerson says the fellowship experience "has driven home to me the importance of people in the science community getting and staying involved [in policy]."

Incoming fellows

The incoming State Department fellows are astrophysicist Carol Christian, head of the Space Telescope Science Institute's office of public outreach, and Edward Whittaker, a professor of physics and engineering at the Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, New Jersey.

The new class of congressional fellows includes recent PhDs Adam Rosenberg, a plasma physicist from Princeton University who is sponsored by APS; Kevin Vranes (AGU), a physical oceanographer from Columbia University; and Colin McCormick (OSA and MRS), an optical physicist from the University of California, Berkeley. OSA, with SPIE, will also sponsor Elka Koehler, a designer of telescope optical systems for Raytheon Systems Co in Tucson, Arizona. AIP's congressional fellow is geophysicist Lee Hirsch, who has worked in industry and academia and recently taught physics in Tanzania as a Peace Corps volunteer. "I liked the kind of experience I had in the Peace Corps," Hirsch says, "and [the fellowship] will let me continue to use my skills but contribute to the broader picture." **Audrey T. Leath** ■

To Apply:

For information about the AIP State Department fellowship program, see http://www.aip.org/mgr/sdf.html. The application deadline is 1 November 2003 for the 2004–05 term. Information about congressional fellowships sponsored by AIP and its member societies is available on the Web at http://www.aip.org/pubinfo. Applications for the 2004–05 term are due in early 2004.

WEB WATCH

http://www.strangematterexhibit.com

The Ontario Science Center in Toronto has put on **Strange Matter**, an exhibit that explores the cutting edge of materials research. The exhibit's online equivalent includes animations, experiments to do at home, and interviews with materials scientists.

http://www.chemheritage.org

Founded in 1982, the **Chemical Heritage Foundation** preserves and publicizes the history of chemistry and chemical engineering. Among the offerings on the foundation's resource-rich Web site are oral histories, archival photographs, and its latest exhibit, Spinning the Elements: Wallace Carothers and the Nylon Legacy.

http://www.engr.uiuc.edu/wie

The mission of the **Women in Engineering** office at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is to "catalyze an environment that supports and inspires women students in the college and to assess and enhance their educational experience, their recruitment to the college, and their retention within it." The office's Web site features advice and information for prospective students and interviews with UIUC engineering alumnae.

To suggest topics or sites for Web Watch, please fill out the form at http://www.physicstoday.org/suggestwebwatch.html.

Compiled and edited by **Charles Day**