



Blaine



Mohta



Link



Gross



Trapani

national security strategy.”

Mohta, who received his PhD in mathematics from Harvard University in June, said his interest in politics and policy began with the September 11th terrorist attacks. “That was my turning point,” he said. “I’d done a lot of community service before that, but I hadn’t been political. That was a transition that started me thinking about the impact my work would have on the world.”

He worked for a few months for the presidential campaign of Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-OH), and then moved to Senator John Kerry’s (D-MA) campaign. “The more I’ve learned about the various policy issues that I was interested in, the more moderate I’ve become,” Mohta said.

Originally from Detroit, Michigan, Mohta spent this summer working as a science and technology policy fellow for the committee on international security and arms control at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, DC. He was intrigued enough

with the public policy work to continue with the APS fellowship. “I’ve found so many interesting challenges and interesting problems that I could sink my teeth into, challenges that have so much impact,” he said. “So I’m leaning toward continuing on in public policy after this, maybe working for a think tank or somewhere where I can bring together my operations research and my quantitative skills to work on public policy.”

Link on innovation

Jamie Link, a congressional fellow sponsored by OSA and the International Society of Optical Engineering, landed a job in the office of Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) working on manufacturing and innovation issues. “I was interested in innovation policy and maintaining US competitiveness,” Link said. Lieberman “has always had an interest in those issues and it was a very attractive office for me,” Link said.

Link, who has a PhD in chemistry from the University of California, San Diego, served for three years as a graduate fellow with the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology doing basic research on chemical sensors. In addition to the research, Link said she became “involved in communicating with people up the chain in pushing the sensor technology through to market. I got to interact with people from government and industry and I got more of the big picture on how science gets implemented in society.” That, she said, got her interested in “being more active in that interface” so she applied for the congressional fellowship.

Link had been in Lieberman’s office only a few days when she spoke with PHYSICS TODAY. “I’m feeling very green,” she said.

Benjamin Gross, who holds a PhD in physical chemistry from Columbia University, is a congressional fellow sponsored jointly by MRS and OSA. Gross studied US nanotechnology policy as a fellow at the National Academy of Sciences in the fall of 2004. During that fellowship he decided to pursue a career in science policy. Gross will spend the coming year working in the office of Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ) looking at a range of issues including business development in the research community.

Josh Trapani, a paleontologist with a PhD in geology from the University of Michigan, was still working Capitol Hill in late September, looking for “a good fit” in a congressional office. “I’m looking for an opportunity to get in-

involved in the right issue rather than being issue driven,” he said. His focus has been on the Senate side of the Capitol, he said, and while he is politically in the middle, most of his interviews have been with Democrats. “It’s the thing about the party in power versus the party that is a little more friendly toward science,” he said. Trapani’s interest in the AAAS fellowship program grew out of what he saw as a “huge disconnect between the scientific community and policy community. Neither side really understands the other and there have to be people who work as go-betweens.”

Jim Dawson

News Notes

Particle theory institute. A stone’s throw from the house where Galileo lived and died in Arcetri, overlooking Florence, Italy, an institute named for the scientist and devoted to theoretical physics was inaugurated in September.

In holding extended topical workshops, the Galileo Galilei Institute is modeled on the Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics in Santa Barbara, California. But the new institute has



Galileo’s house near Florence, Italy.

a loose organizational structure with no permanent staff. Its cofounding organizations, the INFN (Italy’s National Institute for Nuclear Physics) and the University of Florence, pay the bills and take care of the institute’s administration, with external advisory bodies overseeing the selection of workshop topics. Roberto Casalbuoni, a scientific coordinator for the institute, says it’s Europe’s “first institute specializing in fundamental interactions.”

A workshop next spring will focus on the start-up of the Large Hadron Collider at CERN, followed in the fall by a workshop on astroparticle physics and cosmology. Participation by established scientists and graduate students is by invitation only. **TF**

Canadian synchrotron. The light is on at the University of Saskatchewan