



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



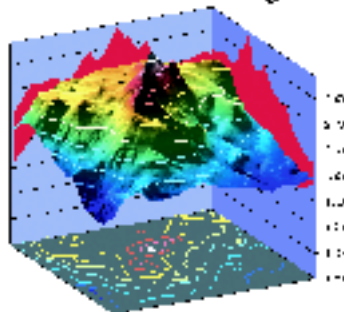
Galileo’s house near Florence, Italy.

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

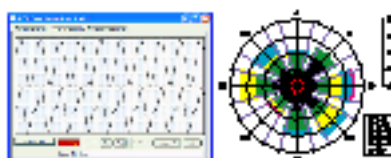
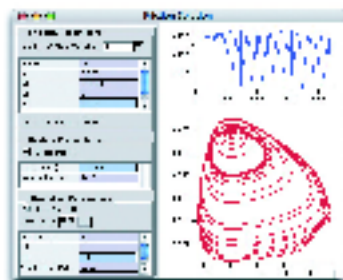
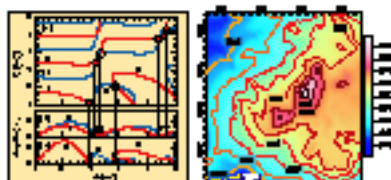
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The Canadian Light Source.

in Saskatoon, home of the Canadian Light Source, now being tested and debugged, with the first beamline expected to be fully operational by the end of the year.

Advances in the storage-ring magnets and in the undulators that determine the output wavelengths allow 3-GeV-class synchrotrons like the CLS to produce x-ray beams that are almost as bright as those created at light sources of twice the energy, but at a fraction of the size and cost. At Can\$174 million (US\$148 million), including the first seven research beamlines, the CLS was a bargain; it's also Canada's largest investment in a research facility in three decades.

Six beamlines are now being tested, and the 171-meter-circumference machine is intended to eventually have more than 30, with photon energies ranging from 1.2 meV to 40 keV. For higher energies, researchers still have to go to the bigger synchrotrons. **TF**

Girl Scout science. Thanks to a new partnership between the Optical Soci-

ety of America's nonprofit foundation and the Girl Scouts of the USA, Girl Scouts who complete an activity book focusing on optics and photonics will earn an optics charm—similar to a merit badge—to wear on a special bracelet. Gary Bjorklund, chair of the OSA Foundation, said the partnership proposal was made to the Girl Scouts because the foundation "has been looking for a broad-reaching program to make a major impact on youth science education. The Girl Scouts were a natural fit for us to address these objectives on a national scale." While the foundation is not giving a direct grant to support the program, it is paying for the books, charms, and other material involved in the project. The overall cost hasn't been determined.

Monica Shah, manager of science and technology for the Girl Scouts, said the OSA partnership proposal addressed one of her organization's key goals: helping girls become and remain enthusiastic about math and science. Shah cited studies indicating that girls tend to lose interest in science as they progress through elementary school into middle school; she said, "Engaging girls in science at an early age is absolutely critical to allowing them to reach their full potential. Without education in this area, doors close for them before they even realize what has happened." The Girl Scouts expect to begin using the new optics book, which will include activities, experiments, and career profiles, in 2006. **JLD ■**

WEB WATCH



<http://www.kineticcity.com>

From the American Association for the Advancement of Science comes **Kinetic City**, a collection of web-based educational video games for children. Players learn about evolution and other scientific principles, follow exercises, and then test their knowledge in interactive quizzes.

<http://www.nationalpostdoc.org>

Now almost three years old, the **National Postdoctoral Association** champions postdoctoral scholars in the US. The association's resource-filled website includes an international postdoc survival guide and advice on how to form a local association.



<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/HAW2/english/kids/movncane.htm>

The interactive simulator **Aim a Hurricane** demonstrates how low- and high-pressure zones influence a hurricane's path. The simulator is based on data collected and analyzed by meteorologist Mark DeMaria of the National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service in Fort Collins, Colorado.

To suggest topics or sites for Web Watch, please visit <http://www.physicstoday.org/suggestwebwatch.html>.

Compiled and edited by **Charles Day**