people in terms of promotions and merit pay increases, but "statistically significant" differences in salaries exist between women and men at five of the six labs, according to a new Government Accounting Office (GAO) study.

The study, conducted at the request of Representative Judy Biggert (R-IL) as a follow-up to a similar 2002 study limited to the DOE weapons labs, found that women were paid 2% to 4% less than their male counterparts. The lab where women's pay was equal to men's was the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland, Washington.

In addition to Pacific Northwest, the laboratories studied by the GAO were Argonne in Illinois, Brookhaven in New York, Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory, Lawrence Berkeley in California, and Oak Ridge in Tennessee. Pay for minorities was equal to that of white males at all of the labs except Lawrence Berkeley, where minorities were paid about 1.5% less. At two labs, Brookhaven and INEEL, women received between 5.3% and 7% more merit pay than white males. Minorities received 3% less merit pay than white men at Argonne and Brookhaven. While the numbers show that the statistically significant problem areas vary from lab to lab, GAO interviewers found that a common concern among women and minorities at all the labs was an underrepresentation in management positions and a lack of career development opportunities.

The 2002 GAO report on gender and race discrimination at the three national weapons laboratories—Sandia and Los Alamos in New Mexico and Lawrence Livermore in California—was triggered by allegations of racial profiling stemming from charges of espionage against LANL scientist Wen Ho Lee. The problem areas raised in that report haven't been officially resolved because of a long-standing dispute between DOE and the Department of Labor (DOL) concerning which agency has the authority to enforce equal employment opportunity regulations at the labs.

A member of Biggert's staff said the latest report is intended to keep lab managers and officials of DOE and DOL working to end all forms of workplace discrimination. Congressional hearings aren't planned, but Biggert said the study shows that "this is an area that requires additional attention by DOE and the management of these laboratories." **Jim Dawson**

News Notes

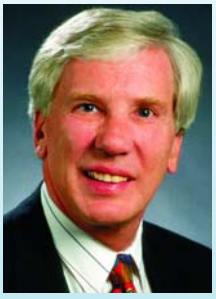
Nanos leaves Los Alamos. G. Peter Nanos, the controversial director of Los Alamos National Laboratory since January 2003, announced his resignation in mid-May. That announcement ended a tumultuous tenure in which he called the lab's nuclear scientists "cowboys and buttheads" and shut down the facility for nearly seven months as part of a security crackdown. Nanos, a retired US Navy admiral, is taking a job at the Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

Nanos's departure had been rumored for weeks on a weblog established by LANL employees (see http://www.lanl-the-real-story.blogspot.com). Many postings made to that site after the 6 May announcement applauded his resignation. Nanos was appointed as interim director after Bush administration officials pressured John Browne to step down as director following a series of security and accounting problems at the lab in 2002.


LANL

Nanos

The Univerity of California, which manages the lab, announced that Robert Kuckuck, a former National Nuclear Security Administration official and a deputy director at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, would become interim director of LANL on 16 May. **JLD**


SNL

Robinson

Robinson sets sights on LANL. In a move that may land him the directorship of Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, C. Paul Robinson has resigned as director of the nearby Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque to assist defense contractor Lockheed Martin Corp with the company's bid to take over management of LANL from the University of California. Lockheed has operated Sandia for the US Department of Energy since 1993 and Robinson has been the lab's director since 1995.

Robinson told the Sandia staff when he resigned in mid-April that the Lockheed bid will list him as the LANL director and he will hold that position if Lockheed wins. UC, which has managed Los Alamos since 1943, is expected to compete with Lockheed in the bidding. At press time, UC officials were concerned about several new DOE rules and had not committed to making a bid. The University of Texas, which earlier considered bidding for the LANL contract, was considering joining the Lockheed bid, but had also been in discussions with UC.

Thomas Hunter, Sandia's senior vice president for defense programs, will replace Robinson as Sandia's new director. Hunter has been at the lab since 1987. **JLD**

UC gets LBNL contract. The University of California will continue to operate Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory for at least another five years. The US Department of Energy awarded the $2.3 billion management contract to UC in what DOE touted as the "first competition of the management and operating contract for the laboratory since its inception."

Although the contract was open to competitive bids, a DOE spokesman confirmed that UC was the only bidder. The university has operated the laboratory for more than 60 years and Secretary of Energy Samuel Bodman said the contract award will allow LBNL researchers to "seamlessly continue their work." The contract runs from 1 June 2005 to 31 May 2010 and may be extended for up to 20 years if DOE performance standards are met.

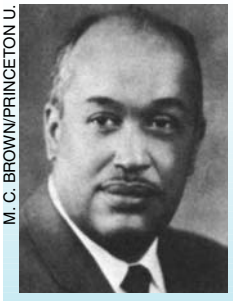
UC also operates two national DOE weapons laboratories—Lawrence Livermore in California and Los Alamos in New Mexico. **JLD**

New S&T centers. Cybersecurity and polar ice sheets are the themes of the newest NSF-funded science and technology centers. The centers will receive around $19 million each over five years.

The cybersecurity center, called the Team for Research in Ubiquitous Secure Technology, is led by the University of California, Berkeley, and has more than a dozen academic and industrial partners. By bringing together experts in computer security, systems modeling and analysis, software, economics, and social sciences, TRUST aims to develop technologies to protect infrastructures such as finance, energy distribution, telecommunications, and transportation.

The University of Kansas, with the Ohio State and Pennsylvania State universities, the University of Maine, Elizabeth City State University in North Carolina, and Haskell Indian Nations University in Kansas, is launching the Center for Remote Sensing of Ice Sheets. CReSIS plans to develop models and measurement techniques to research polar ice sheets and how they affect sea level and climate. The effort will focus on remote sensing technology, aerospace engineering, glaciology, and geophysics. **TF**

Biophysics for minority students. Thanks to its success last year, the Herman R. Branson Summer Mini Course in Biophysics will be offered annually. Sponsored by the Biophysical Society and the National Society of Black Physicists and aimed at attracting minority students, the course is available, all expenses paid, to a dozen junior and senior college majors in math, science, and engineering.



M. C. BROWN/PRINCETON U.

Branson

This year's course takes place from 12 June to 17 July at Boston University. It will emphasize present-day societal and medical relevance with topics spanning energy and thermodynamics of life; mathematical tools in biophysics; neurons; and cell makeup, membranes, and movement. Starting next year, the plan is to expand the course to 15 students and to arrange and pay for research assistantships for a semester afterward. More information is available at http://www.biophysics.org. **TF**

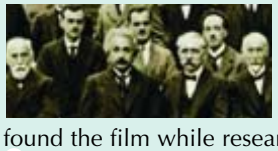
Nuclear training. Nonproliferation, nuclear waste management, space applications of nuclear power, and the politics surrounding things nuclear are a sampling of the topics on the docket for the first World Nuclear University Summer Institute, which will take place this July and August at the US Department of Energy's Idaho National Laboratory in Idaho Falls.

Some 75 young scientists from 33 nations are signed up to participate in the six-week course. Many of the participants are graduate students, one-fourth are women, and the average age is 30. As part of the course, participants will attend a lecture by WNU chancellor and former United Nations weapons inspector Hans Blix. They will also visit Yucca Mountain, DOE's controversial proposed nuclear waste storage site.

The London-based WNU is a worldwide network of institutions. It was founded in 2003 with the aim of replenishing the nuclear energy workforce, promoting nonweapons uses of nuclear power, and improving the image of the nuclear science and technology professions (see PHYSICS TODAY, December 2003, page 38). **TF** ■

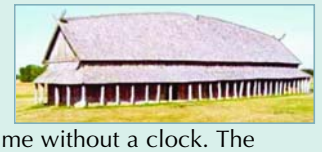
WEB WATCH

http://www.maxborn.net/index.php?page=filmnews



For two minutes during an intermission, Irving Langmuir filmed his fellow participants at the famous 1927 Solvay conference on electrons and protons. Langmuir's **1927 Solvay conference film** is now available online, thanks to Nancy Greenspan, who found the film while researching her recent biography of Max Born.

http://hea-www.harvard.edu/ECT/Daymarks



The aim of the Everyday Classroom Tools project is to encourage elementary-school children to make scientific sense of the world through their own observations and experiences. Among the tools offered is a lesson about **Scandinavian Daymarks**, an ancient, Sun-based way of telling time without a clock. The Harvard–Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics hosts the project.

http://physics.nist.gov/cuu/Reference/unitconversions.html

The weights-and-measures gurus at NIST have provided a set of **links to online unit conversions**. NIST doesn't endorse the accuracy of the converters, which it didn't produce, but does affirm their usefulness.

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

Compiled and edited by **Charles Day**