



Congressional fellows sponsored by AIP-affiliated societies this year are, from left, Marcos Huerta, Virginia Corless, Jeffrey Fox, Arti Garg, Gavi Begtrup, and Maeve Boland. Not pictured is Matthew McMahon.

flagship US climate-change bill, was introduced on her first day as a staff member for Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-ND), a member of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Boland says she intends to return to her research faculty position at the Colorado School of Mines, where she teaches a seminar on US public policy.

"Everyone's preparing for the climate bill to take center stage," says Virginia Corless, a PhD astrophysicist and one of this year's American Physical Society congressional fellows. Corless, a staffer on the Senate's energy committee, says she didn't come to Congress just to work on energy; she cites education and international science policy among her other committee responsibilities. International policy fits squarely in the portfolio of the other APS fellow, PhD astrophysicist Arti Garg; she joined the staff of the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on terrorism, nonproliferation, and trade. "I'm interested in all three words," says Garg, who worked as a postdoc at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory before the fellowship. Unlike academia, she says that Congress is often reactive, so "priorities can change quickly depending on current news."

"How the sausage gets made"

Some new fellows don't have to wait long to witness the excitement of seeing a bill on its way to becoming law. PhD physicist Gavi Begtrup, this year's OSA/Materials Research Society (MRS) congressional fellow, joined the staff of Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (D-AZ) just in time to see the Solar Technology Roadmap Act, sponsored by his new boss, pass in the

House. That legislation directs the Department of Energy to appoint a committee to create a 15-year solar technology roadmap and to provide \$2.25 billion in solar energy R&D over five years to DOE-managed, industry-led consortia. Begtrup gives credit for the bill's passing to professional staff members such as 2003 APS fellow Adam Rosenberg. Elaine Ulrich, last year's APS fellow, also worked on the bill; she says the process of crafting it was just as satisfying as seeing it passed. "When you get involved and you have a stake in the bill, you'll find yourself rooting for it when it comes up for a vote,"

says Ulrich, who now works for New West Technologies LLC, where she does policy analysis on energy issues for DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

Although most fellows leave in August, two of last year's fellows stretched their stays on the hill through November: AGU fellow Maggie Walser continued her work on water and energy policy for the Senate's energy committee, and OSA/MRS fellow Amit Mistry stayed on in the office of Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA), working on health and education policies. Outgoing AIP fellow Richard Thompson returned to the University of Arizona, where he lectures in the geosciences and teaches a course on public policy. During his fellowship, he helped write environmental legislation for Grijalva; he says it was a rewarding experience

to participate in policymaking and "interesting to watch how the sausage gets made." Thompson's advice to the new fellows is, "Throw yourself into your work, but don't forget you are living in the most exciting place in the world."

Jermey N. A. Matthews

Congressional fellowship applications are due in early 2010. For details on sponsorship through AIP or its member societies, visit <http://aip.org/gov/fellowships.html>.

news notes

New role for test site.

It appears the Nevada Test Site will finally receive a new mission,

17 years after the last US nuclear test occurred there. The Senate's version of a 2010 appropriations bill for the Department of Defense includes an amendment offered by the state's two senators instructing the Department of Energy to rename the NTS and to officially assign it the new role as the center for verifying nuclear arms reduction treaties.

In the post-cold war years, the 3561-km² NTS has been limited to performing tests that produce no nuclear yield. The NTS has also trained personnel on criticality safety and in safeguarding nuclear materials. The site is supposed to maintain the capability to resume nuclear tests within 18 months. But in an interview with the *Las Vegas Sun* earlier this year, Stephen Younger, president of National Security Technologies, the site contractor, said less than 1% of the NTS budget now goes to maintaining that readiness. **DK ■**

web watch

To suggest topics or sites for Web Watch, please visit <http://www.physicstoday.org/suggestwebwatch.html>. Compiled and edited by Charles Day

<http://inisdb.iaea.org>

The International Nuclear Information System

is the online archive of the International Atomic Energy Agency. A recent addition to the archive, which is accessible to the public, is a collection of 180 000 documents from the US Department of Energy's Office of Scientific and Technical Information.



<http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/2003/4/03.04.07.x.html>

From the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute comes **The Physics of Cell Phones**, a curriculum unit, with lesson plans, for teachers in grades 5 through 8. The unit's introductory material provides a primer on cell phones that even PhD-holding physicists will find informative.



<http://elementsofhumanity.com>

In **Elements of Humanity**, 12 scientists and engineers speak informally in front of a video camera about their research and about what inspired them to choose their careers. The photo shows one of the interviewees, Drexel University's Andrew Hicks, reflected in a nonreversing mirror that he designed. *Make* magazine created the website.