BRIAN M. MOSLEY, AMERICAN PHYSICAL SOCIETY

Scientists who have successfully campaigned for elected office served on a panel at a recent workshop. From left are Louis Lanzerotti, David Westerling, APS director of public affairs and panel moderator Michael Lubell, Jesse Jones, and Nancy Cline.

practical information to practicing scientists and engineers who might be interested in running for local office. That, plus [give them] the feeling there is a community of people who will support them as they go ahead."

"My presentation was about the steps to put a campaign together," says Dean Levitan of the consulting firm MSHC Partners. "The mechanics of a campaign include raising money and communications—advertising, websites, blogging, town hall meetings, door to door. It's 98% elbow grease, 2% creativity." Other presenters included Kevan Chapman, communications director for physicist and Representative Vernon Ehlers (R-MI), and Joe Trippi, who ran Howard Dean's and John Edwards's presidential campaigns.

"Scientists and engineers have a lot to contribute, with their logical thinking, seeking of facts, analysis, and ability to make decisions once the facts are known," says AIP governing board chair Louis Lanzerotti, who since 1994 has been a member of the township committee where he lives in New Jersey and is currently the mayor. On a panel at the workshop, he says, "I cited cases where bringing fact-finding to an issue was important. For example, here in my township we are looking at issues related to the possible installation of athletic fields. There is a lot of controversy over artificial turf—lead content, runoff, is it healthy for young children to rub it. . . . There are all kinds of questions that involve looking at data."

Another panelist was Baylor University chemist Jesse Jones, who served seven terms in the Texas House of Representatives until he was defeated two years ago. "It's important to have a prior interest in politics, or to have some burning issues that would kind of propel you into it," he says. "You can't apply the scientific method [to legislation], but there is an attitude that is common among scientists, and it does give us an edge."

"I don't know if I'll run for any office. But [the workshop] did make me want to be more politically active," says Griselda Zuccarino-Catania, a graduate student in immunology at Yale University and president of her student chapter of Scientists and Engineers for America, one of the organizations that sponsored the workshop. **Toni Feder**

news notes

Nuclear forensics. Responding to recommendations issued earlier this year by a joint working group of the American Physical Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, a Senate committee in April authorized $25 million to establish a nuclear forensics program in the US Department of Energy. The Committee on Armed Services included another $5 million for fellowships to train scientists how to trace the origins of captured nuclear materials and to analyze radioactive debris after a nuclear attack. The provisions were included in the annual bill that authorizes the Department of Defense and DOE nuclear weapons programs. On the House side, the defense bill approved by an Armed Services subcommittee included just $5 million for nuclear forensics. But when the full House takes up the bill, newly elected Representative Bill Foster (D-IL), a former Fermilab physicist, is expected to offer an amendment to raise the amount to the Senate level. Appropriators generally adhere closely to funding levels specified in defense authorization bills.

In its report, the APS–AAAS working group said that the ability to trace weapons materials to the originating reactor or enrichment facility could well deter both states and weapons scientists from supplying the materials to terrorists. At least three to four people with PhDs in relevant disciplines are needed each year over the next decade to replace experts who are nearing retirement, the report said. In addition, specialized, automated, field-deployable equipment for measuring radiation near the sites of a nuclear incident must be developed and manufactured. **DK**

Yucca Mountain license. The US Department of Energy expects to submit an application this month for a license to construct and operate the long-stalled Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository, but the schedule for completion of the facility will slip again, according to the pro-

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://nanomediafinder.net

Nano Media Finder aims to collect educational material on the topic of nanoscale science and engineering. Produced by the Museum of Science, Boston, the online collection offers animations, podcasts, lecture videos, and other nonprint media. The curators of Nano Media Finder welcome contributions from the physics community.

http://computingnow.computer.org

Computing Now is the newly launched website of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Computer Society. Much of the site's content comes from the 14 magazines published by IEEECS, including *Security and Privacy*, *Computer Graphics and Applications*, and *Computing in Science and Engineering*.

http://www.quantum-physics.polytechnique.fr
http://www.quantum-physics.polytechnique.fr/physics

Manuel Joffre of the École Polytechnique and his collaborators Jean-Louis Basdevant, Jean Dalibard, and Jean-Paul Foing have created two sets of online tutorials, **Quantum Physics Online** and **Classical Physics Online**. Both feature java applets and are available in English and French.

gram's top official. Edward Sproat, director of DOE's Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management, told congressional appropriators in April that funding shortfalls will prevent the department from meeting its March 2017 target for opening the Nevada repository. But Sproat assured lawmakers that DOE will proceed with the licensing process before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, a process that is expected to take three to four years to complete.

Sproat has not yet provided a revised timetable of when Yucca Mountain can begin to accept high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel now held at 121 sites around the nation. But he said that each year the project is delayed beyond 2017 is expected to increase the total cost by $500 million. About $9 billion has been spent already for geological and environmental studies at the site, but the project remains mired in political opposition. Congress selected the Yucca Mountain site for the repository in 1987 and established the Nuclear Waste Fund to finance it. The fund, which currently holds about $21 billion, comes from an assessment on the electricity generated by nuclear plants. **DK**

Austria to join ESO. After 30 years of prodding from its astronomy community, Austria made a formal bid in April for membership in the European Southern Observatory. "Last autumn felt like the final phase of frustration," says University of Vienna astronomer Franz Kerschbaum, who has been campaigning for ESO membership since he was a student in the 1980s. But each new science minister brought new priorities and kept presenting the astronomers with "new homework," Kerschbaum adds. "So we were really surprised with the move by the ministry this spring." ESO council members are expected to confirm Austria this month as ESO's 14th member state beginning 1 July.

Austria's share of ESO's roughly €160 million ($249 million) annual budget will be about €3 million per year. Membership in ESO will gain Austrian scientists access to the 8.2-m Very Large Telescope in Chile and participation in the design of the 42-m Extremely Large Telescope. The country's high-tech sector will also benefit from the opportunity to develop the advanced optics, detectors, and lightweight materials needed for astronomical instrumentation. **JNAM**

History-making gift to AIP. A Colorado-based private foundation is giving the American Institute of Physics $3 million to endow the directorship of AIP's Center for History of Physics. It is the largest gift ever given to AIP (which publishes PHYSICS TODAY).

The gift comes from the Avenir Foundation, which supports education and the arts, and honors Spencer Weart, for whom the directorship will be named. During his 35 years at the helm of the history center, Weart oversaw the transition from card files to computer databases, the creation of a popular online exhibit hall, and the growth of the center's endowment to $13 million. He also wrote five books. Weart was further recognized on 9 May with a symposium, sponsored by AIP and the University of Maryland's department of history, at which many luminaries were present (see photos at http://www.aip.org/history/symposium.html). Weart announced last year that he will retire once a successor is found.

Says AIP executive director and CEO H. Frederick Dylla, "The Center for History of Physics is a unique resource for scholars and institutions worldwide. . . . This endowment will ensure the center's stature and growth into the foreseeable future." **TF** ■