we hear that

Charles E. Till has been promoted to director of the applied physics division of Argonne National Laboratory.

A new department of planetary sciences has been established at the University of Arizona, headed by **Charles P. Sonett**, formerly the deputy director of astronautics at the NASA Ames Research Center in Moffett Field, California.

E. Ward Plummer, previously with the National Bureau of Standards in Washington, D.C., has been appointed associate professor of physics at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

Albert Gottlieb has been promoted to assistant professor in the physics department at Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts.

The first dean of Livingston College at Rutgers University, **Ernest A. Lynton** has been named senior vice-president for academic affairs at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Lynton will also serve as Commonwealth Professor and professor of physics.

Alvin R. Eaton is now assistant director for tactical systems at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory. Eaton continues as head of the Laboratory's fleet systems department.

At the University of Connecticut **Joseph I. Budnick**, previously with Fordham University and the National Science Foundation, has become professor of physics and head of the department of physics.

As vice-president of STV, Inc. a New York-based firm of consulting engineers, **Joseph R. Feldmeier** will head a new energy-systems division. Feldmeier was director of The Franklin Institute Research Laboratories from 1964 to 1972.

David C. L. Price, group leader of the neutron-scattering program of the solid-state science division at Argonne National Laboratory, has been named director of the division. **Oliver C. Simpson**, the former director, has returned to full-time research.

obituaries

Gerard P. Kuiper

Gerard P. Kuiper, internationally known astronomer and champion of lunar and planetary science, died in Mexico City of a heart attack on 24 December.

Born in Harencarspel, The Netherlands, on 7 December 1905, Kuiper chose a career in astronomy and graduated from Leiden University in 1927. He received his PhD in 1933 after a studentship under Ejnar Hertzsprung and came to the US in the same year. Following two years at Lick Observatory and one year at Harvard University, he moved to the University of Chicago, where he was a professor and, during 1947–49 and 1957–60, the joint director of the Yerkes Observatory and the McDonald Observatory in Texas. In 1960 he founded the Lunar and Planetary Laboratory at the University of Arizona, and in 1973 he set up a department of planetary sciences there. In July of last year he relinquished his directorship of both the laboratory and the department in order to devote more time to teaching and research.

Kuiper's earlier research dealt almost entirely with stellar astronomy; he did pioneer work on nearby binary stars, white-dwarf clusters and the interpretation of spectra of spectroscopic binaries. However, as recounted by Bart J. Bok, a fellow student from the Leiden days and currently president of the American Astronomical Society, he

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intended to "study the problems of the solar system." The study of the dynamics and properties of binary stars provided a useful basis on which to pursue this ambition.

Kuiper's study of the solar system

began towards the end of World War II and was immediately punctuated by the important discovery of a methane atmosphere on Saturn's satellite Titan. Shortly after this, he pioneered the use of the then newly available Cashman PbS infrared cells for astronomical research, thereby discovering CO_2 in the atmosphere of Mars. In the late 1940's he discovered a new satellite of the planet Uranus, naming it Miranda. This led to a search for other unknown satellites, culminating in the discovery of Neptune II, which he named Nereid. Using a disk meter on the 200-inch telescope on a night of unusually excellent seeing in 1950, he was the first to measure the diameter of Pluto, an accomplishment that has not been repeated.

Kuiper's inquiring mind probed all aspects of solar-system astronomy, from the evolution of planetary atmospheres to problems of lunar nomenclature, from the origin of the asteroids to the optimum locations for large planetary telescopes. The major installations at Haleakala and Mauna Kea in Hawaii, and the Kitt Peak Southern Station at Cerro Tololo, Chile, all stem from Kuiper's pioneering tests of astronomical seeing at these locations. He received widespread notoriety in 1964, when, as chief experimenter for NASA's Ranger moon-probe project, he gave details of the eminent success of Ranger 7 over nationwide TV. From a study of a single Ranger 9 photograph, he deduced a bearing strength of the lunar surface of about 1 or 2 kg/cm², a value which was exactly confirmed by the later Surveyor and Apollo landings. He was also closely associated with NASA's Surveyor, Lunar Orbiter, Mariner 10, Pioneer 10 and 11, and CV 990 high-altitude programs.

Kuiper, who wrote numerous papers and articles, was also editor of many volumes on astronomical subjects. He served on a large number of committees and panels, and received many awards, including the Janssen Medal of the French Astronomical Society and the Rittenhouse Medal for his theory of the solar system.

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Merle Thomas Burgy

Merle Thomas Burgy died on 4 November 1973. Burgy was an experimentalist working primarily in neutron physics. Because of poor health, he had not been active in physics for the past several years.

Born in Folson, West Virginia, on 5