

been replaced. Kelly and Gawell are no longer at SERI. The Midwest Research Institute, which manages SERI, has proposed to lay off approximately 300 to 400 of the 950 people at SERI. The layoffs will preferentially remove researchers involved with conservation, technology application, evaluation of policy and regulation, market analysis and development. According to Kelly, implicit in these changes is a Federal policy shift—a shift away from conservation and alternative energy, towards an energy policy that promotes conventional energy supplies.

Meanwhile, Ottinger's Subcommittee, led by Michael J. Ward, chief counsel, is conducting a follow-up investigation. As a result of the hearings, the SERI report has become available as a committee print, and from a commercial publisher, Brick House Publishing Company, Inc., of Andover, Mass.

Study findings. The SERI report concludes that "it is possible to construct a plausible, practical and economically attractive sequence of events that would allow the productivity of the average American worker to increase as fast as it has during the past 20

years, the achievement of a full-employment economy—and consequently a rapid increase in national income—while reducing a national consumption of energy by nearly 25%. Some 20–30% of this reduced demand can be supplied by renewable resources."

An underlying assumption of this study is that we can influence our future energy use. The end-use energy demand potentials generated for the year 2000 and the potential contributions from renewables are not projections but goals that are attainable,

continued on page 56

New policies for Phys Rev Letters

From the beginning of this year the four *Physical Review* journals have been carrying "Rapid Communications," short papers reporting "important new results of experimental or theoretical research." These are similar to the papers that appear in *Physical Review Letters*, in that they are short and timely. However, they are not rigorously subjected to the criteria of urgency and novelty that were applied to submissions to *Physical Review Letters* and they are directed to the more specialized audiences of the *Physical Review* journals. *Physical Review Letters* will, in turn, become early in 1982 a letters journal of more general interest.

According to the *Physical Review* editors, the Rapid Communications sections have been well received by readers and have enlivened the journals. Some of the editors have wished to institute such sections for years. Total direct submissions to Rapid Communications have been rising, from 17 in January to 43 in June. Around 80 were published during that period.

Rapid Communications receive priority treatment and are sometimes published within a month of receipt. Although the various *Physical Review* journals handle them in slightly different ways, each compresses the editorial time. Manuscripts pass through the customary steps involved in publication, but more rapidly than other papers. Referees, often sought by telephone, feeling a higher sense of obligation, respond quickly. If only small changes are recommended, these are telephoned to the editor. Likewise, when corrections to galley proofs are not numerous, authors report them by telephone. Another feature that makes publication in the sections desirable is that Rapid Communications titles and authors are listed in *Physical*



Review Letters.

The impetus to add Rapid Communications to the journals came from a need the editors of *Physical Review Letters* saw to "take the pressure off" that journal and to make room for papers of more general interest. The status that *Physical Review Letters* has had as the "world's best-read physics journal," according to Robert K. Adair, its editor, created its difficulties. Because papers are subjected to criteria of timeliness and novelty (56% in 1980 were rejected), appearance in *Letters* carries considerable prestige that attracts submissions to the journal of papers that are too specialized to be understood by most of its readers. At the same time, because *Letters* will remain well-read only if it remains relatively short, many submissions have to be rejected.

High-energy theoretical physicists in the US, upset that referees are rejecting so many of their papers, have been submitting many of them elsewhere. According to D. L. Nordstrom, editor of *Physical Review D*, while US theoretical high-energy physicists still send papers of unquestionable importance to *Letters*, less spectacular articles are

being submitted to other journals.

Finally, with disputes about acceptance, the publication of many papers becomes significantly delayed, to the point that publication in a nonletters journal could have been quicker.

To correct these problems, Adair proposed dividing the journal into five parts to be mailed under separate cover, four corresponding to the *Physical Review* journals, a fifth of general interest. The present plan, proposed by the *Physical Review* editors to a committee reporting to the APS Publications Committee in Spring 1980, was recommended by that committee and subsequently approved by the APS Executive Committee.

While Rapid Communications has enjoyed unqualified approval according to the editors, exactly what will happen to *Physical Review Letters* is controversial. It is to be a general-interest letters journal that will contain papers about research so basic as to be important to many physicists, papers whose subject matter crosses disciplines, papers on subjects for which there is no natural place in the *Physical Review*, and "a representative set of papers" for those outside a specialized field to gain a good idea about what is going on. The present practice of always using two referees in *Letters* is to be relaxed, to make the acceptance procedures the same as those for the other *Physical Review* journals. It is hoped that the acceptance rate will be raised to equal the 75%–80% rate at the rest of the *Physical Review*. "Our long-term goal is to have the same quality of physics in all the journals that carry the title of *Physical Review*, whether they carry short papers or long ones," David Lazarus, editor-in-chief of APS journals said.

While some of the editors see difficulties in effecting these changes, as Adair pointed out, the new procedures are not engraved in stone, and adjustments might be made when a trial period has elapsed.

—DG

the physics community