ity as the cornerstone of the office. "Without it," he says, "there wouldn't be any purpose for the [restructured] OAR."

In practice, the budget authority means the OAR will be able to tilt an institute's balance of clinical and basic research, or readjust the amount of money given to behavioral research institutes versus institutes that focus on treatments or vaccines, or reapportion money to make clinical samples from epidemiological studies more accessible.

But some researchers who fought the OAR legislation as it went through Congress, including Varmus, continue to worry that the budget authority might add another layer of bureaucracy and slow the transfer of funds to intramural and extramural investigators. "I'm still a little uncomfortable about the way money is moved," Varmus says. "It's going to create some problems, and I know some of the appropriators [in Congress] are not happy about it."

Because of this, reformers are concerned there may be attempts to circumvent OAR's authority. On 11 February, Ammann, Gonsalves, Harrington, and six others wrote Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala and urged her to "exert continued vigilance" on this point. "[S]ome of us received reports that both NIH staff and congressional appropriations staff opposed to changes in the status quo lobbied [the Office of Management and Budget], and may continue to maneuver during the FY 1995 budget process, to disburse AIDS monies directly to the institutes, as was done in the past," they wrote. If this and other parts of the new law are not enforced, they warned, "the Administration's only major AIDS research initiative will be in tatters."

Though the budget authority is still a touchy issue, there is one aspect to the new law that even has people who objected to the law change downright enthusiastic about the revamped OAR: the coordinating committees. These five committees—etiology and pathogenesis, epidemiology and natural history, therapeutics, vaccines, and behavioral research—will set the NIH's AIDS research agenda and oversee the whole program. "There's a considerable virtue to the coordinating committees," says Varmus, who hopes Paul attracts top-notch scientists to sit on them. "They could be great."

Paul stresses that OAR plans to move carefully. And it may, he says, even find that everything "is being exceedingly well done." If that's the case, says Paul, "I'm not here to make changes just to make changes." Then again, Paul also hopes to slow the epidemic, which makes settling for the status quo an unlikely outcome.

**–Jon Cohen**

GRAVITY ASTRONOMY

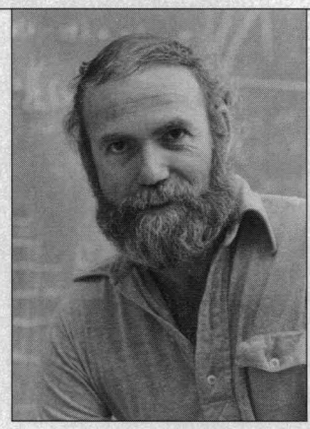
# LIGO Director Out in Shakeup

Caltech physicist Rochus (Robbie) Vogt has spent much of his career thinking about gravity waves, the ripples from such cataclysmic phenomena as the merging of black holes that are predicted by Einstein's theory of relativity. And for 7 years he lobbied first his colleagues, then the National Science Foundation (NSF) and Congress, to do something no one had done before: build a facility sensitive enough to measure these tiny perturbations in matter. This month, in Hanford, Washington, Vogt's dream will take a big step closer to reality when bulldozers break ground on the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO), a $250 million experiment.

But the ceremony will be bittersweet for Vogt, for it will mark an unwilling passing of the scientific torch. Last month Caltech, which runs LIGO jointly with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, named physicist Barry Barish to be the project's principal investigator, replacing Vogt. The move leaves Vogt with an as-yet undefined job under Barish, or even no role at all.

Why is Vogt no longer in charge? Scientists who know him say Vogt's brilliance and tenacity were exactly what was needed to create LIGO. But now that construction is about to begin, they say, his uncompromising and prickly nature (*Science*, 30 April 1993, p. 612) have become obstacles to the project's evolution into a user facility for the astrophysics community. "You need a situation where people feel welcome," says NSF's David Berley, who oversees the project.

Vogt's removal was the result of increasing concern at NSF about how the project was being managed. In December, NSF froze spending on a construction-related contract until Vogt came up with an acceptable management plan, including how to accommodate outside scientists. In January the congressional appropriations committees that approve NSF's budget, citing those concerns about management, told NSF to cut $8 million from this year's planned $43 million budget. The crisis apparently came to a head during a 17 January meeting at NSF, when NSF told Vogt that LIGO needed a "coherent plan" to develop a user community. Vogt was "less inclined to do" that than NSF wished, says Berley.



CALTECH

**New man.** Caltech's Barish takes charge at LIGO.

Vogt disputes that account, saying he had a plan "that was appropriate for the state of development of the project" but that "other people obviously felt they wanted something different. They tried to tell me, [but] I was not interested in perverting the project." In particular, he says he wanted to avoid the fate of the Superconducting Super Collider (SSC) and several ill-fated space projects that, he says, "were managed to death."

Once NSF decided that it wanted a change at the top, Caltech turned to Barish, a high-energy physicist at Caltech who has headed several large detector teams, including one planned for the SSC. The cancellation of the SSC last October made Barish available.

Barish says he's comfortable stepping into the project at this stage, although his experience is not in gravitational physics. Indeed, he will continue some of his other physics collaborations—including serving as U.S. spokesman for a magnetic-monopole detector being built under the Italian Apennine mountains at Gran Sasso (*Science*, 3 September 1993, p. 1276)—but promises to put in as much time as LIGO requires. Vogt has been offered the chance to remain as project director under Barish, says Hall Daily, Caltech's director of government relations. Vogt says he would have no qualms working for Barish, whom he called a "first-rate physicist," but that it remains to be seen if there is still a "meaningful" role for him to play in the project.

In the meantime, LIGO is moving ahead. The facility at Hanford will be the first of the two massive detectors, consisting of two 2.5 mile-long tubes at right angles. Land must still be acquired in Louisiana for the second one. (Twin detectors are needed to rule out false signals.) And Barish says he hopes Vogt will remain affiliated with LIGO.

"[Vogt] has brought this thing from a few crazy romantic scientists who had absolutely no concept of what a $2 million, let alone a $250 million, project might look like, into a state that they not only convinced NSF and [Congress] to fund it, but have created a solid set of engineering and scientific people working on the problems," he says. "Now it has to make a transition to something that is big and robust and has the controls in place....That's just not [Vogt's] strength. What I would hope for is a way to use the great talents that he has to do the things he does really well."

**–Christopher Anderson**