Figures appearing in the EDITOR'S CHOICE are those arising from materials research which strike the editor's fancy as being aesthetically appealing and eye-catching. No further criteria are applied and none should be assumed. When taken out of context, such figures often evoke images beyond and unrelated to the original meaning. Submissions of candidate figures are welcome and should include a complete source citation, a photocopy of the report in which it appears (or will appear), and a reproduction-quality original drawing or photograph of the figure in question.

How often do our fellow scientists boast both of having damaged a specimen and obtained a nebulous result? Well, this month's Editor's Choice comes from just such an unexpected source. To study the structural evolution in a sol to gel transition, J.K. Bailey and M.L. Mecartney of the University of Minnesota used fast freezing and a transmission electron microscope cold-stage to capture the structure at intermediate stages of the process. Their work is reported in *Better Ceramics Through Chemistry III*, edited by C.J. Brinker, D.E. Clark, and D.R. Ulrich (Mater. Res. Soc. Symp. Proc. **121** [1988] p. 367-372). In the vitrified state of the frozen samples, exposure to too great a dose of electrons in the microscope results in radiation damage, which causes void formation (light regions) and solvent crystallization (dark inclusions). If the scale of this photo were kiloparsecs, these submicron-sized features of inner space could well be mistaken for great galactic clouds of which proper nebula are made.

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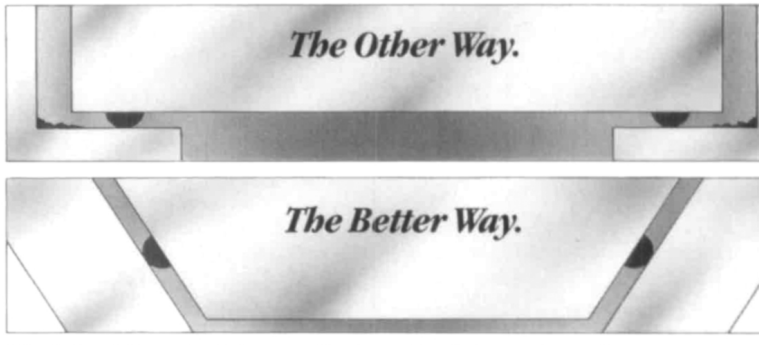

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