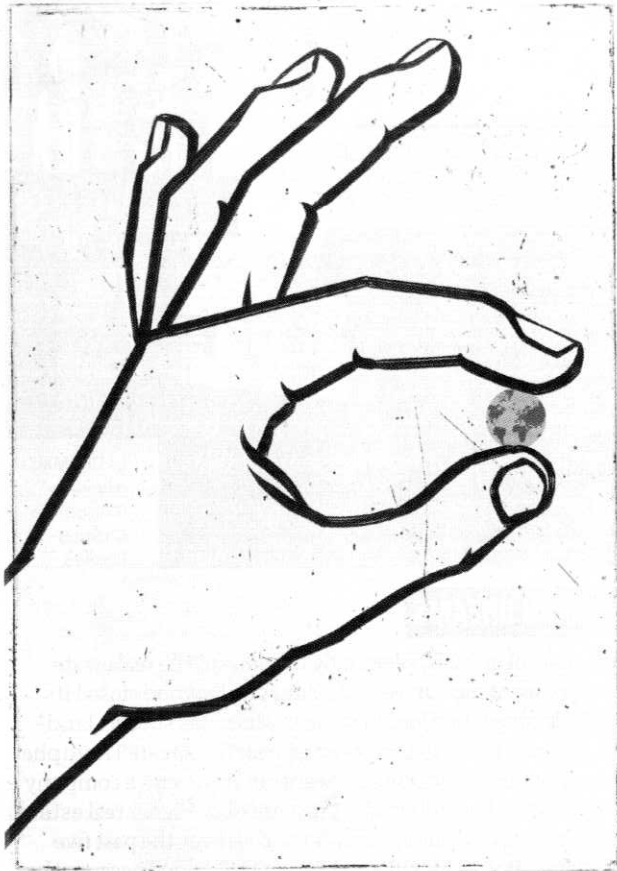


EDITED BY DEBORAH STEAD



## THOU SHALT NOT SHRINK

In a recent poll, only 30% of 1,015 Americans said they morally approved of nanotechnology—the engineering of matter at the molecular level to create everything from slice-resistant golf balls to cancer drugs. That’s much lower than the results of similar surveys in key nanotech markets like Britain (54%), Germany (63%), and France (72%), notes Dietram Scheufele, a University of Wisconsin life sciences professor who ran the U.S. poll. He believes the approval gap is due to religion’s “important role” in America. On both sides of the ocean, he says, many who identified themselves as religious objected to the idea of altering molecules. Nanotech has also stirred resistance among environmentalists, who fear long-term effects of engineered particles in the atmosphere. Scheufele says researchers must do more to distinguish nanotech from other realms of the minute, such as genetic engineering. —*Stephen Baker*

## AS HOUSING GOES SOUTH, SO DO FEWER DOLLARS

The U.S. housing meltdown is being felt in Mexico—and maybe Central America. Remittances—money sent home by relatives in the U.S.—are slowing as housing-related jobs vanish.

In 2006 about 2.2 million foreign-born Hispanics worked in construction, the Pew Hispanic Center estimates. And by 2007, remittances to Mexico by Latino immigrants hit \$25 billion, up 25% from 2005, with most of the money coming from the U.S. “But now the growth rate in remittances to Mexico is zero,” says Federico Mandelman, an economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. “And some are forecasting it will turn negative.”

The money being sent home to Central America is holding up better, Mandelman says, but a drop would pack an economic wallop. While remittances make up 3% to 4% of Mexico’s gross domestic product, he says, in Honduras, for instance, they account for 26%. —*Christopher Farrell*



Northern exposure: Money from the U.S. has slowed

## DISPOSING OF THOSE TOXIC TUBES

As more Americans upgrade to flat-panel TVs, they’re dumping old sets—models containing up to eight pounds of lead, mostly in the picture tube. That worries environmentalists, who say lead from trashed TV sets can leak into groundwater.

TV disposals may hit a peak this year, says Barbara Kyle, national coordinator of the Electron-

ics TakeBack Coalition, as we approach Feb. 17, 2009, when broadcasts go digital. The switch doesn’t require a new set—converter boxes are available. But Americans are expected to buy some 32 million new TVs. Kyle hopes Sharp, Panasonic, and other top brands will follow Sony’s lead and set up a way to recycle their old models. —*Adam Aston*