

Next Issue coming out
on the 28th

In This Issue:
The Ethics of Loyalty

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by Marien Helz

in [Editorials](#)

[Awards](#) [Announcements](#)
The Many Faces of Eve

The faces of arthropods are something we very seldom see. Usually, they fly by or jump away, or are turned to mush under our shoe before we can inspect them properly. In addition, some are so small it is hard to see the detail, assuming that we are even disposed to do so. For those so inclined, though, the microscope is a great equalizer. It can expand the tiniest face up to the size of your own and open up a whole new world as well as scare the bejeebers out of you.

by Charles Miess

in [Columns](#)

Word Worth's Site of the Month
[Silent Ladies and Gents](#)

Poetry Reading by Alastair Reid

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in [Arts](#)

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<p>June 2004 v IV n6 Editorials: <i>Prisoners</i>—Marien Helz Columns: <i>The Gift</i>—Charles Miess Arts: <i>Photography</i>—by Armin W Helz</p>	<p>May 2004 v IV n5 Editorials: <i>Selling Our Souls</i>—Marien Helz Columns: <i>The Loveliness Within</i>—Charles Miess Arts: <i>Photography</i>—Michelle M Mayer</p>	<p>April 2004 v IV n4 Editorials: <i>William Shakespeare</i>—M H Perry Columns: <i>Casting Stones</i>—Charles Miess Arts: <i>Sonnets and Songs</i>—William Shakespeare</p>
<p>March 2004 v IV n3 Editorials: <i>Notorious Trials</i>—Marien Helz Columns: <i>The Robbery</i>—Charles Miess Arts: <i>Test Day</i>—by Gary Earl Ross</p>	<p>February 2004 v IV n2 Editorials: <i>Guns and Other Toys</i>—Marien Helz Columns: <i>The Encounter</i>—Charles Miess Arts: <i>Photography</i>—by Armin W Helz</p>	<p>January 2004 v IV n1 Editorials: <i>Crime and Punishment</i>—Marien Helz Columns: <i>The Lady's New Clothes</i>—Charles Miess Arts: <i>Photography</i>—Michelle M Mayer</p>
<p>Word Worth Volume III</p>		
<p>December 2003 V III N12 Editorials: <i>Re-Discovering Melville</i>—M H Perry Columns: <i>God Wasn't Listening...</i>—Charles Miess Arts: <i>Bartleby the Scrivener</i>—Herman Melville</p>	<p>November 2003 V III N11 Editorials: <i>The Maladaptation...</i>—M H Perry Columns: <i>The Other McCarthy Era</i>—Aurelia Carter Arts: <i>The Way She Looks at Me</i>—Cam Adams</p>	<p>October 2003 V III N10 Editorials: <i>Autumn Ritual</i>—Charles Miess Columns: <i>The Other McCarthy Era</i>—Aurelia Carter Arts: <i>Castles & Cathedrals</i>—Ron Colgrove</p>
<p>September 2003 V III N9 Editorials: <i>Either Pass or Pull Over</i>—Marien Helz Columns: <i>The Other McCarthy Era</i>—Aurelia Carter Arts: <i>A Rose for Allyson</i>—by Charles Miess</p>	<p>August 2003 V III N8 Editorials: <i>The Etiquetely Challenged</i>—Marien Helz Columns: <i>A Journey into Darkness</i>—Charles Miess Arts: <i>Photography</i>—by Renee Oubre</p>	<p>July 2003 V III N7 Editorials: <i>Changing of the Guard</i>—M H Perry Columns: <i>Billsburg</i>—Charles Miess Arts: <i>Pen & Ink/WaterColor</i>—Ron Colgrove</p>
<p>June 2003 V III N6 Editorials: <i>Agape</i>—Marien Helz Columns: <i>Re-Wrighting a Disaster</i>—Susan Johnson Arts: <i>Architecture</i>—Frank Lloyd Wright</p>	<p>May 2003 V III N5 Editorials: <i>The Changing Face of...</i>—Marien Helz Columns: <i>Meditations on Tagore</i>—K Srinivasan Arts: <i>Poetry</i>—Rabindranath Tagore</p>	<p>April 2003 V III N4 Editorials: <i>Academic Integrity</i>—Marien Helz Columns: <i>Luxury of Slowness</i>—Susan Johnson Arts: <i>Photography</i>—Renee Oubre</p>
<p>March 2003 V III N3 Editorials: <i>The Assassination of...</i>—Marien Helz Columns: <i>Edible Art</i>—Susan Johnson Arts: <i>Cake Art</i>—by Carolyn Scott Panzica</p>	<p>February 2003 V III N2 Editorials: <i>The Saddest Words</i>—M H Perry Columns: <i>Same River, Separate...</i>—Susan Johnson Arts: <i>Photography</i>—by Renee Oubre</p>	<p>January 2003 V III N1 Editorials: <i>You Do What You ...</i>—Marien Helz Columns: <i>A Good Place to Work</i>—Susan Johnson Arts: <i>Photography</i>—Armin W. Helz</p>

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The Ethics of Loyalty

by Marien Helz

The quality of loyalty is likely what allows countries to endure and perhaps is one of the elements which enabled humankind to come into being. Only a country which generates allegiance in its people can survive outward hostility and inward strife. Steadfastness to one's kith and kin is essential for the survival of a species with a lengthy infant dependency and with a reliance upon transmitting culture and learning. The problem with loyalty, however, is that it requires a hierarchy, and many people get it skewed. Loyalty to one's God, or one's ultimate center of value—whatever one cares to call it, must take precedence over any other dedication. One's God, however, is not one's religion, and this is often confused. A religion is merely a roadmap to one's god, and there are more false prophets than true putting out roadmaps.

It is the misapplication of loyalty that has created egregious wrongs in this very new century. The Taliban's commitment to religion rather than to values that their religion was supposed to espouse caused them to create unconscionable desecrations. Devotion to their religion rather than to those whom the religion was engendered to serve is what caused Catholic bishops to enable priests who were committing depraved crimes. Some of their followers still blame the scandal on the victims for not continuing to suffer in silence.

One most often sees the misuse of loyalty in politics. Political parties exist to serve the country. Putting party loyalty ahead of the good of the country seems so obviously foolish that it is surprising that it ever happens; yet it is happening with increasing and alarming frequency.

During the Clinton administration we saw politicians create a position designed to go after the president. Kenneth Starr, a 1990's version of Joe McCarthy, was given an obscene amount of power, and he used it obscenely. People were put in jail for an indeterminate period with release promised if they agreed to say what he wanted them to say. Starr turned his inquiry into what Clinton appropriately called a pornographic investigation.

Former President Clinton fully acknowledges that what he did was wrong; he has expressed deep regret for it. While those who claim that the private life of someone in the presidency is no one else's business fail to acknowledge the impact of private life on public performance, explicit details are irrelevant and out of place. If a Kenneth Starr were allowed to grill people on the details of their legitimate conjugal activity, it would degrade them as well. Everyone will have some personal shortcomings. While Clinton's were regrettable, they were less significant than those of many recent presidents—especially since he carried on the business of the presidency well, placing the country in a position of economic security. Starr certainly did more damage to the image of the presidency and the international respect for our nation than has any other man in history, and he did this damage through loyalty to members of a party that wanted to "get" a president from the other party. When he could not find anything criminal, Starr went after behavior that was inappropriate and embarrassing and used it in an attempt to maneuver the president into saying something that could be construed as criminal.

One of the greatest victims of the impeachment fiasco and misplaced loyalties is Republican Jack Quinn. In a talk given to a club in his constituency, Congressman Quinn said that colleagues in his party were upset with him for talking to Democrats. “I talk to Democrats all the time,” he said; “my wife is a Democrat.”

Jack Quinn is a representative who always had his loyalty hierarchy straight. He worked constantly for his constituency. He remembers the names of people in his district whom he has met only once. He places the importance of the people and the country above the power-seekers in his party. In addition, he is affable and dedicated. He was reported to have been invited to the White House to watch football games with President Clinton.

When the impeachment vote came up, he had said that he would vote against impeachment. As the vote came close, he changed his mind. Although he claimed that he made his decision based on what he believed was right, the appearance certainly is that he was strong-armed into joining the party extremists. They could have made it difficult for him to get re-elected or to accomplish anything.

Now, more than four years later, he suddenly said that he would not run for re-election. He angered his party power-clique by not telling them ahead of time that he was going to drop out. He is reported to be extremely frustrated over the in-group in his party who have made it difficult for him to do his job. The irony—which can’t be lost on Quinn, a former school teacher—is that those who put the triumph of their party over the welfare of their country have done anyway what it appears they had threatened to do if Quinn didn’t join them in the vote.

Jack Quinn is the kind of congressman that they all ought to be, putting loyalty to constituents and country above party politics. Now the Democrats don’t like him because of the impeachment vote and his party extremists don’t like him because he’s not an extremist. It seems likely that Quinn really believed that voting against impeachment was the right thing to do. We would be better off now if he had done that.

[[Up](#)] [[Greetings](#)] [[Editorials](#)] [[Letters](#)] [[Columns](#)] [[Arts](#)] [[Links](#)] [[Classifieds](#)] [[Archives](#)]

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The Many Faces of Eve

by Charles Miess

The word *arthropod* means jointed foot. It would probably be more correct to say *jointed appendages*, as it is really the legs or arms of the critters so named that are jointed. They also have segmented bodies—three for insects, two for spiders, and you count ‘em for centipedes and millipedes. Arthropod is the name of a phylum in a classification system developed by a young Swedish naturalist named Carl von Linné who apparently had nothing better to do with his time. In fact, he got so wrapped up in classifying all the plants and creatures of the world with Greek and Latin names that he even changed his own name to sound like a genus and species: *Carolus Linnaeus*. Nice name—although probably not the first one to pop into the minds of his college roommates when they wrote out party invitations.

The faces of arthropods are something we very seldom see. Usually, they fly by or jump away, or are turned to mush under our shoe before we can inspect them properly. In addition, some are so small it is hard to see the detail, assuming that we are even disposed to do so. For those so inclined, though, the microscope is a great equalizer. It can expand the tiniest face up to the size of your own and open up a whole new world as well as scare the bejeebers out of you.

Consider the front end of the white-faced hornet. These are the guys that make the gray football-shaped nests high up in trees and sometimes on the eaves of your house. They’re known for attacking in swarms and have even killed people. Most of the dear departed, however, richly deserved their untimely end by tormenting the hornets first. We don’t even need to see the business end of this particular gal to know that she means business. Notice the powerful mandibles that come in real handy for chewing up wood and mixing it with her saliva to make paper for her nest. Her antennae function as sensors for touchy-feely purposes as well as for smelling and maybe even hearing. The eyes, like most insects, are compound and consist of hundreds of tiny receptors. Hornets don’t have the visual definition that we do with those bumpy looking goggle eyes. In fact, they see us as a mosaic image. But don’t let that fool you because they have an enormous field of view and are real good at detecting motion. To make matters worse, they also have a pair of



simple eyes on the top of their head that give you the creeps when you first see them under the microscope.

Just as it is that the female hornet stings, it's the female mosquito that drills through our skin and sucks up our blood to get protein to make the eggs for her babies. Yet, to my way of thinking, these poor ladies have been given a bum rap. Yes, she does bite us and make us uncomfortable on those humid summer evenings. On the other hand, she has done more for the preservation of the rainforests of the world than all the tree-hugging societies put together. When the trees start a-rocking, she comes a-knocking, and the guy with the chainsaw ends up with a nasty case of dengue, yellow fever, or malaria—maybe all three. As much as I admire her for this, I'm going to talk about the male mosquito to avoid any possible hint of gender bias.



Now the male is kind of an easygoing guy. He spends his time mating, sipping nectar from the flowers, and then mating again. If he were big enough to hold a TV remote, he would probably be flipping channels too.

Without a mean bone in his body, he would never even *think* about biting a human. Actually, he doesn't have any bones in his body because, like all insects, he is held together with a hard outer covering called an exoskeleton. But if he did have bones, not one of them would be mean. Anyway, this guy has big plume-like antennae almost like the tail on a peacock. Unlike the peacock, however, this macho male has lots of sensing organs in his antennae that he uses to check out the girls, find nectar, and check out the girls again. He has big green compound eyes that are also good for the above pursuits and for charming the ladies to boot. His eyes almost completely encircle a dwarfish head that has a capacity for little more than four brain cells. Like the rest of us guys, though, he makes do with what he has.

Last spring I was rambling through the fields looking for pussy willows and finally found some that were weakened and broken from hollowed out stalks. I made a diagonal cut through a couple of stems to see if I could find the little rascal that was responsible. I didn't see the borer, but did find a silken cocoon that was smaller than a pencil eraser. Under my stereomicroscope, this little cocoon looked as big as an army tank, and the fine sewing needles that I used to carefully pull it apart seemed as fat and blunt as a broom handle. Just as I made an opening in the end, a spider leaped out. I jerked and she jumped. Then she stared right up the tubes into my baby blues with four of her eight eyes. And they were not the expressionless compound eyes like insects have. They were big bulging simple eyes much like my own and



they were filled with malice and intent. My microscope, the great equalizer, had put us on an even footing. We bonded through the tubes like that for a few minutes until I could feel her probing the depth of my soul, so I flicked her into a jar while I explored the rest of the cocoon.



If you've ever watched Star Trek and remember Geordi La Forge's visor, you'll know what I thought when I first saw it. It was all that remained of this poor spider's dead husband. I figure she probably woke up hungry after a winter's night of love and passion and in her sleepy-headed confusion thought he was a charbroiled steak. Before she knew what

she was doing, all that remained of him was a vacant stare. I could only imagine the sorrow and guilt she must be feeling.

No account of arthropod faces is complete without mentioning the praying mantis. The mantis is a primitive insect and second cousin to the cockroach. It is different from most other arthropods in that it can swivel its triangle-shaped head at least ninety degrees to each side. They like to intimidate by turning their head at you and stare you down. I took up the challenge once and to my everlasting shame, I blinked first. Two summers ago, my daughter, Laura, and I were on the lookout for a good mantis specimen for her science project. It just so happened that I spotted a really big one near the trunk of an apple tree while I was mowing the lawn. Now, it's not that I don't like touching the things, but since it was Laura's project I thought it only right that she should be the one to get it. I called her over.

At that time, Laura was raising a tussock moth caterpillar in a large clear-plastic pretzel jar. She had several leafy tree branches inside to keep the caterpillar well fed. She put the mantis in the jar with the caterpillar and then helped me put the mower away. Yes, she knew that the mantis was a predator and might eat the caterpillar. But judging by its fat distended belly, she figured it had recently finished off a big meal. Besides that, being captured by a giant a million times its size had to have a bad effect on its appetite and, on top of that, it would only be with the caterpillar for about five minutes.



When we returned, we saw the caterpillar first. It was at the bottom of the jar shrunk to about a third of its normal size with a big juicy hole in its back—almost as if something had sucked out all its innards. The mantis was perched above on a twig licking goo from her massive claw-like forelegs. She turned her head and gave me a defiant stare. I blinked again.

We are pleased to present Painting by Pei-Hua Chiang

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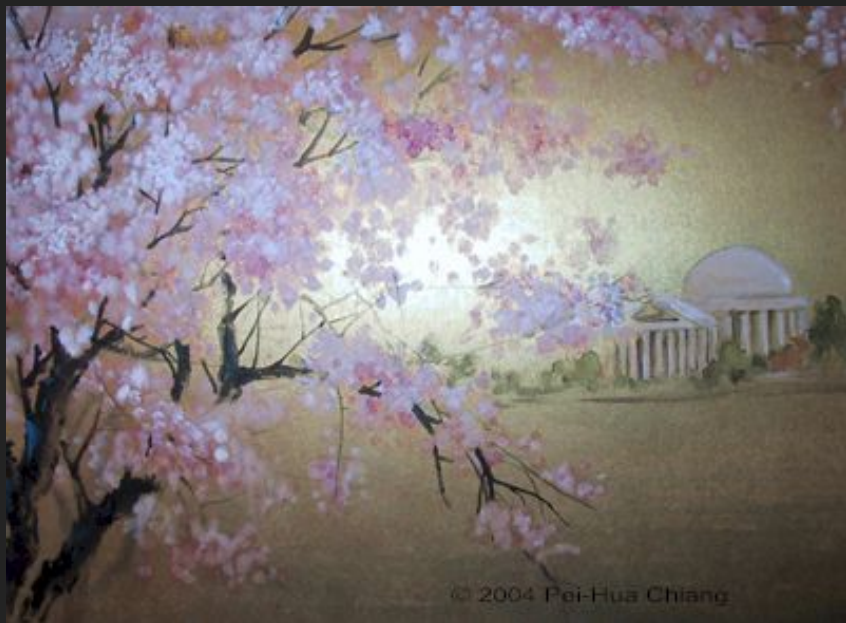
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