The roots of a cubic polynomial form a triangle $T$ in the complex plane. There is an equilateral triangle in 3-space that projects onto $T$, and this projection induces a linear map taking the cube roots of unity to the roots of the polynomial. This leads to a short new proof of Marden’s theorem: the roots of a complex polynomial are the foci of the ellipse of maximum area inscribed in $T$. Time permitting, we give a related proof of Cardano’s formula. (Received September 22, 2011)