

The truth is...we gather on the Third Monday of each month to practice our writing skills. We listen and share in each other's work. We are small in number and our commitment is strictly to produce and foster creativity among our members.

We started in July 1999 and consist of adults that enjoy writing memoirs, commentaries, essays, poems, and/or prose. Our simple method each month is to use a pre-selected word or phrase as the basis of a story, an idea, an opinion, a derivative of, or an implied essence of and write a 1 to 1 ½ page document. We share our stories, comment, and in that way build up our writing skills through practice and presentation. The atmosphere is friendly and supportive, and the feedback is gentle.

Curious? Always wanted to try writing for fun, entertainment, or even profit? Come visit with us at any of our open meetings. Bring a sample of your work. Sit in and see what we do. If you like it, join us every month and become a member. Contact Nancy at nestewart@ameritech.net to zoom with us during COVID restrictions.

Original Works by Members of the Pen & Ink Writers' Group
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February Word Selection – Creation

Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria
By J. Smetana

Hey man the pastor told us the CREATION only took six days then God kicked back for a day, you know that story?

Yeah I heard it.

Does it make sense to you?

Yeah well as much as anything, but why not five days or four days or even three days? I mean he's *God* after all. And why does he have to take off an entire day? I mean he's God so what's he gonna do on his day off? But I guess he can do whatever he wants.

###

A Valentine's Day Creation
By Mark Moe

The people of Magnolia City enjoy celebrating all holidays including the wizards of the Fairy Tail guild. A week before Valentine's Day, Master Makrav was inspired by the city's energy and their passion for decorating. Every year, the town held multiple parades and activities for almost every holiday and Valentine's Day was no different. Master Makrav wanted

to encourage the feelings of compassion and partnership that Valentine's Day provides. He also knows that several of his "children" only work with a handful of other wizards and some wizards never get the opportunity to hone their skills with the strongest S-class wizards. He decided to approach Mirajane who is one of the S-class wizards and serves as both his sounding board for new ideas and also acts as the guild archivist.

"Mirajane, I have an idea of how we can start a new tradition for Valentine's Day to foster cooperation and partnership within the guild."

Mirajane looked down at her diminutive guild master with his crazy ring of gray hair around a mostly bald head and replied, "Master this would not be another excuse to see all the female wizards in scantily-clad outfits again, right?" Master Makrav turned bright red with embarrassment and started waving his arms frantically, "No, no! Nothing like the swimsuit competition last Summer! I want to break up the most common of the teams and matchup the wizards into pairs to give our less powerful wizards an opportunity to gain much needed experience. And since we have an equal number of men and women here, the couples would be fairly balanced. Anyway, the swimsuit competition was also for a charitable cause for the city of Magnolia."

Mirajane tapped a couple of fingers to her mouth and look contemplative for a moment. "We could reprogram the magic tournament selector to act as a two-person random team made of men and women based on their skill levels as wizards. That would be fair and break up the teams in the manner you described."

While Master Makrav and Mirajane were talking, some of the other women overheard their conversation and quickly ran away to gossip about this new exciting "*creation*" from Master Makrav. They loved the idea, but in their girl talk they wanted to hijack it and use it as a way to pair up all the unofficial couples for potential romantic entanglements as well as still keeping the training aspect with the stronger partners. They knew that since Mirajane was one of the S-class wizards, she would be able to change the program settings fairly easily on the selector. They just needed to change the program after Mirajane set up the initial parameters. One of the girls in question used a low-level spying spell to mark the device with a magical tracker so that they would know when Mirajane used the device.

The next day while Master Makrav was going to a magic council meeting, Mirajane went to the lower storage room where the tournament selector resided when it was not in use. She noticed immediately that a magical tracking spell was now attached to it. "Oh, Levy must have finally put a tracking marker to this one. I knew she was going to do that to all the devices we have in here and the other room. She must have finally got to it. That's good because we have such a problem with wizards borrowing equipment and not bringing it back when they are done. That reminds me, I have to label the shelves once she is done so we can make sure everything goes back in the right places," she said out loud to no one in particular. She picked up the bulky, box-shaped device and carried it up to her table in her little office on the main floor.

What Mirajane did not realize that the tracker was not the result of Levy McGarden's efforts, but a group of girls who wanted to mess with the settings for a less than ideal reason. Aqua-colored stars appeared in the air near the wizard who placed the tracking spell on the device. That was the signal to her that Mirajane is currently working on reprogramming it. When the stars appeared again, she knew that it had been placed back into storage. She waited a few minutes before telling the others just to make certain that no one else would take the item.

“This is going to be so much fun! Who knows in a couple of years, we could be attending several weddings within Fairy Tail! Wouldn’t that be awesome? All those couples will thank us one day for bringing them together.”

While the one wizard kept prattling on, the other wizards used magic pencil tool to write the names of all the wizards they wanted to match up on a nearby wall. The benefit of the magic pencil allows wizards to write on any surface, but it disappears after thirty minutes. It leaves no actual ink since it is magically written and disappears without a trace once the spell fades. When they had their list, one of the girls quickly programmed all the new “random” selections for the tournament selector. As soon as she finished, she proclaimed, “Great! It is all set! Now we just have to get it back into the storage room so that it will be ready for tomorrow when Master Makrav and Mirajane announce the Valentine’s event at the guild meeting in the morning.”

The next morning, all the wizards of Fairy Tail gathered to hear an important announcement from Master Makrav and Mirajane regarding their Valentine’s celebration. Everyone was expecting to see Master Makrav in his traditional yellow shirt and shorts combo and Mirajane usually wore some sort of magenta or purple dress. That was far from what they were actually wearing. Master Makrav was sporting a pink shirt and matching shorts with red hearts all over it. Mirajane was wearing a sexy formal, red dress with pink hearts all over it.

Gajeel Redfox, the “Iron Dragon” as he was called commented sarcastically, “Wow you guys are really dedicated to holidays just like all the other residents of Magnolia. So, you want us to spread love throughout the town and help the them to live in harmony?”

Master Makrav looked down from the wooden podium he was standing on at the center of the stage and replied, “That is a great idea and something I encourage all of you to do anyways, but I have an idea more geared toward us in the guild. In order to give our lower ranked wizards a chance to work with the S-class wizards and to break up the most common wizard teams, we are going to assign you a partner to work on any open contracts together for this week. You can continue to work with your partner after that if you enjoy it, but you are obligated to no less than a week. Mirajane, please bring out the tournament selector so that we can figure out the two-person teams.”

As she placed the boxy, tournament selector on a nearby oak table, several of the girls could be heard laughing and giggling. She looked over at them as she continued to setup the machine and said, “Hey, I know you ladies are excited about this idea, but what is so funny about getting to work with S-class and A-class wizards? They might help you to get enough experience to reach their level.” They quickly quieted down, but the smiles never left their faces. “Master, the machine is ready to start selections.”

Master Makrav hopped down from his wooden stepstool and headed over to the machine. The tournament selector works much like a projector, but it projects names in a large red or blue text that is easily readable from anywhere within sight of the stage. The first name is always in red and the second is in blue. He reflected for a moment to himself, “I should have had Mirajane change the colors to be more in line with Valentine’s Day, but no matter.”

“Our first partners are: Gray Fullbuster and Juvia Lockser.” Gray had worked with Juvia before and she matched up well with him being an iced wizard. “Sounds like fun! he exclaimed. Juvia’s eyes turned into large pink hearts as she thought about spending an entire week working exclusively with her beloved Gray. In her mind, she saw Gray asking for her hand in marriage and it was too overwhelming for her and subconsciously activated her power and turned into a puddle of water in front of everybody.

One of the other girls said, “Juvia, get a hold of yourself! You transformed into a water puddle again! Honestly, every time you work with Gray or even think about it, you lose control of your abilities.” Juvia reformed herself back into her solid state and apologized, “I’m good now! I accept working with Gray!”

Master Makrav acknowledged with a nod and chose the next partners. It was surprising to him and Mira by the types of selections made by the tournament selector. It was still matching the more powerful wizards with the less powerful, but it seemed to pair up a lot of unrequited love interests on one side or the other. “It must be the magic of Valentine’s Day,” Master Makrav said quietly. Mira heard him and nodded her full head of platinum, long hair in agreement.

One of the two biggest surprises dealt with the two wizards who practice dragonbuster magic. Natsu Dragneel, a fire wizard was paired up with another member from Team Erza, the young, blonde-haired, Celestial wizard, Lucy Heartfilia. Mira made it a point to remind Master Makrav about the fact they were both members of the most powerful team, Team Erza. “Master, should we allow this partnership? They are both on Team Erza together. Didn’t you want to break up the team members?”

Master Makrav, thought about it for a moment and replied, “In this case, I am going to allow it. Although they are both on Team Erza, they rarely just work together without Gray and Erza. It will be good for both of them. The partnership will stand.”

The other big surprise involved matching the other dragonbuster wizard, Gajeel Redfox, the “Iron Dragon” with Levy McGarden, the Letter magic wizard. They both accepted the partnership, but Gajeel was worried if she could hold her own with some of the more dangerous contracts he typically completed for the guild.

When the selections were completed, the newly formed, “teams” went about their daily business but making sure to include their partner when it came to choosing and accepting contracts that were posted on either the upstairs S-class and A-class job board or the one meant for the B-class and C-class downstairs.

Master Makrav turned toward Mira and said, “See I told you my idea would be nothing like the swimsuit competition last Summer. I think we shall do this every year!”

###

The Greatest Creation **By Carol Karvon**

Some people might call Carrie a helicopter mom because of her constant and obsessive concern for her son Michael. She didn’t care. They could think what they wanted about her. The most important person in her life these days was Michael or “Mikey”, as everyone called him. That nickname stuck to him since he was a baby. His grandpa Bill and grandma Abby called him that. They already had another grandson named Michael who was nine years old, while Mikey was just five. They thought it would be less confusing that way, instead of having two grandsons with the same first name. Their surnames were different so there was no confusion on that front.

Carrie’s husband, Mikey’s dad, died in a car crash when he was only two years old. That might explain her desire to have Mikey with her almost constantly. He didn’t remember his dad

and had stopped asking why he wasn't there. Carrie made sure to show Mikey pictures of his dad to keep his image alive. She was raising Mikey on her own as a single mom, with occasional help from her parents. They loved Mikey totally and always made themselves available to help out.

His best friend, Pauly, had a dad who went to work every day and came back home every night. Sometimes Pauly's dad would invite Mikey to go out with them on a hike or fishing at the creek in their neighborhood. There weren't really any fish in there, so they never caught anything. The boys didn't know that but had lots of fun just hanging out together with Pauly's dad.

At other times, Pauly and his dad went out alone. Those were sadder times for Mikey. He didn't want to but felt a little left out and lonely on such days.

At those times, Carrie would try to reassure him how important he was to her and his grandpa and grandma. She told him and everyone else that Mikey was her greatest creation and would surely earn her a spot in Heaven. She called him her perfect little angel.

Mikey didn't quite understand what she meant by his being her creation. Her parents, Bill and Abby, tried to tell her she was putting too much pressure on a small child to be such an important person in Carrie's life. Of course, she listened to what they said, but then did what she wanted to do anyway.

Carrie's mom and dad were concerned she'd never find love again and was too focused on her young son. They tried to tell her she needed to give herself and Mikey a little breathing space – maybe not so much now while he was five, but surely soon. He needed to experience friendship with other kids his age. Maybe when he started kindergarten in a few months, he would connect with kids his age. They hoped Carrie would let him develop healthy relationships with his peers. They were fearful he might become a little reclusive. Right now, he was at home with Carrie or his grandparents who all doted on him.

Mikey had started to question his mother about why he didn't go to pre-school like some of the kids who lived on his block. She always answered him the same way. She told him she couldn't stand to be apart from him even for a few hours. Again, her parents tried to tell her that it was too much pressure to heap on a small child. He needed time with other children.

Unknown to Bill and Abby, Carrie secretly knew they were right, but it broke her heart to realize that soon Mikey would be going to school and meeting kids his own age. She felt like she'd be losing something very precious and valued their time together even more. Deep down inside her soul she wondered what she would do with her days once Mikey was in school. The money from the insurance policy her husband had when he was killed was supporting them up to now but wouldn't last forever.

One of these days, she'd need to find a job and earn money to support them. She'd have to think about that. Without saying anything to her parents or friends, she started considering the possibility of returning to the work. First thing was to update her resume. It was hopelessly outdated. Her last position was as a research assistant. Unfortunately, there would be more than a five-year gap in her work history. She might even need to take a course or two to refresh her skills.

With her husband's blessing, she had resigned her position when she knew she was going to be a mother and had never regretted that decision. After all, what was a job compared to having Mikey, her greatest living creation, in her life every day.

###

Creation
By Edward Scheffler

Creation must disregard a random choice of
happenstance.

In that it's an art form made in detail.
With the works of forethought sustainable.

The renowned Astronomer Carl Sagin viewed the
Cosmos with Objective Reasoning.

He was a Believer in the:
Happenstance Phenomenon

(A logic of restrictive programming based upon: Random Selection)

He knew the Physics of Inertia.
But could see no Divine purpose
To set it into motion.

Discounting all concepts of a Prearranged ORDER.
As this is understandable in which
Our finite minds are in awe by our
Own findings.

Yet should the spectrum of variations conclude,
The universe looks more like
A great
THOUGHT
than
A great machine (James Jeans)

###

A Sand Castle at the Beach
By N. Stewart

“That’s some creation you have going there, Kenny.”

“I’ve made a sand castle. I started this a couple of hours ago. It wasn’t easy. The sand kept collapsing until I added the right amount of water. See, I’ve built the castle already and I’m working on the moat.”

“Can I help?”

“Sure, Mr. Johnson. If you want to.”

“What do you want me to do?”

“Here are some buckets. Go fill ‘em up in the lake and bring ‘em back.”

“Before I do that, should we make the circle bigger around the castle? That way we can expand the castle with additional buildings, maybe a bridge or two between or over the moat. What do you think?”

I loved doing this kind of thing when I was a kid about your age.”

“I don’t know if we will have time to do all that. I have to be home for lunch. Maybe make the moat bigger though.”

“Okay, I will start over here. See if this is big enough,” said Mr. Johnson, after walking around in a large circle, moving sand with his feet to create a bigger moat.

Looking up Kenny said, “That’s much better. I want to be an engineer like my dad when I grow up. He designs things and I watch him sometimes working on plans on a really big table. But I like to build things in the sand and the dirt, not on paper. I want to be outside working with the big machines that move tons of dirt and build roads and bridges, so I practice on making sand castles.

That’s big enough. I think we need a bridge over the moat so people can get into the castle. Can you start that?”

“Yes, I will. You know, I’m a civil engineer and did those things that you mentioned in the sand and dirt for real. I developed plans and then would go out and oversee that the plans were carried out. I started out making castles in the sand right here at this same sandy beach. Maybe you will become a civil engineer when you finish school.”

“I think I’d like that,” said Kenny

A tiny voice said, “Hi Kenny. What’s ya doin’?”

“Oh no, it’s my little sister. She’ll spoil everything and she only wants to destroy whatever I build,” he said aside to the man. “Nothin’, Ali, go play with your dolls. This is man’s work. Can’t you see Mr. Johnson and I are busy?”

“I wanna help. I’ll carry the buckets of water from the lake. Okay?”

“I guess so. But stay out of the way. Put the filled buckets down in the sand and don’t put the water in the moat. Can you do that?”

Ali picked up the buckets and headed for the lake. “Mom said she will bring sandwiches and Kool Aid down later and that you can stay at the beach longer.”

Mr. Johnson said, “You know the bridge over Turtle Creek at NN? I helped designed that and watched it take shape. Those beams were massive and huge cranes lifted them in to place. It was a thrill to see the plans I had made take shape and become a bridge that traffic crossed over. If you stick with it and become a civil engineer, someday you may design and implement roadways or bridges, or intersections, too. I did that for many years and now I’m retired and I’m back to building sand castles at the beach. Is this bridge okay?”

“That’s supper neat. The water will flow through it. Thanks, Mr. Johnson. Think we can build another structure for the horses over there? Or maybe a shop or two alongside the castle? Or add a wing to the castle? And, maybe some paths or roadways”

“Whatever you want, Kenny. You’re in charge. You tell me what you want me to do and I will do it. This is fun working with you.”

“Okay, then let’s start with building a wing to the castle. Ali, bring a bucket of water over here. Be careful. Don’t you dare step on that moat wall. Look out!” And, they continued working and building in the sand for some time.

“Wow! We have a whole city within the walls of the moat and we’re ready to fill the moat with water. Ali start bringing the buckets of water. Mr. Johson, you should pour the first bucket.”

“Thank you for that honor,” he said and slowly and carefully poured the water into the moat. Many more buckets of water were added before all was finished.

The sand castle engineers stood back, admiring their creation while Ali looked on ready and eager to stamp all over the moat and the sand castle city, bringing it back to plain old beach sand again.

###

Creation and Conversation by Jeremy Tibus

Been through the ringer with self-help groups and meetings.

None have done the good being in art classes have done.

Whether it be drawing\painting, creative writing or fiber arts, the creative process with a conversation has been doing me a world of good.

In 2020 my creation and conversation classes abruptly ended.

Within a few months I started to zoom.

It has been two years and I am looking to doing both online and in-person classes.

Although my creations have not stopped, the people I am conversing with has changed.

I have met people online I would not have otherwise.

Teachers out of my reach geographically have been on my laptop.

Not sure what the future holds but the conversations continue.

###

A Question By Vicki Elberfeld

What will be different, once we begin to see Covid as, not gone perhaps (it will never go away), but eventually no longer life threatening? I anticipate that day with hope but also a certain dread.

I would love to forget about wearing a mask along with hand washing the cloth as my washing machine is insufficiently gentle. I will be able to breathe comfortably during Chicago's hot summers once this mouth and nose covering mandate ends. But really, has the mask been so bad? I genuinely appreciate it being no longer necessary to paste on a smile when greeting folks, as the mask covers both my smiles and my grimaces. Of course, the eyes have their own language, but having the lower part of my face covered gives me welcome privacy. Then not being sick with anything at all during the past two years gives me a good reason to mask beyond the mandate.

I've come to wonder how it works on a dating site when two people decide to meet for the very first time. During their phone call setting up the date and coming up with ways to identify themselves, do they focus on what they will wear or share the colors of their masks or what? Of course, once they have met in a restaurant, bar, or coffee shop and assured themselves they are indeed with the correct party, they must then sit down and as soon as they have received their drinks or food or even water, they unveil themselves to expose their noses and mouths and voila! They can view each other's naked face. Do they feel embarrassed at such exposure? Do they breathe a sigh of relief once they see the stranger at their table isn't repulsive and/or doesn't find them repulsive? Perhaps in wearing masks we women get a little sense of what it might be like to walk in certain Islamic countries where females are veiled. While I'd tend to see veiling as seriously limiting my freedom, wouldn't I come to experience other freedoms in the total comfort I'd feel on bad hair days for instance?

But what about attending meetups and going to hear speakers in person as opposed to from the comfort of my home? I so much love that phrase, "from the comfort of my home." No emptying my closet to find the perfect outfit as there is most often that delightful opportunity to attend Zoom meetings in my jammy bottoms, though I wear a blouse or long T-shirt when actually on camera. I don't do half the laundry I used to anymore, while I continue to bathe once every month, whether I need it or not. Just kidding. My warm bath is still one of the highlights of my day, and I do my best Sudoku in the tub. Of course, if I oversleep, I can delay this morning ritual until after my remote meetings. I am not bathing for the people on screen; I am cleaning up for myself and my own sense of smell. At the beginning of the pandemic, I began growing my own garlic by the living room window. This didn't smell very nice and neither did I, but I wanted to indulge given I didn't have to worry about stinking up any place other than my oh so comfortable home.

But I've become lazy when it comes to driving errands. Now I have to go out for the distinct purpose of shopping whereas formerly I'd just pick up a few items on my way home from some get-together with friends. In the beginning of the shutdown, shopping for groceries was the only reason I'd leave the house. Instead of dropping by every couple of days to refill my depleted stores, I'd shop once every seven days, my big weekly outing, and if I ran out of something before the week was up, I'd do without. I only felt safe shopping at Trader Joe's. At first the six-foot spacing they maintained in all their lines impressed me, and while waiting outside I'd observe the employees vigorously scrubbing down every inch of their grocery carts. I soon learned they had senior hours from 8:00 until 9:00 am daily when old folks like me could bypass the lines and shop before the air could be contaminated with the exhaled germs of possibly infected people.

But lately, life has gotten better. We no longer need to wash down our groceries or take in our mail and let the bills and letters sit for three days before opening. I saw YouTube videos

where folks who had been out all day would be expected to arrive home and immediately go to the bathroom, shed their clothes, place them in a laundry bag, and then step right into the shower. We wore gloves, even in the spring and summer and most particularly when pumping gas. One of the biggest effects of Covid in my little world came from my family's request that we all be tested prior to getting together over the holidays. I went to a testing center on Foster and Milwaukee which a friend said was very efficient. I had to wait in my car for three hours for my test and negative result, only to learn the next day that our Christmas gathering had to be cancelled as someone had tested positive.

Recently the son of my good friend Sue got married over Zoom. We were used to marriages and even funerals occurring virtually, but this ceremony was particularly odd given that the groom had Covid. Therefore, he and his bride weren't in the same room or even the same building together during their wedding. When it came time to exchange rings, each put their own rings on their own fingers. And of course, there was no reception, the groom having to return immediately to his own single bed.

I've only attended one funeral which was entirely outdoors with all but one person wearing a mask. This funeral was streamed, and most folks watched from the comfort of their homes. Because most mourners didn't yet feel comfortable gathering indoors, only four of us got together for lunch afterwards. I wonder if the fear of restaurant germs will eventually develop into full blown phobias in some of us.

I look forward to new restaurants opening to replace those which didn't survive the pandemic.

But they'll be expensive. I don't know if the stimulus checks, the effects of long Covid, or the healthy stock market are enabling some folks to avoid returning to their jobs. Of course, most of us in states with heavy mask mandates and stay at home orders managed to save quite a bit on restaurants, entertainment and gas, but we do have a labor shortage which has raised prices in some industries.

I don't think any of us would have believed how long our lives would be impacted by Covid 19. In March of 2020 I returned home from work for my one precious week of spring break which became extended to two weeks and finally three, thanks to a certain virus, so basically, I never returned to the campus and even now continue to tutor online from, you guessed it, the comfort of my home.

At first, I was lonely being home all day by myself seven days a week apart from my grocery runs. I'd even thought of acquiring a house pet to keep the blues away, but I decided it would not be fair to that dog or cat to have me to themselves every single day until the virus was contained. Then I'd return to campus and socialize in the evenings, abandoning my poor pet to no company whatsoever for the bulk of its week.

Had I known how endless my staycation would be and how quickly I'd adapt to not going anywhere or doing much of anything, I'd have adopted a puppy or a kitten or an older animal in a heartbeat. Now that I don't get up early to go anywhere, my sleep schedule is shot to hell. Not only do I stay up till all hours, I nap off and on all day, just as a dog or cat would. It would be ever so easy to sync my life with that of a pet, and I don't expect I'll return to a very active social life any time soon or even ever. And if I were expected to return to campus to work in person, I could always retire. My priorities having shifted so greatly, I would argue that I'd most certainly need to stay home to keep my pet company.

I sometimes rebuke myself that with all the extra down time delivered to me by the pandemic, I've composed no masterpieces, learned to play an instrument, or acquired a second language. I have progressed on my German however, given it's easy to complete the more mindless exercises along with watching YouTube. I have not written the great American novel in part because I've acquired a certain taste for the easy life, and writing any novel, great or not so great, is anything but easy. Not needing a creation to complete myself, I can stay home, interact with folks in two dimensions over Zoom, cavort with a real or imaginary pet, and enjoy the creations of others through reading, streaming concerts, and watching films online. Covid has shown me that I can do so much and be so satisfied without ever having to leave the confines, or what I prefer to designate as the comforts, of my home.

###

The Creation of Adam By Pauline Bastek

I hear the word, creation, and I see the Michaelangelo fresco in the Sistine Chapel of *The Creation of Adam*. I find this to be one of the most moving works of art and I only regret that I never was able to see the original when I visited years ago in Italy.

The heat in Italy, even in early October, the absence of air-conditioning in Italian tour buses and obvious lack of deodorant usage by Europeans caused me to beat a hasty retreat prior to attending the scheduled tour. Masks would have helped but this was in the early 80s. My loss and regret to this day.

Upon my return home, I decided I would share the art I had seen in my tours of churches and museums with my 2nd grade class of students in my next visit to their class as a volunteer picture lady.

While selecting prints at the Art Institute, I came across the one of *The Creation of Adam*, but lo and behold, Adam had a strategically placed leaf where in the original in Italy where I had seen a copy his gender was fully visible. I asked the clerk at the Art Institute about it and she said they had both versions but only displayed the "modest" version as American schools found the original unsuitable for children. The clerk had a slight Latin accent and smiled when I burst into laughter and agreed to purchase the American version of *The Creation*. Our puritan heritage lives on I said.

When showing it to the children they did ask why he didn't have any clothes on, but one bright pupil informed us that his Sunday School teacher said they didn't have clothes 'til God created women to make them. I couldn't have come up with a better answer for 2nd graders. I agreed with him and we all accepted the answer of his Sunday School teacher. Out of the mouths of babes.

Whenever I hear the word creation, I picture naked males frolicking in the Garden of Eden until God created women who created clothing and brought it all to a halt.

###