

## A Tale of Spontaneous Laughter

—by Carl Henry Mills

Once upon a time, there lived in a small town in one of our great mid-western states a man named Snommis. I must tell you first that Snommis was a Conservative. Snommis was also a Taxpayer. Snommis was also a graduate of the Law College of the State University. Immediately you may deduce that Snommis, being an eminent man of the law, was at all times rational in his thinking. I must also tell you that Snommis was a commendably frugal man. With all his shining frugality, the man of the law felt that a dollar spent should return a dollar's worth of goods. Snommis, well versed in logic, naturally extended and applied this eminently practical Law of his to the Taxpayer's dollars also. In all fairness, I must admit that Snommis' motives were completely unselfish: he only had the interests of the Conservative Taxpayers at heart. Conservative tax dollars, he thought, should buy Conservative goods.

Now one day, with nothing better to do, Snommis happened to read *The Congressional Recorder*, which was an institutional newspaper supported by tax dollars. Now, you know nobody ever reads the *Recorder*. But Snommis read it; and his intuitive and law-trained reaction was something like this: "Egad! This newspaper is LIBERAL!" Then he spat, which made him feel good all over. "Conservative Taxpayers pay for Conservative newspapers," he said righteously, as he turned his framed copy of the Bill of Rights round to the wall. Now Snommis was forgetting, of course, that a majority of the members of Congress were liberals; and forgetting, too, that they had a right to their liberal opinions, and to have their newspaper print those opinions. Snommis saw, with alarm, all the deepest shades of Red.

Then Snommis went to work. Day and night he labored, until he had gone through endless mountains and 187 years of dusty back numbers of the *Recorder*. He culled, he extracted, he snipped, and he discarded, until he came up with a 32,000-page "document." The "document" said the *Recorder* was liberal and was indoctrinating the Congressmen. Actually, I must tell you it was the other way round: the Congressmen were liberal and were indoctrinating the *Recorder*.

Snommis tried to peddle his "document," but no one would buy it. He went to the President, but he was a liberal. He went to the Congressional Board of Directors, but they were impartial. He went to the Recorder office, but it ignored him. Clutching his little Red "document" in his hot little hand, Snommis ran around with it, unable to sell it, until one day there just happened to be a convention of True Blue Conservatives in his Capitol City. "Eureka!" cried Snommis. He also cried "Eureka!" when he realized that the Congressional budget was then being discussed. The Conservatives invited him to read his "document," which he did, in a great, stentorian voice, being a politician of sorts. The momentous issue was exposed—the cat was out of the bag,

or the herring out of the net, whichever figure of speech you prefer—CONGRESS WAS LIBERAL! A great hue and cry of alarm went up to the skies all over the Conservative land.

The Recorder staff got on the phone and tried to interview Snommis. The questioners hammered and Snommis hedged, until about all they found out was that Snommis didn't like liberals. They also found out that he had a double-standard for freedom of the press: one for commercial newspapers, and another one for institutional newspapers. They also found out that he really loved his Congress. You must admit it was all quite irrelevant.

The publisher of the *Recorder* defended his staff. "They aren't all that liberal! And, besides, even if they are," he said, "they're very fair minded." He gave Snommis an "F" for his poorly done paper, which made Snommis very mad. You must admit it was all quite irrelevant.

Then somebody went to great lengths to show that the *Recorder* wasn't tax-supported at all. It seems as though the *Recorder* was paid for by the Congressmen themselves (no doubt with money from Taxpayers back home). I believe it worked something like this: every time a Congressman registered for a new term, he paid a dollar to support the newspaper I might add that he also paid a dollar to support his union hall, where he danced, gambled, drank, ate, and debated, sometimes, which wasn't very Conservative. Now this survey, to prove that the *Recorder* wasn't tax-supported, only proved that Snommis didn't have an argument, on his terms. You must admit it was all quite irrelevant.

Somebody published in the *Recorder* a copy of a statement by the Congressional Board of Directors concerning communism in the Congress. The statement guaranteed freedom of speech and press in the Congress. But publishing it then, you see, forged the link between "communist" and "liberal" that Snommis desperately wanted, but hadn't dared to make himself. So Snommis leaned back and smiled, saying "Thank you — Thank you very much!" You must admit it was all quite irrelevant—and damaging.

Then a Congressman (he was a liberal) who was watching, began to laugh. He laughed so hard that he nearly split his sides. "How completely ridiculous," he said to himself. "We're all stooping to argue with Snommis on his level, which is exactly what he wants us to do. Snommis is forcing us to prove our innocence, which is irrelevant, and is denying us our right to think differently, which is inalienable. Snommis knows we don't have to prove our innocence. He also knows that up on our level, where he could only debate the issue of freedom of the press, he has no argument at all."

So our Congressman laughed harder at the folly of it all. Then he got mad. He took out his pen marked "for Satire," which hadn't been used since Senator Goldwater

brutally butchered the Laws of Definition, and he wrote a satire, hoping to mend the ways of the world through laughter. He got his satire published in *The Daily Mid-Western*, where it was sandwiched in between "Findings over the Weekend" and an article entitled "Supra-Rosa Rears its Ugly Head Again."

The people who read it laughed. They laughed at Snommis for trying to trick them, and they laughed at themselves for being tricked, too. They realized they couldn't turn Donkeys into Elephants by denying they existed, or by saying Donkeys really looked more like Elephants than the world thought. They realized that when Snommis turned his copy of the Bill of Rights round to the wall, he actually told Nature to stop making Donkeys. So Nature, who was busy, and couldn't wish something of hers out of existence because it didn't look like an Elephant, or because it wasn't an Elephant, laughed at him too. Some of the Donkeys, instead of laughing with Nature, tried furiously to make themselves look less like Donkeys, and Nature laughed at them. Some even tried to prove that they were not Donkeys at all, so Nature laughed at them too. Soon, however, everybody was laughing good-naturedly. People laughed so hard that the guffaw could be heard for twenty-five miles around. And the laughter made everybody feel good all over. Of course, in those days there was no constitutional guarantee needed for laughter, so it rolled in great waves over the mid-west countryside. Very soon Snommis became synonymous with snicker, and all the people snorted "Snommis!" whenever they snickered.

But, dear reader, Snommis won out in the end, because nobody could make him face the real issue. So *The Congressional Recorder* became True Blue Conservative, even though the majority of the people it spoke for were still liberals. Nature had been hoodwinked: the braying of Donkeys was made to sound like the trumpeting of Elephants, and a great darkness descended upon the Conservative land.

Now one day, with nothing better to do, Snommis happened to read *The Daily Mid-Western*, which was an institutional newspaper supported by tax dollars. Now, you know nobody ever reads *The Daily Mid-Western*. But Snommis read it; and his intuitive and law-trained reaction was something like this: "Egad! This newspaper is FUNNY!" Then he cried, which made him feel good all over. "Sour-faced Taxpayers pay for Grim newspapers," he said solemnly, as he turned his framed copy of the Bill of Rights guaranteeing laughter round to the wall. Now Snommis was forgetting, of course, that a majority of the members of the Mid-West had a sense of humor; and forgetting, too, that they had a right to their humor, and to have their newspaper print reflections of their humor. Snommis saw, with alarm, all the deepest shades of Fun.

Then Snommis went to work . . .

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following column reflects the views of Charles A. Peek, state college director for the Nebraska Federation of Young Republicans.)

That the students were not the only political whipping boys is by now plainly clear—but I thank Mr. Hall for the phrase and I hope he will not object if I plagiarize and apply it to the Republican Party.

Ray Simmons made political whipping boys out of the Republican Party when he ungraciously and without any decorum used the party as a spring board for his own private political bias.

Now I cannot purport to speak for the whole party—not for our state chairman, Mr. Denney; not for the campus Young Republican president, Steve Stastny; not for the voters, not for the students, not for our con-

## A RED HERRING?

—by Charles A. Peek

gressmen—I speak only for myself.

But it is my opinion that we've been duped by this figure from the right side of the right. Several weeks ago this gentleman spoke on the ridicule undergone by the right wing. And many of us were in sympathy with him then.

But we were duped because Mr. Simmons is not a rightist—he is a political hack-man who has placed himself clear of the 'left-right' spectrum. He deserves not only the criticism of both sides, but also our sympathies.

There was little decorum to his actions from start to finish. As long as these things had to be done at least they could have been accompanied by some sense of propriety or sign of wisdom.

surprise. Read his report and see if you don't agree. Yet this is not the real reason either—the real reason is that Mr. Ray Simmons could care less what is printed in our paper—the content of what he said was of little importance—so no one needed to be forewarned.

What was important (this may sound as ridiculous as does Mr. Simmons—if so bear with me as I've just finished reading his report) is that Mr. Simmons had the opportunity to wave the liberal bone in front of the conservative cage at the legislature. I do not care to go any further into his motivation for that. I do not care to say that this makes the whole affair either a bi-partisan or a non-partisan issue.

It is not for me to resent his attack on our university. The Chancellor and Regents will take

that into account.

It is not for me to refute what he has said. That is the duty of the paper and I'm sure Miss Jensen will comply to this procedural decorum.

It is for me, as a state officer of the Young Republicans, to say that I am indignant at the use of the party as Mr. Simmons has used it, to say that I disjoin my name from both his actions and his methods.

It is for all of us to make certain that the legislature is not affected by this attack—and you can help. You can assure the university of at least a minimal budget — by standing behind your paper and by knowing Mr. Simmons for what he is—a man outside the political spectrum, without truth and without dignity.

## Problem Of The Week

By Pi Mu Epsilon

**PROBLEM:** Every living person has shaken hands with a certain number of other persons. Prove that a count of the number of people who have shaken hands an odd number of times must yield an even number.

Bring or send answers to this week's problem to 210 Burnett. The solution will be printed next week along with another problem.

**SOLUTION:** The solution to last week's problem: No, it is not possible, for at each move the knight goes from a square of one color to the other, and the knight must move 63 times, thus it is impossible for the knight to move as required, 63 being odd and the diagonal opposite square being of the same color.

Leo M. Harwill, Lane Isaacson and Val Policky submitted correct answers to last week's problem.

In all fairness, Miss Jensen could have been forewarned (Simmons had the chance for she was in the hotel just before he dropped the bomb). The Republican State Chairman could have been warned ahead of time (they, too, saw each other beforehand). Surely the Chancellor and the Regents could have been notified—but no one was.

The reason is that any acceptance his claims could gain would depend on the element of

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