

Nixon for pres, new Chicago top April Fools' Jokes



WASHINGTON (AP) — For Nixon-haters, it was the moment they'd been dreading for 18 years. For fans of the former president, it was a dream come true.

Thousands of listeners on National Public Radio's "Talk of the Nation" program Wednesday tuned in to hear Richard Nixon — as played by impersonator Rich Little — announce his candidacy for the Republican presidential nomination.

"People rushed out to tell

their mailmen, some were crying, they were really emotional," program host John Hockenberry said of people who called in after the program ended.

Little read an "announcement" speech:

"I would not boast of a career in which so many tragedies and setbacks have occurred," Little, playing Nixon, said. "I would only say that it is the true leader who stands alone. ... Having marched up this hard road and won back your confidence, I ask you once again, my fellow

Americans, to make me your president."

The program then went to political analyst Norman Ornstein, who gave a mock-serious dissertation on the ramifications of a Nixon campaign. Then Harvard law professor Lawrence Tribe discussed the constitutional question of whether a president who resigned in disgrace midway through his second term would be able to run again. "Might be," Tribe said.

Hockenberry then opened the phone lines. Before callers

went on the air, they were let in on the joke — and played right along.

"They were giving serious analyses of how it would be easier for the Democratic Party if Nixon were the nominee. Someone else thought Nixon was too liberal," he said.

Gotcha ya

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Welcome to Chicago.

That's what passengers arriving at Los Angeles International Airport saw April Fools' Day

come to Chicago.

That's what passengers arriving at Los Angeles International Airport saw April Fools' Day when they looked out the windows of their airplanes.

An 85-foot-long yellow banner with 20-foot-high red letters was hoisted above the pavilion at Hollywood Park race track about three miles from the airport.

"It was something we always wanted to do," said park spokesman Brock Sheridan. "We thought it would be kind of funny and our new management ... thought it would be a great practical joke."

Sheridan said the sign would be up two days.

DJ for a day

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Hundreds of listeners called a morning talk show on April Fools' Day wondering why radio personality Bob Conners had been replaced — by the host Conners had replaced more than a year ago.

WTVN-AM's one-day substitute was Jim Bleikamp, a former station host who quit in January 1991 after managers said he was rude during an interview with a congressman. He works for another station in the city.

Bobby Hatfield, operations manager, said Bleikamp good-naturedly agreed to the spoof. But some listeners didn't think it was funny.

"Thank God it's not true," Hatfield quoted one listener as saying.

What about jelly?

WASHINGTON (AP) — With tongues firmly in cheeks — or perhaps stuck to the roofs of their mouths — an April Fools' panel of peanut butter lovers traced the history of the noble legume Wednesday, from its roots in the Incan empire to the gums of television's talking horse Mr. Ed.

In a witty wandering that mixed fact and fiction, the experts examined the peanut and peanut butter from every perspective at the Second Annual Smithsonian Conference on Stuff.

Last year's conference was on the history of Jell-O, and they're talking about lawn art for next year.

Why peanut butter this year?

Perhaps because it is embedded in the culture of middle America.

"Who can imagine middle America without peanut butter?" said Rayna Green, director of the Smithsonian Institution's American Indian Program at the National Museum of American History. "It is peanut butter on which the empire of Ward and June and Beaver Cleaver was built."

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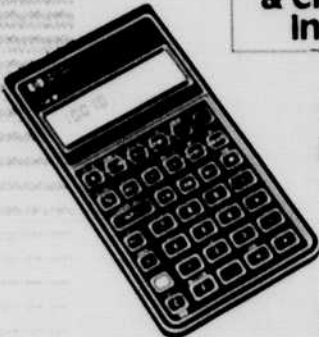
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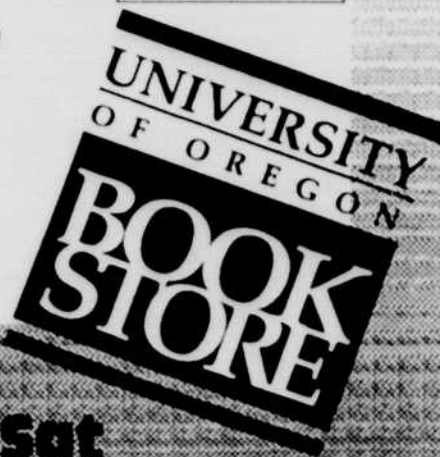
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