

# HUMOR

The people who count will get it

## The best (and biggest) April Fool's pranks of all time

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April Fool's Day has been a day for unexpected jokes and pranks for decades. However, some pranksters have really outdone themselves in not only devising incredibly devious plots, but making the public in general their intended target, sometimes affecting thousands of people across a city, state or country. A few of the best have been compiled below.

Probably the best large-scale April Fool's joke ever made was from a Richard Dimbleby 'news report' that aired on April 1, 1957 on the BBC. His report opened with the news that Spring was coming early that year, leading the spaghetti harvest in Switzerland to be early. With a video in the background playing featuring peasant women harvesting spaghetti from trees, humorous claims about the cultivation of spaghetti were made in a totally straight-faced manner. The matter of spaghetti's consistently uniform length was explained as the result of years of dedicated cultivation and careful plant breeding. After the program had concluded, the switchboards at the BBC offices were overrun by callers inquiring about where they could see the harvest take place, or if it was possible to procure some of these plants and grow their own spaghetti. When some viewers wrote in asking about cultivation methods, BBC producer Michael Peacock related what he knew, saying, "Many British enthusiasts have had admirable results from planting a small tin of spaghetti in tomato sauce."

British astronomer Patrick Moore made an announcement on a radio program in 1976 that the rare alignment of two planets in the solar system would cause a strong upward gravitational pull at exactly 9:47 a.m. that would have the effect of making everyone on the one side of Earth feel much lighter. Keeping a serious voice, Moore encouraged listeners to jump in the air at that precise moment and feel "a strange floating sensation" as their body was held suspended by the gravita-

tional force. Soon after the specified time, the radio station was amazed that dozens of listeners had actually phoned in to report that the phenomenon had occurred, just like Moore said it would.

In 1977, a British newspaper decided to prank its readers by printing an article rife with inside jokes that would not likely be recognized by those outside the printing and publishing industries. In the article, readers learned about the 10-year anniversary of the small Indian Ocean republic of San Seriffe, which consisted of many small islands "in the shape of semi-colons." The two main islands, Upper Caisse and Lower Caisse, were where the government was run by General Pica in the capital of Bodoni. Reportedly, dozens of readers were disappointed when they contacted the newspaper to learn more about the intriguing islands only to find that they were invented out of font names and publishing terminology.

In a poke at the then-recent upswing in religious activity and pontification, a small town in Illinois in 1987 announced it was instituting a "sin tax" that would be taken bi-monthly. Residents would have to call a special phone number and answer a questionnaire about the kinds of sin they had been taking part in since the last call, and the line would supposedly be hooked up to a lie-detector machine that would determine if the citizen was being truthful. The tax would then be applied according to the amount and weight of sins committed.

Two police officers in 1989 were in the mood for a prank when they obtained a quantity of the invisible dye that is used to mark large amounts of money in secure transit from one location to another. The dye transforms into a dark purple color when it comes in contact with human skin. The officers saw a great opportunity and spread the unwashable dye throughout the city-county office building as well as the mayor's office restrooms. The prank was, of course, quickly discovered when the mayor visited the restroom only to find he'd become a "marked man." The two offices were let off, however, with a relatively light two-day suspension without pay.

In 1994, an industry leading PC Computing magazine publishing an

article that claimed that there was a new bill before Congress that would impose new restrictions restricting the behavior of those who surfed the Internet. Senate Bill SB040194, it seemed, would criminalize the use of the Information Superhighway while intoxicated by alcohol and would also make it illegal to discuss any kind of sexual matter online. In a bit of editorializing at the end of the article, the author claimed, "Congress apparently thinks being drunk on a highway is bad no matter what kind of highway it is."

In 1996, the Taco Bell Corporation made the announcement that it had bought the famous Liberty Bell from the federal government and had decided to rename it the Taco Liberty Bell as a promotion for its food services. Hundreds of citizens, incensed by the sale of a historic national treasure to a private business, complained to the National Historic Park in Philadelphia, where the bell is housed. After only a matter of hours and a quick wave of publicity, Taco Bell admitted the prank. Then-White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry was asked about the "sale" a short time later, and chose at that time to also mention that the Lincoln Memorial had also since been sold, and would soon be known to the nation as the Ford Lincoln Mercury Memorial.

Fast food companies seem to have a great time with April Fool's pranks, as evidenced by a prank pulled by national chain Burger King. In 1998, Burger King bought full page ads in newspapers across the country to advertise its newest product, the "Left-Handed Whopper." This new burger, they claimed, was completely redesigned to have all its toppings rotated 180 degrees to ensure proper weight distribution so that left-handed customers would no longer have to worry about everything sliding out of the right side of the hamburger. The corporation reported that on April 1, 1998, the day the burger was to make its debut, thousands of customers across the country requested the specially made burger. Not to be left out, many also asked if a special right-handed burger was also available.

Special Thanks to The Urban Legend Reference Pages at [snopes.com](http://snopes.com).

## Top ten reasons why top ten lists should be abolished

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10. There is always one of those stupid items that is repeated twice in a list for humorous emphasis because the writer thinks that they are a comedian.

9. Most of the time the lists make people feel stupid because they don't know what half of the things on the list are, but are too embarrassed to ask.

8. An article discussing the strengths and weaknesses of each list item would be much more informative and entertaining to read.

7. Mostly the writer only has two or three relevant things for the list, and so most of the list is a bunch of bull. Such is the case here, and so number six will be skipped for a lack of content.

5. There is always one of those stupid items that is repeated twice in a list for humorous emphasis because the writer thinks that they are a comedian.

4. Chuck Norris says so.

3. Chuck Norris always roundhouse kicks his way onto the list, even if the list is top ten losers. (In that case he roundhouse kicks his way on the list just to roundhouse kick all the losers in the face.)

2. They build a lot of suspense by providing nine really boring items allowing the reader to suspect a brilliant number one but never live up to expectations and give stupid things like ten is an unlucky number.

1. Ten is an unlucky number.

## Police & safety special report

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The Beacon has received a police report through means that cannot yet be disclosed (flying ninjas). The report describes events that involve a wheelchair gang and a local mountainboarder gang. The report has been compiled and charges have been pressed. Officer Truett says that this gang war started due to a turf disagreement between the Power Wheels and the Off Road Bandits.

Witness accounts put the first altercation somewhere around the Bruno's elevator area. The cleaning crew told the Power Wheels to spinout their tires on the floor mat before cruzin' around the newly waxed floor. The Power Wheels were astonished at the claim placing them at the scene of a dirty floor.

After discussing the issue, the power wheels soon discovered that the Off Road Bandits were to blame for the muddy floors, and there would be hell to pay for disrespecting the Power Wheels' turf. Drastic measures had to be taken, and the Power Wheels cruised to the Off Road Bandits' Mecca: the Bruno's stairs. They poured water on the grass and turned it to mud and broke bottles at the landing of

the stairs. The Power Wheels then covered all their trails and blamed the vandalism on a mob of angry Broncos fans.

The Off Road Bandits knew something had to be done. They built a large kicker and launched so high off it that the whole Power Wheels gang saw a banner that said "The Fight Is On!!!" being pulled behind a mountainboarder with a gnarly Indy grab. The fight was set, and all parties knew what was at stake.

They met at high noon in front of the Bruno's stairs. They slowly rushed each other in a suspenseful finger snapping method. As the two gangs were just about to collide, a shrill beeping noise stopped the gang war as they all watched in awe a Housing and Food Services worker getting out of a truck pulling a muddy wheeled dolly with large brown boxes heading towards the Bruno's elevator. Both the Power Wheels gang and the Off Road Bandits gang looked at each other and realized that this war was not between each other but rather against the disrespectful Housing and Food Services guy. Both gangs then held hands and cruised down the hill from Almy to Science with their hair flowing in the breeze laughing the whole way down into a beautiful sunset.



Jersey Poll

## Prodigy founds nursing program

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Behrend's already expanding campus was made even bigger with the conception of the newest major. As of Spring 2006, Behrend will be offering classes involved with the medical field. Former child prodigy Doogie Howser, M.D. will be the new chairman of Behrend's new major. Howser and his partner Vinnie Delpino look to single-handedly transform the campus as students know it.

Along with the praise Howser has received for being an admirable physician and establishing many praiseworthy credentials, skeptics still offer rebuttals for Behrend's new plan. In one instance, a cynical patient simply told Howser, "You're a kid."

In response to this issue, Howser replied, "True, but I'm also a genius. If you have a problem with that, I can get you someone who's older but not as smart as me." This confidence in Howser's work has led Chancellor Jack Burke to put his full support behind Behrend's decision to add the medical

major to its curriculum. "I feel that Howser and his staff of Dr. David Howser, Dr. Benjamin Canfield, Dr. Jack McGuire, Dr. Ron Welch, Nurse Michele Faber and Nurse Curly Spaulding will be the triumphant starting point for a program immersed in an already successful campus."

Howser began his illustrious career at the age of 14, while his friends were caught up in watching "Full House" and getting their left ears pierced. From the heights of successful surgery to the depths of losing a patient, Howser's well roundedness has won him nationally renowned acclaim from physicians around the world. This excerpt from Howser's daily journal gives us insight to what drives Howser in his occupation, "Kissed my first girl. Lost my first patient. Life will never be the same again..."

The reaction to the news of Behrend's expansion has been received very well by its students. There has been much speculation that Behrend will be expanding its curriculum to include nursing and education. No one could have possibly anticipated the arrival of such qualified physicians on staff. Local Erie

residents predicted a staff of experienced physicians that would aid students in their goal of becoming able doctors. With the arrival of Howser and his staff, Behrend and local leaders agree that they will raise their expectations for the program.

Former Erie resident and successful Californian physician Dr. Turner N. Coff, specialist in sports physicals, said, "The only regret that I have in my life is that I was not born later than I was. I have spent thousands upon thousands of dollars paying for my out-of-state medical schools. If I had the opportunity to work under Howser in the proximity of Erie, I would have jumped at the possibility."

Even current students contemplate changing majors just to receive the endless benefit of Howser's tutelage. International student Serge Urray, formerly of Finland, has decided to remain at Behrend beyond his graduation date to obtain his medical degree. Urray said, "It doesn't matter the cost or consequence. Doogie Howser has already established his place in medical history. That is worth staying in school for. Hopefully he can bring Wanda along too."

## Deadly dishes dealt daily

By Dan Dombrowski  
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Months ago, as reported in an Associated Press article, twenty-two year old Nathaniel Radzicki of Sheboygan, WS was arrested on the charge of substantial battery and disorderly conduct with a dangerous weapon after he attacked his girlfriend with a cactus. You may find this funny. You may chuckle at the idea of using a cactus as a weapon. You may make a few jokes about being a "human pincushion." You may even giggle when you hear the word "Sheboygan." I assure you, this is no laughing matter.

Every day, in every city and town across this country, in every grocery store, on every aisle and on almost every shelf you can find a potentially deadly weapon. Our produce departments are full of pineapples and prickly pears; our floral departments are full of countless varieties of the aforementioned cacti; and frankly, this reporter has had enough. The sale of unlicensed, organic weaponry has gone on for far too long.

If nothing is done to stop this epidemic, it is only a matter of time before we are swal-

lowed whole by a wave of food-related violence.

I work at a local grocery store as a checker, and no one knows the wide range of potential weapons out there better than I do. Just this morning, I helped lift a thirty-pound turkey out of a cart that could easily have been used to kill a grown man. Don't worry. I memorized that grandmother's name and address from her check. The police should be closing in on her location any minute now. But I can't do it all on my own. In my store alone, there are two full aisles of canned goods that could easily become lodged in a young child's brain should he or she be left alone in the kitchen for a few moments.

So I implore you, write to your local Congressmen. Demand legislation to control these food-based disasters waiting to happen. Push for a two-week waiting period for coconuts and all melons over five pounds. Demand that background checks be completed before the purchase of cacti, roses or any other sharp or pointed plants in the floral department. Stop food related tragedies before one hits you. No one wants the last thing they see before they die to be "Butterball."