

THE BATTALION

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Wednesday, November 5, 1980

Tooth Fairy is alive and well and on the telephone

She gilds teeth, has her own hotline, and teaches children dental hygiene

United Press International
CHICAGO — For parents unable to convince their children they should brush their teeth, the Tooth Fairy is ready to lend a hand.

The Tooth Fairy is Sharon Rutkowski, 32, a dental assistant in suburban Addison. She has established a telephone hotline as a way of educating children about dental hygiene.

"Children have a poor attitude about dental health," Rutkowski said. "It's tough to get them in the habit of brushing. I have two of my own. I know."

"About a year ago I thought of the Tooth Fairy Hotline. The children can call 24 hours a day, every day. Twice a week I talk to them personally and discuss brushing, how often to use dental floss and just things they need to do."

The best way of reaching children through fantasy. No one ever did much with the Tooth Fairy. No one knew why she was picking up the phone. So I figured what better character to give children some incentive?"

Rutkowski said most of her callers are between the ages of 3 and 12, "but I have gotten calls from teenagers and some parents call to find out what I'm telling their children."

Calls come from as far away as California and Florida, she said. The dark-haired, dark-eyed woman, whose personal appearance outfit is a pearl crown and a white chiffon dress with wings, gives out "Official Tooth Fairy Awards" and gilds baby teeth for \$2. ("I used to charge \$1.50," she said, "but gold leafing has gone up.")

Rutkowski estimates she receives an average 1,000 calls from children and gilds about 100 teeth every week.

She now is looking for a sponsor to underwrite her personal appearances, which she makes with "Mr. Brush, Mr. Tooth and Mr. Cavity."

Her presentation, usually made at schools and parks, includes the legend of the Tooth Fairy.

"When I was very little, I had a lot of friends with stinky breath and yellow teeth," she says in a high-pitched, squeaky voice. "I used to wonder why."

"One day, one of my friends lost a tooth and dropped it on the ground. I picked it up. It had a lot of holes in it and I asked my dentist why. He explained and that's when I decided to become a fighter against Mr. Cavity."

"Mr. Sandman gave me a bag of magic dust. I sprinkled some over my head and I got wings—but I only fly between midnight and 6 a.m."

At this point she interrupted her story to say she put in that last line so children wouldn't ask her to fly for them.

"Then I sprinkled some magic dust over the tooth (pause) and it changed into a black pearl," she continued. "So I went into a store to see how much I could get for it. Well, they grabbed it."

"So I started leaving notes under children's pillows saying, 'Leave me a tooth and I'll leave you a prize, the Tooth Fairy.' So I sprinkled magic dust over all the teeth and the ones without cavities turned into white pearls—and stores gave me a lot more for white pearls than black pearls."

"And that's why I go from house-to-house collecting teeth."



Rutkowski said her husband, Richard, 34, has gotten quite a kick out of the whole Tooth Fairy scene and even was responsible for part of her collection of props.

"I was sick one day and couldn't answer the phone, but how can you tell a child—some of them call faithfully twice a week—that the Tooth Fairy is sick," she said. "So Richard said he'd help out."

"I don't know what he did to his voice, but he sounded like a robot. He told the children he was Toothie-ack, my electronic robot."

"So now I've got a little radio-controlled robot. I tell the children that when they're born, Toothie-ack gets the information and is programmed to send out a ticker tape to tell me where to go to collect the teeth."

The Tooth Fairy Hotline is (312) 628-0615.

Paris bank looted during holiday

United Press International
PARIS—Thieves who apparently hid inside a bank branch before it closed for a three-day holiday weekend looted 250 safe deposit boxes and left a painted inscription that read, "Without hate, without violence, without weapons. Thank you," police reported Tuesday.

Officials at the Caisse d'Epargne branch in a fashionable residential district of the city discovered the theft when they opened for business after the All Saints Day weekend.

They said they could make no immediate estimate of losses without an inventory of the boxes' contents, but expected the toll to involve millions of dollars worth of valuables.

Investigators said an unknown number of thieves apparently hid in the bank's offices before it closed Friday afternoon and spent the weekend breaking into about one-third of the branch's safe deposit boxes.

They tossed aside securities that would be difficult to sell and also left some jewelry and gold ingots in a pile of discarded items on the vault floor, police said, indicating they found it impossible to carry all their booty.

No signs of broken locks or forced doors were found inside the bank and it was not immediately clear how the thieves escaped.

Police said it was possible they discovered keys inside the offices that allowed them to leave by one of the doors after deactivating an alarm system.

The inscription found spray-painted on the vault wall was similar to one left behind by burglars who looted 339 safe boxes at a bank in the Riviera resort city of Nice in 1976 after tunneling inside.

Brazilians getting more miles to the fifth

United Press International
RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil — When 100-percent alcohol-powered cars went on sale in April, Brazilians balked at buying them. Now there is a stampede to get them.

"With the Iran-Iraq war, the Brazilian has come to be terrified of gasoline and only wants to know about alcohol," said Wolfgang Sauer, president of Volkswagen's giant Brazilian subsidiary.

New car dealers in this oil-poor country report as many as eight or nine of every 10 potential customers ask for an alcohol-powered model, be it Ford, Chevy, Volks or Fiat. Most dealers have waiting lists. They say price is the chief factor. Alcohol fuel, subsidized by the government, costs the consumer barely half as much as gasoline.

For the first time there are reports

the home-grown fuel may be in short supply in 1981.

Brazil's alcohol program goes back to 1975 when the military government started the plan to replace expensive imported oil with alcohol made from Brazilian sugar cane. First the alcohol was mixed into regular gasoline. Now almost 2,000 service stations sell pure alcohol fuel at the pump as well as the regular gasohol.

Production of alcohol cars has accelerated since the start of the year. Automakers have topped the 100,000-unit mark and have an agreement with the government to finish 1980 at 250,000 alcohol models out of an overall auto production of 1.1 million.

Sales went so slowly at first that auto industry officials suggested extra incentives for alcohol car buyers.

But during the year gasoline prices tripled and buyers soon discovered it was cheaper to burn the government-subsidized alcohol than heavily taxed gasoline.

Current pump prices are \$2.85 per gallon for regular fuel, \$1.52 per gallon for alcohol. Alcohol cars get about 20 percent fewer miles per gallon of fuel, but the government has guaranteed that alcohol always will cost at least 35 percent less than gasoline so the alcohol car owner should always come out ahead.

When the Persian Gulf War hit, Brazil was importing almost half its oil needs from Iraq. Immediately there was talk of gasoline rationing and the government hiked the price of regular another 18 percent.

Government specialists reported-

ly fear an alcohol shortage in 1981 should current consumption rates continue.

But both the industry minister and the agriculture minister denied there will be any shortage.

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