

Going the Step Beyond in

. . . Spreading the Joy



Klynky,
a.k.a.
Kay Henry

of Killeen
Texas

Put on your humor ears and eyes, take laughter everywhere, and make life fun. It's never too late to have a happy childhood. ~ Kay Henry

From Kay's daughter Barbara Allen, RN Coordinator for Health Services, Killeen ISD, Texas

"My mom has helped our community so much in these difficult times of deployment by speaking to our school counselors and now the nurses at a conference for pediatric and school nurses at Scott & White Hospital. Our community is now up to 83 deaths in our units from Fort Hood. Her sunshine helps us learn to deal with the stress of life.

"She also spoke to our school counselors last February to encourage them to see humor in little things of life, especially when life is really difficult such as it is for our community. One of the counselors was so inspired that she decided to give noses to the teachers on her campus for Teacher Appreciation Day.

"After hearing her speak, several employees were observed encouraging a coworker who was having a stressful day by using materials they had on hand. They made balloons out of surgical gloves. One became a cow labeled "Don't be in UDDER despair." The others

were made into a girl with a big smile, an ad for a silly moving company who could help her pack her personal belongings from her office, and a hand to help her out.

"It is not only the people who attend a conference who benefit from the information. As those go into the community and spread some cheer, others learn and are encouraged to reach out to others too."

"Blessed are we who can laugh at ourselves, for we shall never cease to be amused."

Kay Henry would be the first to say she doesn't do much without having fun. "Kay is the kind of lady who, when cut off in traffic by an inconsiderate driver, dons a pair of Groucho Marx glasses so she can give that driver something to think about if their cars pass each other farther down the road." – Sharon Denning from the Odessa American

Kay is a mother of two, a grandmother of four, and a great-grandmother of two. She's been a clown for 21 years and a Registered Nurse for 57 years. Retiring from registered nursing, Kay moved to Odessa in 1981 with her husband, Wynn Veale. The couple, known as *Wynky and Klynky*, worked as professional clowns, performing at the fair, at private parties and eventually teaching a clowning class at Odessa College. "After he retired, my husband's original plan was to be a wedding photographer," she said. "Instead we went to clown school in Houston just before we moved here, and we decided to go into clowning instead."

Sometimes we forget to laugh or even smile when life gets heavy. Some people do not naturally see humor in everyday situations, but they can learn.

"At my age, people shake their heads and say, 'That crazy old lady,' but deep down many of them wish they had the courage to do it. What better way to bolster people and make them feel good?"

What started as a second career as Klynky the Clown grew — through time and experience — into a desire to sprinkle a little joy into people's everyday lives and offer humor and compassion to the sick and the dying.

"A person who belly laughs doesn't have time to bellyache."

Kay presents a program entitled "Aging is Not For Sissies." in which she shares her unique and humorous altitudes about life.

Kay and her husband learned the benefit of laughing at life's misfortune when he was stricken with Guillain-Barre Syndrome, a neurological disorder that causes progressive muscle weakness or paralysis.

"Humor is so healing. If you can laugh at it, you can live with it."

Kay learned to live with even more when her husband died of cancer in 1983. Her second husband, Norman Henry, also died of cancer.

At a Clown Camp in Wisconsin, she learned clowns weren't all silly, that their positive humor did have real value. And as a retired nurse, she knew she wanted much of her clowning around to be for hospitals and hospice.

Judy English, volunteer coordinator for Odyssey Hospice in Odessa, has worked in hospice care with Kay for nearly 10 years. "When you work in this business, if you don't have a sense of humor, you just

can't make it," English said. Kay entertains hospice patients' family members at special dinners, visits patients at home and provides respite care when care givers need a break. Kay gives people so much pleasure and hope. Often there isn't a way to find much hope, but she does it."

Kay continues "There are so many small things you can do to bring a little pleasure, brighten someone's day or at least make it more bearable,"

"A Christian ought to be happy. It's not a dull way to go. Put on your humor ears and eyes, take laughter everywhere, and make life fun. It's never too late to have a happy childhood." "I just know God wants us to be happy," Henry said, "and he made clowns just for fun." Henry is a member of Caring Clowns, and eight years ago she made a mission trip to Japan. She also teaches a clowning class for the children's fine arts program at First Baptist Church.

♥♥♥♥ *They Stole Our Hearts*
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Cheryl “Queenie” Bailey is one of the Kettering Medical Center’s clowns who visits the Children's Medical Center (Ohio). Valerie Haley, Director of Volunteers sent the following to the newsletter with this comment. “I know that this experience touched Cheryl and it also helped to comfort this child who in a time of fear was in need of a grandmother's love and gentle touch.”

An Experience from Cheryl “Queenie” Bailey, Kettering, Ohio
Monday was my first clowning experience at Children’s. It was truly an experience to remember. We saw a little girl with a dog bite, a boy whose dog tripped him, a baby who had fallen, a teenage boy who was embarrassed because he was there and a teenage girl who had been sick for weeks but now came in for fluid replacement.

Then back in a quiet corner of the emergency department there were two little towhead sisters. One was 3 years old and the other 2 years old. As we went in, we passed a police officer coming out with a camera. These little girls’ feet were black and we found out later they had been washed up, but so dirty

NRL Allergy The skinny on Latex Allergies

Hardly a week goes by that someone doesn’t write me about Latex Allergies. Every time I buy a product to take to the hospital or sell from the newsletter, I need to write the manufacturer and ask about latex contents.

Latex allergy is actually Natural Rubber Latex (NRL) Allergy

Natural rubber latex is manufactured from a milky protein fluid that is obtained from the rubber tree (*Hevea brasiliensis*). Some synthetic rubber materials may be referred to as "latex" but they do not contain the protein that produces latex allergies. For example, latex paint does not contain natural rubber - NRL. Here the term refers to a physical property of the paint. All the more to confuse us, but it may do us good to know what we are looking for and asking about.

NRL is found in a wide range of manufactured goods, including an estimated 40,000 common household items including: car tires, rubber bands, elastic, carpet

they couldn't get the feet clean. They had been found in a house with roaches crawling in their ears and mice running across a house so filthy that it would be condemned the next day. Their diapers so bad that they hung to the floor filled with all kinds of excrement.

I walked quietly to the crib which held the tiniest of the two girls and started talking and singing softly to her while Linda [her clown partner] played with the older child. When I put my finger through the bars, this little one held tight to my hand. I asked the nurse if I could hold her and was told as long as I didn't see other children that night it would be fine. I picked her up and spent the next hour rocking and singing to her. After about 15 minutes she and her sister became children for the first time in their lives, just like the rocking was a first for the youngest. They laughed at the bubbles that Linda blew and the music she played on a little xylophone. If I would stop rocking, the little one would encourage me to start again by rocking her body.

This was such a sad but sweet time for me to give love for just a short time to one who had not had any since she came from her Father in Heaven. Please pray for those who are in such sad situations.

backing, hospital and dental equipment. Dipped latex products are the biggest culprits in triggering allergic reactions, including exam gloves, kitchen gloves, and balloons. NRL is also found in many toys and children’s items as pacifiers and balls, bubble blowers and puppets. Generally speaking, if it is pliable, it may contain NRL

Exposure to NRL worsens with each exposure - known as *allergic sensitization*. The allergic reactions can range from moderate skin irritations to life-threatening anaphylaxis shock.

Latex allergy was first recognized in the late 1970s. Prior to this, reactions to latex were virtually unknown in the United States. Now, according to OSHA, it is estimated that 8-12% of health care workers are latex sensitive. And it now affects an estimated 1% to 6% of the U.S. population, or up to 16 million people.

Why is this a new problem?

The introduction of *Universal Precautions* (UP) in health care settings gave rise to the widespread use of

latex gloves to prevent the spread of AIDS and Hepatitis B. To meet the demand of the UP there were significant changes in the manufacturing of latex products, specifically latex gloves. To keep up with increased demand, manufacturers sped up their processes and resorted to lower quality latex, both of which have resulted in latex products with higher levels of the protein that can trigger allergic reactions.

In certain pediatric populations there may be an incidence as high as 73% of children with spina bifida and related pathologies are at high risk because of multiple surgical procedures and catheterizations with the opportunity of contact with rubber catheters and other NRL instruments. **This is the main reason balloons are not allowed in pediatric wards. Children can develop a sensitivity to NRL much quicker than an**

adult. As NRL was not a problem in the active years of most seniors there is no report of incidents among seniors in nursing homes.

There have been extensive efforts to provide a latex safe environment for children at risk. Proper and understandable labeling has been an issue. In the future, skin tests may be commercially available and there may be treatment protocols also.

If you are working with children, check everything for NRL. With ICU and Recovery be equally alert. As older adults are less likely to become latex sensitive, nursing homes may allow balloons and latex puppets. However, it will only show you are a conscientious and aware member of the health care team if you ASK FIRST.