
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

Do you think this rain is ever going to end? It's supposed to clear up today but it's still gray and gloomy. And the forecast is for more rain over the next few days. We need a little relief so we don't all end up "under the weather."

Now there's a good saying – the expression means you are not feeling very well, and you're not exactly sure why you feel a little sad or depressed, achy, or just plain grumpy. The old expression comes from a connection with the weather - some people feel down when there's no sunshine and it's dark, dull and raining, and atmospheric conditions like moisture and barometric pressure work on us as well. You know how those old goats complain about Ole Arthur (Arthur-itis) when it's raining? That's as good an excuse as any, and then, oh-my-gosh – the traffic!

When you combine Christmas shopping with this bad weather, traffic all over Baton Rouge is bottlenecked. Please, if you live in Baton Rouge, and you have not finished your Christmas shopping, **please** go on the Internet so the rest of us can **please** get home at a decent hour. See, the weather has a bad effect on me, too. I try not to be too grouchy....and I shouldn't be grouchy on my birthday!

Yes, today is my birthday and I want to thank everyone who thought of me on this day and sent great messages. I'm starting to realize my age (and no, THAT is classified information) – I woke up this morning with a little hitch in my git-along. Must be the weather.

I know you have been hearing about the state's budget deficit. Our executive team has been working hard to address budget issues. Our work continues and we will keep you all posted when we have information to share.

Louisiana has been somewhat fortunate because we have not felt the severe impact of the economic downturn until recently. I was recently in Washington, DC at a Models for Change conference and things up there are noticeably different. I'm accustomed to seeing tons of people on the mass transit systems – there were few. And when the Atlanta airport has few travelers, and Union Station is almost deserted, you know things are tough. The northeast looks radically different now than last year at this time.

But keep in mind that these economic down times are not going to last forever. As a city, state, nation, and as individuals, we do what we have to do to survive these economic times.

Now, here's a blast in today's national news. Louisiana is the happiest state in the nation. The happiness ratings are based on a survey of over a million people across the country conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. People in sunny states like Louisiana, Hawaii and Florida say they're the happiest Americans. "Ranking No. 1 in happiness was Louisiana, home of Dixieland music and Cajun/Creole cooking," the report said. Researchers were a bit cautious, though, noting that part of the survey took place before Hurricane Katrina and part after. In case you are wondering about which was the unhappiest state? New York.

So, I'll try to be upbeat and I hope you will, too. The economy has got to turn around and the sun has got to come out. OMG – I just looked out the window, and there's a strange light in the sky!

Have a great, sunny, dry weekend. And thanks for all you do, in fair weather and foul, to meet the mission.

Sincerely,

"Doc"

Dr. Mary Livers

P.S. Hope to see you all at the OJJ Christmas party in Baton Rouge tomorrow evening. Be safe if you are traveling.

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