

---

# what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

---

Vol. 2, No. 17. December 12, 2009

Hello, Everyone:

You're not going to believe what's on my mind today. Goats. It's not that I am familiar with a lot of goats, just that I have been reading and hearing about them recently. Which is kind of strange. Who talks about goats?

Ever wonder where the expression "that gets my goat" comes from? I'm reading a book that talks about where expressions and sayings come from. According to this book, high-strung horses often had goats as companions, due to the goats' uncanny ability to calm horses down. (which I have on good authority is true). The book goes on to say that specifically, racehorses had goat companions, and to get the horse revved up and excited before a race, someone would "get the goat." One legend even says that rivals would deliberately bet against a certain horse and then steal the goat, so the horse would get upset and not race as well. Such practices are uncommon these days, but the expression remains. And like many such sayings, we usually have no idea where it originated.

Another mention of goats came up recently. A member of my staff told me that as a result of last week's "What's Up, Doc?" she followed through on a thought and asked her family for a goat for Christmas. I asked whether she wanted it fried or barbecued. In reality, she wanted it delivered to an impoverished family in a developing nation by an international relief organization. In any event, I reminded her to watch what you ask for (and surely you know the rest of THAT saying...) or she could wake up Christmas morning to find a goat in the front yard. She is now very concerned that one sibling might take her literally since she lives in the country - with a couple of horses.

Which brings me to the next thought. Goats are inquisitive, curious and smart. They are independent, they like to explore new surroundings and they have a calming effect on high-strung creatures. They have a reputation for being stubborn. What's not to like about a goat? Even an old goat. So, the moral of the story is: don't let anybody get your goat. The message this week is, very simply, to stay calm and work it out. And there is a reason I say this. We have some big hurdles ahead of us.

We all need to try to stay calm as we approach our new challenges as an agency. To be honest with all of you, this week's "What's Up, Doc?" has been very hard for me to write. That is why this edition is coming out on Saturday. I had to call the executive team in to work today, and possibly tomorrow. We were notified yesterday that the state is in a budget crisis this fiscal year, and we must be prepared to face serious mid year cuts. I have been struggling whether to address it in "What's Up, Doc?" and as you now know, I felt I should communicate the truth to you, however unpleasant, and even though the timing is very bad for all of us. We don't have control over this, so we have to "gut up" and handle it the best way we can. We will be making decisions based on the mission. It is serious, and that's about all I can say. I am sorry to have to communicate this, as I always look forward to sharing something uplifting, but not this time.

I am signing off now as we have work to do, and I must not keep our team waiting. God bless all of you and the work you do, everyday, to meet our mission. As we have specific information to share, we will get it to you as soon as we can. I am counting on all of us in OJJ to be supportive to each other as we approach these huge challenges ahead of us.

Sincerely,

"Doc"

*Dr. Mary Livers*

Mary L. Livers, MSW, PH.D, Deputy Secretary

---

Office of Juvenile Justice • PO Box 66458 • Baton Rouge, LA 70896 • e: Whatsupdoc?OJJ@la.gov • www.ojd.louisiana.gov