
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

This has been quite a week. While I am speechless at this moment, there is no shortage of topics to talk about in WUD. Suffice it to say that on Tuesday afternoon about 3 p.m., I asked DAS Karen Stubbs, "Is tomorrow Friday?" She said, "No, Doc, it's only Tuesday." Well, that explains why I'm so tired.

Bright and early Monday morning, Karen and I drove to New Orleans to meet with the LA District Attorneys Assn. (LDAA), which had invited me to give an update on OJJ. I was happy to do that, and we updated them on Columbia and Bunkie, as well as our most recent recidivism data. It looked like they had great attendance at the meeting – I'm guessing that about 40 elected DAs were there.

Then back to Baton Rouge for an afternoon of rapid fire meetings, including some on contract negotiations and capital outlay requests. Coincidental to me talking about a capital outlay top priority being the Bridge City perimeter, at that moment DAS Sean Hamilton came in to inform us of a report that three youth were missing from BCCY. Appropriate staff were dispatched to deal with the situation. It did not help any that it was Halloween night – there should have been a full moon, but there wasn't. In any event, Team OJJ came together to help out at BCCY. We had staff there from Hammond P&P, Baton Rouge P&P, Thibodaux P&P and Central Office. After a sleepless night during which we worked with local law enforcement, we regained custody of the youth the next morning. The 17 year old will be seen in adult court, and the two 16 year olds are in custody at Jetson. We are looking at our policies, procedures and training to ensure that we address what led to this incident.

Later Tuesday I was invited to speak to the Public Defender Board, also in New Orleans. I appreciate being invited, as all partners in the justice system have a vested interest in the professional exchange of information and understanding of the different roles that we all play. Back to BCCY that afternoon for a press briefing on the escape incident. And an added bonus to being at BCCY at that time was that I was able to meet and greet the second shift as they came in, something that I usually do not have the opportunity to do.

Wednesday I got to find out that Alexandria RM Johnny Qualls is a natural with the media. I had the opportunity to be on a radio program with Johnny and Communications Director Jerel Giarrusso. Department of Corrections has a regular radio program – Re-Entry Radio – broadcast from KAYT in Alexandria. I'm sure getting my media practice in this week, and in this case, practice does not make perfect. I'm grateful that Johnny and Jerel carried the weight of the show. Anyway, we had a good time, and we told listeners about the work that OJJ does and many of our programs. The show will soon be archived on the DOC website, so anyone can listen to it, at <http://doc.la.gov/pages/reentry-initiatives/reentry-radio/#2011>. The link goes to the web page that explains the purpose of the show.

Thursday, I traveled to Jackson, Miss., with Chief of Operations Ellyn Toney, DAS Carolyn Lewis and DAS Sean Hamilton, to take advantage of an invitation to see how the Mississippi juvenile justice office manages its system. We toured the Oakley facility and were also able to visit with the staff from community based services. We had good exchange of information, and we have extended an invitation for them to come and visit our operation as well.

In all my travels in just the last two weeks, I have noticed a lot of dead raccoons by the side of the road. I guess they are getting killed crossing roads while trying to hide before Thanksgiving. It looks to me like they ought to hide now. If we keep running over them, there won't be enough for Thanksgiving.

Well, I hope you all can tune in for the game of the century. I can't wait. Geaux Tigers – beat Bama! Wishing you all a wonderful fall weekend (game and all), and don't forget to turn back your clocks and enjoy that extra hour of sleep as daylight savings time comes to an end this weekend. As ever, my thanks to each and every member of Team OJJ, wherever you serve, for all you do every day to meet the mission.

Sincerely,
"Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

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