
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

Vol. 4, No. 40. June 29, 2012

Hello, Everyone:

We all know (and now the whole world knows) that alligators and Louisiana are almost as synonymous as white and rice. Back in April, you may remember, a gator checked into a motel in Port Allen and bit a human guest – from Florida no less – that tried to grab it. This week a seven footer stopped traffic on the interstate near Lake Charles and was finally removed. Also this week, alligators identified as dinner a couple fishing on Lake Verret near Pierre Part, after their boat was swamped and rolled in choppy water. The couple managed to scramble 15 feet up a cypress tree, where they tied themselves in before being rescued by sheriff's deputies several hours later. Our gators are made for walkin' even before they become boots, and that's just what they're doing. One of these days they are going to walk all over town...can we all say "choot 'em?" Or just learn to wrassle.

Maybe the alligators are looking for a cooler place than a hot, humid swamp. Because it's hot out there, y'all. The news reported this week that June has been unseasonably warm. Yeah, we got that. And we know how to handle the heat. (Air conditioning, lemonade, sunscreen and hats, air conditioning...) Others are not so fortunate. Just ask the people in Colorado who are losing their homes to uncontrollable wildfires. We should send prayer and good thoughts to the people of Colorado Springs who are losing everything to those fires – those of us in hurricane country can identify. Speaking of hurricanes, we dodged a bullet with TS Debby – a bad tempered lady that poured oceans of rain on the Tampa area. We all need to be aware and ready to roll if (and when) another storm churns up in the Gulf.

Changing gears, we had a very productive half-day PREA Grant Workshop with The Moss Group, OJJ leaders in the facilities, regional offices and central office, and a number of providers. You may remember that we were awarded a sizable grant by the U.S. DOJ to study our PREA readiness and the culture within our organization. The national PREA final standards and rules will take effect next year, and I am happy to say that OJJ appears to be ahead of the pack on implementation of PREA concepts in our secure facilities and our contract providers in the community.

Medical update: I have graduated from the wheelchair to crutches. Yea! It's a little easier to get around now and it feels good to be on my own four feet. At least I'm on the same level as everyone else, not looking up at people who are looking down at me. It's been 9 weeks since my fall and the doctor says I'm recovering nicely, thanks to the physical and moral support of family, friends, colleagues, and yes, Daisy the Golden Retriever.

As you know, next week is the Fourth of July holiday – it's unusual to have a mid-week holiday but I know all of you will enjoy having the day off for some summer activities. Whether you are barbecuing at home, visiting friends, boating, fishing (watch out for those gators so you do not become dinner), enjoying one of our state parks, please be careful on the road, in the water and in the heat. It's easy to have heat exhaustion or heat stroke if we're not careful. And remember our secure care staff who will be taking care of our youth and making sure they have a pleasant holiday.

Wishing all of you, wherever you serve, a wonderful weekend and a great Independence Day holiday, with my thanks to each and every one of you, for all you do every day, to meet the mission.

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