
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

Vol. 6, No. 6, September 20, 2013

Hello, Everybody:

Well, we started off the week with another mass murder incident, this time at yet another military base, the Navy Yard in D.C. It seems ironic to me that we've had two mass shootings at military bases where security to get on and off the installation is supposedly well-maintained. "We have met the enemy and he is us." (Ever heard that before? That profound statement was penned in 1953 by comic strip author Walt Kelly, who created Pogo, a comic strip set in a swamp. The statement was uttered by Pogo, a wise possum, a parody of an actual message sent in 1813 by Commodore Perry to General Harrison after his victory in battle, "we have met the enemy, and they are ours.") It just seems like we must have the highest mass murder rate of all the "civilized" countries.

There does not appear to be enough consensus to institute more protective measures about who gets guns, so if that's not an option, maybe we need to turn toward something else – mental health care. Apparently a lot of people knew the man in Washington, D.C. was disturbed. Unless we find a way to proactively and effectively control the behavior of the mentally ill people in our communities, we stand a chance of seeing more of this in communities nationwide. There seems to be one common denominator in all of these mass shootings – mental illness on the part of the shooter. The Colorado movie theater shooting, the person who shot Arizona Congresswoman Gabby Giffords, the school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut – every one committed by people with serious mental health issues. The system is not set up to prevent these incidents. There seems to be a lesson here for all of us – we really don't know who we are dealing with. We can't look at somebody and know they are delusional or psychotic. It pays to be very careful if we know that some people that we encounter in public may look perfectly harmless, but they may not be. It is most important that we keep in mind that some people out there are struggling with some kind of mental disorder. (Time to read *Crazy: A Father's Search Through America's Mental Health Madness*, by a journalist named Pete Early, who wrote a lot about crime and punishment, and society – but had no real idea of the truth about treatment – and non-treatment - until his son was declared mentally ill.) We need to be very responsible for communicating this to people in authority, and we must be careful not to minimize things that we might see and actually need to act on. Maybe there are other ways to address these issues, but address them we must. The week was almost ended, when there was a mass shooting yesterday in Chicago where 13 people, including a little three-year old boy, were shot and wounded. Mercifully, all survived.

Well, on a much happier note, the Eagle has landed! I probably did not tell you all that our Eagle Award went missing after it was presented to us at ACA. After it flew the coop, a little detective work showed that the award was nested in an ACA employee's conference materials, but it was never recovered. So, a new eagle was sent to us and we received it this week. It's on display in our conference room and will soon appear on our website.

How 'bout some football? LSU meets Auburn this weekend, but it looks like nasty weather, so it's a good thing that I didn't get tickets after all. Southern University plays Mississippi State in Itta Bena, and the Saints play the St. Louis Cardinals in the Superdome. So far, so good – no storms – but it looks like we are going to have a stormy weekend.

Well, I'll close for now, with my thanks to each and every member of the OJJ family, in every facility and office, for the work you do every day, often with difficult youth, but always with public safety foremost, as you meet the mission.

Sincerely,

"Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

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