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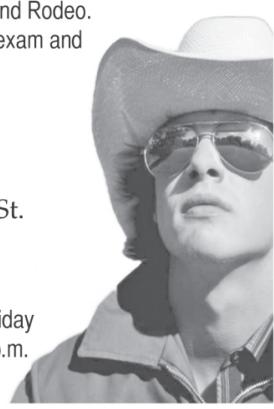
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Dr. Aaron Reneau, OD




Frankly Speaking –

# The Big Cover-Up – Kitty Litter

by Frank Jordan

Great inventions have often been due to the need for an answer to a critical need. Examples are Benjamin Franklin and his kite in a lightning storm and Thomas Edison and the telephone/electric lights. Then there was Kay Draper with Kitty Litter!

That's right, it was almost 80 years ago in 1947 that Kay Draper was the primary player in the big cover-up who helped de-

velop an answer to the issues of a smelly cat litter box and the unwanted deposits left by indoor cats finding relief.

Until after World War II almost all cats resided outdoors due to the indoor irritants of stinking leavings and the unpredictable behavior of unaltered kitties indoors. Shredded furniture, wallpaper and clothing were common and to be expected and thus most

felines resided outside instead of inside.

Today, millions of cats live comfortable lives indoors due to the efforts and insights of Kay Draper and her kitty litter bringing indoor cats into acceptability in our lives. Now, we periodically must clean the indoor litter box by spending only a few minutes scooping and tossing clumped litter with the odor mostly gone. But what about before World War II?

Most wily cats were hunters of mice and did their business in backyards and flowerbeds; often seen scratching the loose soil, squatting and then using their paws to cover their production. We surmise that the health-savvy cats' habit of burying their business was to hide their presence from predators and to instinctively protect themselves from disease and parasites. Perhaps that's why they have nine lives.

After noticing these habits, those willing to go to the trouble of providing a disposal facility indoors would use sand, sawdust and frequently fireplace ashes placed in roasting pans or enamel containers. Frying strainers were often the removal utensil, hopefully boiled after usage. Lump-fries anyone? Yuck.

This process required disposing of polluted fillers and washing the pans daily – unacceptable to most folks. Today cat lovers display cat hair on clothes, but litter box ashes from dirty paws transferred to clothes were the telltale sign for those dedicated early cat litter box owners.

On a snowy January day in Cassopolis, Michigan in 1947, Kay Draper was unable to access her snow-covered sand supply for her litter box and thus her Angora cat was leaving soot paw tracks everywhere inside her home. She sought help from her neighbor, Ed Lowe, and he suggested in the absence of sand to use Fuller's Earth, which is kiln-dried clay granules. Fuller's Earth was used at the time by chicken farmers as nesting material. The clay granules worked, with Kay revisiting her neighbor and bringing her friends with her to acquire the unique at-the-time cat box material. Lowe decided to test to see if there was a larger market and "Kitty Litter" arrived in five-pound sacks for \$.69 each. Sales began and increased. Over the next ten years the word spread about the granular product and Kitty Litter became available in multiple pet stores. Plastic specialized poopscoops, automated and fancy polypropylene litter boxes and indoor specialized cat foods arrived, with table scraps and heavy cream losing cat food market share. Go into a pet store, Walmart or grocery emporium and see the multiple forms of kitty litter (the original is now sold as Tidy Cats) and the almost countless forms of cat food, both dry and moist. Whether you are a young or old cat, have hairballs or bowel issues, there is a specially formulated food just for you, Kitty.

Frankly speaking, was this the real origin of the phrase, "Big Box Stores" and was it just a rumor that Kay originally wanted to call the new product, "Gotcha' Covered"?

—o0o—

**FBC FOOD PANTRY**  
DAYTON - Dayton First Baptist Church Food Pantry will hold its next food distribution Tues., March 10, from 9-11:30 a.m. The pantry will only be able to serve those with a Dayton 77535 zip code; proof of residence will be required. This will be a walk-in pantry, so please park and come into the food pantry entrance on the north side of the Family Life Center on Nelton Street. Picking up for others will not be allowed except under dire circumstances. The food distribution will be available the second Tuesday of each month.

—o0o—

**LIBERTY CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
Join us this Sunday for Bible Classes for all ages at 9 a.m. and stay for Worship at 10 a.m.  
We meet Sunday night at 5 p.m. and Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.  
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DAYTON ROTARY CLUB MEMBERS WITH THEIR PRESTIGIOUS NEW BANNERS



DAYTON ROTARY CLUB AWARDED BANNER

A highlight of the Dayton Rotary meeting this past month was recognition from the Rotary International Foundation. Longtime Rotarian Judge Don Taylor and current Assistant Governor of District 5910 Ernestine Belt were on hand to present the Rotary International banners. The Dayton club earned the prestigious Every Rotarian Every Year designation, placing it among a small percentage of clubs worldwide that meet high standards of member participation and charitable giving. Members were encouraged to continue supporting Rotary's global initiatives, including its long-standing mission to eradicate polio.

In the photo above, back, l-r: Stephanie Montgomery, former president; Dr. Luke Chachere, current president, front: Elizabeth Robertson, president-elect; Ernestine Belt, assistant governor; Judge Don Taylor, Rotarian.

## Cummins named Liberty's Assistant Chief of Police

The City of Liberty partnered with Clear Career Professionals to conduct a national recruitment for the position of Assistant Chief of Police. The position was widely advertised and Clear's Position Cast interview with Chief Ashe generated more than 5,000 impressions across social media and podcast platforms. In addition, Clear conducted direct outreach to more than 200 potential candidates nationwide.

The recruitment process yielded 20 applications from highly qualified law enforcement professionals. After a thorough and competitive evaluation process, the city has selected and promoted Joshua Cummins to serve as Liberty's next Assistant Chief of Police.

Assistant Chief Cum-

mins brings an impressive record of law enforcement service, education, and a commitment to continuous professional development. His combination of experience, education, and dedication to the Liberty community position him well to strengthen departmental leadership and support the continued delivery of outstanding public safety services.

City Manager Bryan Kendrick stated, "Promotions of this magnitude are never taken lightly. We are grateful to Clear Career Professionals for conducting a comprehensive national search that produced many high-quality applicants. After a thorough and competitive process, it became clear that Joshua was the right choice. Leadership

requires both capability and the ability to bring people together, and I am confident he is prepared to meet the expectations of this role. Promoting from within reflects not only the strength of his candidacy, but also our commitment to developing leaders who are invested in Liberty's future."

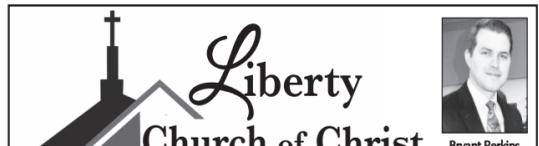
Police Chief Ashe added, "The Assistant Chief position is critical to the continued growth of our department. Joshua has demonstrated the leadership capacity, professionalism, and commitment to Liberty that this role requires. I look forward to working with him and with every member of this department as we continue strengthening communication, trust and service to our community."

## Local author event coming to Jones Library, March 7

DAYTON - Jones Public Library is hosting a community event that will bring together over 35 local authors. The event is set for Saturday, March 7, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Dayton Community Center, which houses the library.

The public will have the opportunity to meet and support authors from across the area. A variety of books in various genres will be available for purchase. There will also be crafts and activities along with refreshments and free food. For more information, contact the library at 936-258-7060 or email [jonespubliclibrary@daytontx.org](mailto:jonespubliclibrary@daytontx.org). Visit the Jones Public Library event page on Facebook for additional information.

**FLAGS OVER LIBERTY**  
LIBERTY - The Liberty Lions Club is offering an invitation to homes and businesses in Liberty to participate in the Flags Over Liberty program for 2026. The cost is \$50 annually per flag with any number of flags available. To participate, contact David Leonard, flag program coordinator, at 936-346-2358. Emails can be sent to [flags@libertylionsclub.org](mailto:flags@libertylionsclub.org).



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