Small Worlds Around Us

Lynn W. Watkins

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Cat Saying Developed By Practicing Ancestors

The old and now time-worn expression, "let the cat out of the bag," had implications not too complimentary as to the actions of some of our ancestors, or whoever it was that coined the expression in the first place.

This "letting the cat out of the bag" unfortunately still has a disgraceful significance today. Neither is it complimentary to some of today's people who, never having anything to do with the coining of such an expression, nevertheless try to dispose of surplus cats or kittens by carrying them out into the country and dropping them, probably bag and all, leaving them to forage for themselves.

This abandonment of unwanted animals is a cruel and too frequent practice. It is a sad commentary on supposedly civilized people. The still sadder part is the prevalence of the act; it occurs near every city and nearly every day.

Prolific Animals

Admittedly, cats are prolific animals. Parenthood comes easy for them. As a result, the world is burdened with literally millions of homeless and unwanted little cats.

Many cat owners, believing themselves pressed for time or trying to save a buck, think they are doing the little animals a favor by dumping them out in an isolated spot. An isolated place is usually selected, for such folks are cowards and afraid someone will see them. These folks are ignorant enough to think the orphan kittens will look out for themselves.

Most of these uninformed folks really think they are doing a humane thing. They would probably scoff at the accusation that such an act is cruel, stupidly believing an abandoned animal will seek and find adequate food and shelter.

Standard Procedure

The cat-in-the-bag formula seems to be standard procedure, and has been for many, many years. Probably it is easier to carry away a cat in a bag than it would be to have placed the animal in a box or cage. At least a sufficient number of people have used a bag to give credence to the expression.

Of course, it would be just as heartless to have carried the animal away in a cage, but "letting the cat out of the bag" seems to have sounded better.

Even the least informed person grudgingly admits that a cat, even a kitten, has feelings. That person, of course, would be slow to realize that an abandoned cat or dog is panic-stricken at being left alone, and that it will suffer from thirst and hunger. Even the man in the motor car who later runs over the terrorized animal may experience more than a twinge of remorse. At least he unwittingly put the small creature out of its misery, but it is a terrible way to die, even for a cat.

Will Find Way Back

Not too frequently, but it has happened in the case of an adult cat, that once the bag is untied and the owner has gone away, the cat will find its way back. At least it happens often enough to have given someone the idea for the expression, "The cat came back." This added another trite saying to American folklore.

Of course, the expression, "Letting the cat out of the bag," is often used by people who never owned a cat, much less ever abandoned one. [illegible]

Dr. Waskow Plans Talks in Valley

Dr. Arthur Waskow, senior staff member of the Peace Research Institute, Washington, D. C., will speak in Southern Oregon twice Tuesday, Dec. 3.

At 11 a.m. he will speak on "The Worried Man and Peace Politics" at Churchill Hall, Southern Oregon College, Ashland, and at 8 p.m. at the Medford High School Lecture room on "Human Rights in the International Scene."

The morning talk is presented under the auspices of the American Friends Service Committee. His Medford appearance is sponsored by the Medford and Ashland Human Rights Councils.

Dr. Waskow has written several books and magazine articles on peace, civil defense, disarmament, and racial conflict. He received his doctorate in American history at the University of Wisconsin and for two years was legislative assistant to a U. S. Congressman.

Both meetings in the area are open to the public.

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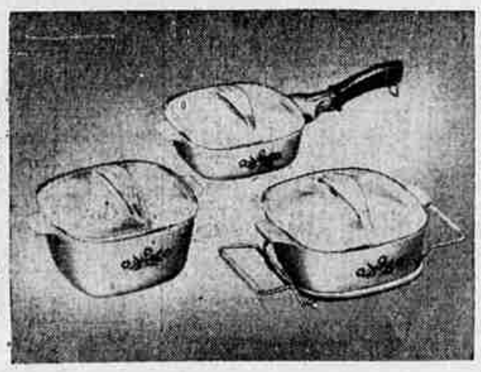

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