

Life's a Beach

I am often tempted to buy one of those cute little holiday mementos found at seaside resorts that state "Life's a beach ..." It would be perfect to hang above my cats' litterboxes because my life unquestionably is a beach. In fact, I live in a sea of sand.

There's no question that generously providing Cali and Fudge each with jumbo-sized litterboxes works to my disadvantage. They are permanently on a feline mission to cover all walkable surfaces with cat sand.

To make matters worse, Fudge must have been an archeologist in a previous life because her quest to find a tunnel at the bottom of her litterbox that leads directly to Sydney, Australia, is relentless. Being both optimistic and determined, she continues to search on a daily basis ...

I've also discovered that kitty litter has a lot in common with ground coffee. A single teaspoon spreads finely over a vast area. And if you consider each feline paw to be the equivalent of a teaspoon ... it's easy to do the math.

"Why don't you simply put a mat under the trays to trap the sand," suggested a helpful friend. Well, Cali has the answer to that one. Sometimes, when she goes in the litterbox, she leaves the important part of her anatomy, namely her rear, hanging out of the box and soaks the entire kitchen floor.

I can't chastise her; after all, she technically is using the box. And since she's 17 years old, I have to make allowances for her age and resulting forgetfulness in keeping her tail in check. I have no choice but to position a puppy potty training pad under the litterbox to handle the mop-up operations, and they unfortunately don't work in conjunction with rubber litter mats. So I am back to square one.

"Change your litter" was another suggestion. I tried that, too. Too fine, too flaky, too dusty, too clumpy ... And if you bring the actual cat into the equation, it's even more compli-

cated. I remember once trying something new, and Cali flew out of the box and stalked off as if it had been filled with hot coals. Crystals that soak up urine would be a good bet, but Cali is diabetic and my bank account isn't liquid enough to soak up the expenses of her overactive kidneys.

Needless to say, my two cats don't synchronize their visits to the litterbox either. Someone always is coming or going, which means I am permanently on sand duty, and it's far too much trouble to lug out the vacuum cleaner throughout the day. I've thought about one of those robotic Roomba vacuums that zoom around, sucking up household detritus. But we have stairs, so no doubt it will take a tumble on Day One.

Teaching them to use our toilets is tempting. But then I have a vision of that cat on YouTube that learned how to flush the toilet and ran around watching the swirling water all day ...

Let's face it. If you have a cat, you have litter in your home. Fortunately, the pet industry is on our side and continues to think inside the box in order to come up with new litterbox ideas.

In the meantime, I'm considering having another sign made for my kitchen that reads, "Life is a brush and pan ..." ○

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No rest or relaxation in a house full of cat litter.



BY SANDY ROBINS

