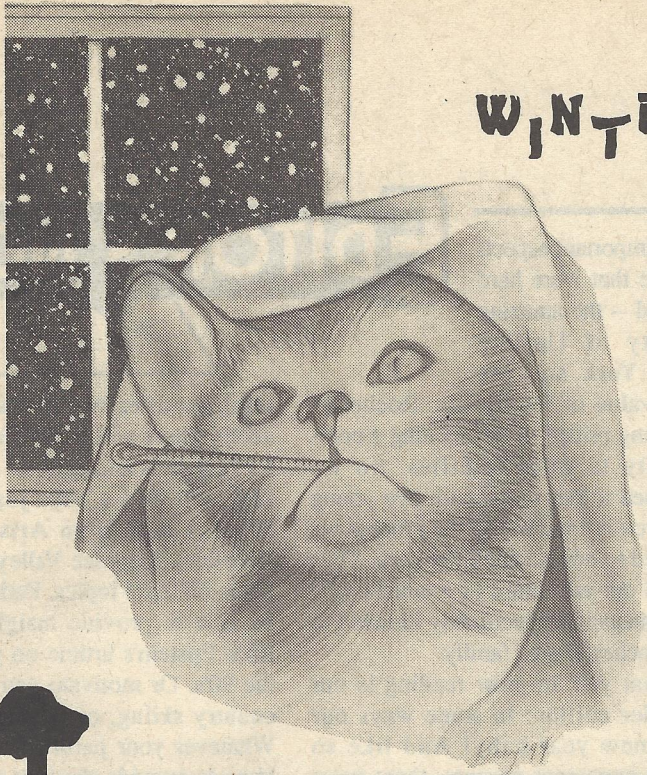


# WINTERIZE YOUR PET!



Contributing writer C.C. Birt

Domestic animals need special care during the cold winter months. But with a few common-sense tips, you should be able to keep your 'other kids' safe and warm this winter. The Rochester Humane Society and Susan Watkins, Director of Companion Animal Hospital in Henrietta, recommend the following:

\* Cats and dogs need protection from wet and cold, whether they get it inside your house or inside their own. Cats are best kept inside when it gets cold, as are most small and short-haired dogs. An outdoor dog needs a dry, elevated dog house with clean, dry bedding and a flap over the opening to keep drafts out. Or consider adding a dog door to the garage with a soft cushion in the warmest corner.

\* Strongly consider getting your dog a warm sweater for the cold winter months, particularly if you own a small short-haired breed. Look for a sweater that fits snugly on your dog's body, especially his vulnerable belly. While it may seem a luxurious frill, a sweater makes real sense if your dog shivers in the cold.

\* Take your dog outside only for as long as it takes him to relieve himself. Dogs, particularly small, short haired breeds like chihuahuas and terriers, suffer from the cold despite their seemingly warm fur coats.

\* Wait until spring to train a young puppy to relieve himself outside. Puppies cannot take the cold well and are difficult to train outside in the winter. Paper train him inside your home in the mean time.

\* Never let your dog off the leash on snow or ice, especially during a snow-storm. Dogs frequently lose their



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scent in snow and ice and easily become lost. They may also panic during a snowstorm and run away. More dogs are lost during the winter than during any other season.

\* Never leave your pet alone in a car during cold weather. A car can act as a refrigerator in the winter, holding in the cold. Your pet could literally freeze to death.

\* A bowl of frozen water can't help a thirsty pet. Check outdoor water bowls often when it's below freezing, and break the ice or refill with water as necessary.

\* Outdoor dogs need more calories in the winter to produce body heat, so increase the amount you feed your pet. Pets particularly need protein to keep their fur thick and healthy. On the other hand, indoor dogs and cats may get less exercise in the cold months, and will need fewer calories to avoid weight gain. Talk to your vet about vitamin and oil supplements.

\* Thoroughly wipe off your dog's legs and stomach when he comes in out of the rain, snow, or ice. Check his sensitive foot pads, which may be bleeding from snow or ice encrusted in them. Your dog may also pick up salt and other chemicals on his feet accidentally. These chemicals could hurt him if he swallows them while licking his feet.

\* Anti freeze tastes good to pets, but it is a deadly poison, even in small amounts. The most likely source of the poison is radiator drainage spots in your garage, which should be flushed with water immediately.

\* A cat may crawl up under your car seeking shelter and warmth near the engine. It may get caught in the fan and seriously injured when the engine starts. Open the hood of your car or slap it noisily with your hand before

# What we did on our vacation

- ✓ Met a bunch of dinosaurs
- ✓ Slept out on deck with 40 other kids
- ✓ Rode in a donkey rodeo
- ✓ Got kidnapped by pirates

- ✓ Ate fish pancakes and moose pies
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starting the engine on cold days to startle any animal sleeping there.

\* Bathe your dog only when necessary. Your dog runs a good chance of catching a cold anytime he gets wet. If you absolutely must bathe your dog, have a professional dog bather do it.

\* Never clip your dog's hair in the winter. That way, your dog will stay as warm as possible even if he looks funny. Brush him daily instead. This will keep your pet's coat healthy, shiny, clean, and mat-free.

\* Make sure your pet has a warm place to sleep, far away from all outside drafts and preferably off the floor -- such as in a basket or a cardboard box with a warm blanket in it.

Love your pet, as he loves you and if you have any questions about caring for your pet, consult your veterinarian.



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