

Fishing derby goes on despite weather

By STEVE

ANTIOCH – The cold weather did not stop hundreds of ice fishermen from dropping a line and putting up a shanty on Channel Lake for the 48th Chain O' Lakes Fishing Derby.

Tom Olandese of Fox Lake was hoping to do as well as he did last year, winning an award for crappie caught.

Olandese, 55, didn't win, but said he has been coming to the Northern Illinois Conservaton Club event for 25 years.

"I come with my son, who is three and one-half and caught a fish last summer on Lake Marie, a walleye," he said.

NICC members stressed the family nature of the event, with some parents involved in the event since its beginning in 1960 to youngsters fishing today.

The difficult weather has had an affect on the sport.

"With all the snow, it is not as accessible to get to the lakes as usual," Tom O'Connell said.

A food drive, kids games and cash and prizes worth \$3,000 were all available at the Feb. 9 and 10 event at the Thirsty Turtle in Antioch.

"I have been the fishing judge for 15 years and a club member for 24," Peter Poli said.

"It is great to see the looks on people's faces. We have families who have been coming here for three generations."

Organizers said the food drive went well. The donations went to Open Arms Mission in Antioch. Kids games and the conservation cafe were back for the weekend.

A group of anglers were on hand from Algonquin, Spring Grove and Round Lake.

"It is still a good event; you get to fish with others," Paul Jay said.

For more information, call NICC at 847-395-NICC, or visit the Web site, www.mynicc.org.