

Ice fishing escape

By Giovanni Capriotti

In a country which is home to the world's northernmost settlement, the harsh winter has always been revered as a chance to get out and enjoy an array of different activities, involving all ages and genders.

For the rest of the world, Canada is synonymous with snow and ice. But for the true Canadian, the cold season is a matter of pride and a celebration of nature's wildest side.

Winter activities are a great chance for a social life, preventing people from the dangers of "living room laziness."

To walk or skate on a frozen lake may sound exotic and risky to those living at more temperate latitudes. But for Canadians, ice in all its forms plays a crucial role. Winter is definitely hockey season, but ice-fishing time is also a popular pastime.

It is not uncommon to drive by a frozen lake and spot tiny, colourful tents or huts contrasting the winter whiteness. Normally, those spartan shelters host a few brave souls who took the time to walk on a frozen lake, drill a couple of holes and set up a few lines with several baits.

That is the magic of ice fishing. Enthusiasts challenge the harsh temperatures and the rugged environment to spend an afternoon with their buddies.

In an interview in late February, Quinte resident Travis Gould said he likes getting outside to participate in this outdoor activity.

"Ice fishing is a good chance to leave the house and do something. I would be watching TV otherwise."

He and Josh Loft have been friends for 10 years and share their passion for fishing. Their friendship dates back to Grade 9. The two love the lifestyle around angling as well as the thrill of the catch.

"Ice fishing is one sport either you like it or you don't," Josh Loft said, from the tent.

"Generally because I am laid off, I can fish all January and most of February if I am lucky," he continued, keeping his line under control.

The first prey of the day always brings satisfaction and reinforces the hope for a rewarding time. One of the most common Lake Ontario catches is the walleye, which is around pretty much year-long. A 11/2-pound fish shines in Loft's hands. But the pair definitely have bigger fish to fry.

"There is something about pulling a big fish through a little hole," concluded Gould, with a smirk on his face.

With the spring approaching and the ice melting, the ice fishing season has come to an end, at least in Southern Ontario. Few peeps up north can still enjoy it for a little while. Soon they will have to switch to the traditional rod and cruise the lakes by boat.

For a video look at this story, go to:

<http://www.qnetnews.ca/?p=51800>

Photos and video by Annie Sakkab



(Above) For Travis Gould, the thrill of the sport is that moment of "pulling a big fish through a little hole."

(Right) Josh Loft and Travis Gould have been friends for 10 years and share their passion for fishing. Their friendship dates back to Grade 9. The two love the lifestyle around angling as well as the thrill of the catch.



Josh Loft waiting patiently to catch his first fish of the day. Ice fishers bring with them a flasher to let them see between the lure and the bottom of the lake. Normally if they see something, 9 out of 10 it's a fish.



(Above) The first prey of the day always brings satisfaction and reinforces the hope for a rewarding time.

(Right) Throughout the month of Januray of this year, Josh Loft and Travis Gould spent almost every day out on the Bay of Quinte ice fishing from around 4 p.m. until right after sunset.

