

Thanks for your e-mail concerning Scouts Canada's membership fees.

As is common in many organizations, our cost of operating has increased significantly over the past number of years (e.g. program resources for leaders like books, program support, training, and Leader Magazine; insurance coverage; administration; maintaining camps; membership recruitment activities, etc.). An increased membership fee will partially address this.

The National portion of the membership fee, which is \$40 this year, is broken down into \$25 for services and support \$15 for insurance. Each local council typically adds to this fee and in some areas the local group also adds a few dollars to cover their respective costs.

It is certainly not the preference of our staff and volunteers to raise the membership fee. However, in light of financial constraints, it has become necessary in order to continue providing the same level of service and support to our leaders and members.

In the end, we feel that the fee continues to be very close (or in some cases, below) the amount other organizations ask of their members. For example, many parents pay as much or more for Programs that only function for three or four months. Our programs generally run for 8 months or more. We also play an integral role in shaping the character and values of children and youth. We have proven this to parents time and time again throughout our nearly 100 years of operation in Canada. While the fee has increased, the value to parents and Canadian society is still very high. Please consult our web site to learn more about Scouts Canada's Program Standards and the value Scouting provides to youth: <http://www.scouts.ca/inside.asp?cmPageID=131> .

Scouts Canada is actively working with groups across the country to raise the participation level in our three Scout fundraisers: Scout Popcorn, Scout Hot Chocolate, and Scoutrees. With the cooperation of our volunteers, these revenue sources have the power to eventually stabilize or even decrease the membership fee. (Please see our web site for information on fundraising: <http://www.scouts.ca/inside.asp?cmPageID=118>) We are optimistic that working together, we can make this happen. I also want to assure you that we will be mindful of the Scout Law as we move forward and we are committed to being wise in the use of all resources.

In the meantime, thank you for your patience and willingness to discuss these issues openly and frankly. Should you require further assistance, I would be happy to arrange for you to speak with someone from your local Council office.