April 26, 2007

Information Regarding Membership Fee Increase

Dear Members:

Skate Canada has spent the last 12 months rebuilding and reconnecting with our membership and we are moving ahead into the next season with a renewed enthusiasm and clear goals. We are now on a path to restore the profile and successful stature of the sport in Canada. Members, Clubs and Sections must all work together to provide the kind of environment where our youth can participate in a sport where they learn skills that will serve them for life and where all members whether recreational or competitive skaters, officials, coaches or administrators feel they can achieve their personal best in their environment. Each of us has an important role to play in securing the notion that learning to skate is to be truly "Canadian".

All eyes are focused on the winter sports as Canada and Vancouver prepare for the 2010 Olympics and we want to let the world know who we are as an organization and who our skaters are so that, when they compete with Canada's colours, the country will recognize and support them.

Last summer we reconnected with our membership through extensive surveying of many people involved in our sport; volunteers, administrators, athletes, coaches and officials. We analyzed the needs of Skate Canada and clear recommendations emerged as to the steps needed to move forward. We have already begun to put many of these recommendations in place.

We also recognized the need for involving more skaters in the management of Skate Canada and were fortunate to recruit former national team members Debbi Wilkes, Norm Proft and Mike Slipchuk to key positions in the organization. Please take note that I referred to these individuals as "skaters" and not the frequently used term "former skaters". This is deliberate. For our sport to grow and flourish, we must recognize that skaters are always that, skaters. They may move on to different phases in their life and no longer participate in competitive skating, but we always want them to remain skaters and to remain involved in skating for life, whether as a participant, coach, official, volunteer and/or administrator.

In order to encourage people to become and remain involved in skating, Skate Canada has initiated many new events and programs and has made significant improvements to existing programs since the early 1990s. These include:

- development and improvements to the CanSkate and CanPowerSkate programs;
- the introduction of the STARSkate Program;
- the development and implementation of the Cumulative Point Calculation (CPC) judging system;

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- the creation of the Skate Canada Junior National Championships;
- the creation of the STARSkate National Championships;
- the creation of the Skate Canada Adult Championships; and
- the addition of Festival Synchronized Skating to the Skate Canada Synchronized Championships.

We also believe that further promotion of our programs is necessary to grow our membership over the coming years. Given that, an initiative for 2007-2008 will be tolaunch a national CanSkate advertising program to assist our clubs in attracting new skaters to our organization. In addition, membership cards will, once again, be issued to all members.

While all of these initiatives and changes have been extremely positive for Skate Canada and its members, we are also facing challenges. It is increasingly expensive to run our programs and events and the development events referred to above are run at a financial loss to Skate Canada. We believe, however, that all of these have tremendous value to Skate Canada and its members and the value to skating in Canada cannot simply be measured in terms of the dollars spent.

In order to continue supporting the many activities of our organization and to maintain a balanced budget, the Board of Directors of Skate Canada unanimously determined at the April 20-21, 2007 board meeting that it is necessary to increase the Association membership fee. Effective August 1, 2007, for the 2007-2008 membership year, the fee will be $30.00 (plus insurance) per member.

The Association membership fee has been $14.00, plus insurance, for the past 15 years (since 1992). Members have been fortunate to enjoy this below market rate for such an extended period. Adjusting for inflation over the past 15 years, the equivalent fee rate today would be $21.81. However, in order to fully support programming at the Section level, the vast majority of Skate Canada Sections have, over time, found it necessary to introduce a Section Development Contribution to supplement their funding. Section Development Contributions were as much as $10 and were approved by the Board of Directors on an annual basis.

With an increase to $30.00, Skate Canada will continue to return 50 percent of the membership fee to the Sections. This will eliminate the need for Sections to collect the Section Development Contribution and the Board of Directors will no longer approve these contributions. The centralized collection of all the fees will increase efficiency and reduce duplication allowing Sections to focus on other value added activities for Section programming development.

While an increased fee is never a popular move, we believe that the fee is warranted when one considers the many benefits to being a Skate Canada member including:

- An accident insurance benefit at a substantially lower cost to the members than that available in other sports (80 cents per member).
- Access to high quality programs that are recognized and often sought after internationally and by other national sport organizations.
- Access to qualified, NCCP certified Skate Canada professional coaches who have been trained through high quality training programs developed by Skate Canada.
- National registry of figure skating qualifications (tests) and results (for qualifying events) held in a central computerized system for easy access.

- Test certificates and Award of Merits for tests passed.
- Web site
- Online store with special pricing for members on materials and Skate Canada merchandise.
- Members only access to information including event announcements, rulebook, information on athlete development, talent ID and off-ice training.
- Toll free telephone and fax access to member services and national office.
- Have the opportunity to participate in interclub and invitational competitions.
- Elite athlete and skater development funding and programs.
- Opportunities for skaters to compete for positions on the national teams.
- Voting privileges and opportunity to participate in the decision-making and direction of the Association.
- The opportunity to purchase selected Skate Canada event tickets prior to the general public.
- Benefit from participation in a sport that promotes fun, fitness, achievement and the development of essential life skills such as confidence, time and stress management, teamwork and motivation/commitment.

As a member of Skate Canada and supporting the initiatives of the organization, you are showing that you believe in a sport organization that strives for excellence and strives to provide outstanding opportunities for all its members. There is competition on many fronts for the sports and entertainment dollar and Skate Canada must be able to move forward to market the benefits of being a member of this organization and to provide the best programs possible for our members, so that figure skating remains as part of the cultural fabric of this country.

Sincerely,

William Thompson
Skate Canada Chief Executive Officer