

## Values and The Club Mission Statement

In preparation for the coming Strategic Planning Committee meeting---at which the Committee intended to address the Club's Mission Statement---I'm preparing this White Paper on club values and the Mission Statement as currently written. Hopefully this background document will stimulate further discussion of "the club experience" and the core values that are at the very heart of The Beach Club community.

Values are ideas which constrain impulse and direct action. They are real in that they are seen in what you do, in each action taken. There is always an "audit trail" of an individual's or a community's values. Look at what they've done and are doing. That's who they are. Those are their values. Talking values isn't enough---you've got to "do values" to make them values. The history of "club values" is written in the candidates chosen, the staff hired, the layout of the club house, the house rules adopted, the aesthetics of the building, the decision making processes, the level of communication between board and members and the newsletter that's written, among other things. Most values are not articulated but lived, sort of a "common law" approach in that specific issues are resolved in a particular way, that particular way becomes the way to resolve similar problems in the future, and that "way" becomes an expressed value of the community.

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I orient new employees daily, and part of that orientation is to give staff an understanding of clubs, club values and specifically, Beach Club values. Values are best taught giving examples and that is true whether the person being exposed is a new employee or member. Anecdotes are powerful teaching tools. Who you are is what you do.

People are herd animals. They want to be around people. They're comforted by "the crowd." All people crave the club experience whether they know and acknowledge it or not. They want a place where "everyone knows their name," Private clubs have all of this and more. Private club people have a commonality of interests, they want a facility that reflects those interests, they want a management team that can both understand and satisfy those needs and they want a selection process that ensures that they encounter others of like values in the community they create.

The Beach Club wants all of the above plus it wants to attract those who have social personalities, that is they respond warmly to others when encountering them; those who have social enthusiasm, that is, people who seek out others in the community for social exchange; they want people who believe in the value of family; who believe in education; who believe in achievement (not accumulation, which is about money, but about doing what one does extremely well); who are committed to maintaining and pursuing good health; who have an appreciation of the athletic mindset; who believe in the value of food and beverage as a social opportunity; who expect the Board of Directors and the Management Team to maximize the goods, services, facilities and programs for the dues paid each month; that the maximizing of those goods, services, facilities and programs not be achieved for one group at the expense of any other group within the member community; and who accept that a healthy community is built on the diverse needs, wants and expectations of the multiple smaller, more specialized communities within the larger club community.

Past Strategic Planning Committees have listed words that they feel capture the core values of The Beach Club. Those words include **family, health and fitness, comfortable, tradition, casual, relaxed, sand, sea, recreation, friendship, safe, second home, food, beverage, community, athletics, private and neighborhood**. Each of these words provokes a powerful image and a memory picture that explains the values involved better than any word could ever do. We as a club community are built on these shared images and the values that we infer from those anecdotes.

Mission statements are an attempt to summarize values. To be effective, they need to be "digestible," that is, short enough for all to understand and to memorize, yet broad enough to provide a strategic direction for those needing to make tactical decisions in "the real world." They need to address core values, yet have to

be flexible enough to respond to changes that inevitably occur in the “macro” (community) and “micro” (club) worlds.

Years ago I created a Beach Club Mission Statement for the staff, a written summary of values I perceived in the history of club experience. That statement is as follows:

**The Beach Club is in “The Happiness Business.”**

**The Beach Club is a “Home at the Beach.”**

**The Beach Club is “The New Neighborhood.”**

The words are easy to remember but the values and experiences represented are quite complex. Let me explain.

People come to The Beach Club to escape from the traumas and concerns of “the real world.” We want people to feel better when they leave than when they came. We want them to be happy, to glow a little more than they might otherwise do. Who we hire, what we do, the activities we offer and the efforts we make are intended to make people feel good. Happy people make others feel happy. I’d like members and staff alike to be in “the happiness business.”

The Beach Club is a “home at the beach.” My definition comes from my youth in Maine during the early fifties (I’m getting old and geeky---this proves it!). A home is about people and about things. The Beach Club, like my home in the fifties, has kids and grandmas, parents and children---a whole spectrum of people who have to get along, whether they really want to or not, because the alternative is pain and sorrow and anger and smoldering resentment. People can hear everyone else in the home, can feel the clunk of a chair being moved and dropped, a radio played too loudly and for that reason everyone needs to respect the needs of the larger family while pursuing their own interests. Just like the Club. Like a home, The Beach Club needs to feel warm and embracing, a retreat from the vicissitudes of normal living. It needs comfortable chairs to sit in, it needs formal and informal spaces, it needs a family dinner table and areas for entertainment. A home is about place, people and the emotions that bind all of them together. If we do what we do well, people will be closer and the facility will be more intimately connected with each of our family, who they are and want to be.

People need neighborhoods, places where the other families are known, where they play together and recreate together and talk together. A place where they can pretty much expect that the other families have some of the same values as they have---otherwise, they’d have found another neighborhood more appropriate to the way they live. The need for neighborhood is a constant in the human condition though its expression evolves over time. The Beach Club is the “new neighborhood” because it, better than most neighborhoods that exist in Los Angeles, has a community of people closer in values to them than might otherwise be the case. The Club is a place where kids can come together with other kids and play. A place where neighbors watch out for neighbors (as I’ve often told children, every member is a cop when it comes to the rules!) and where neighbors know each other, enjoy each other’s company and search out opportunities for connecting, socializing, recreating.

I’d like to believe that the decisions the Board has made, the advice that the Committees have given and the administration that I’ve created all reflect the staff mission statement. We’re in the happiness business. We’re a home at the beach. We are the new neighborhood.