



## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

*Julie McCulloch*  
*President, SIPOA*  
*Board of Directors*

I was recently honored to represent SIPOA at a Newcomer's Party, held at the Lake House. This twice-a-year event serves as a "formal welcome" to people who have purchased property within the past year.

As is usual with Seabrook Island so-

cial events, it had a wonderful spread of food, prepared by both the Club and committee volunteers, plus an array of adult beverages. The room was abuzz with chatter from about 50 new property owners and other invitees. At the appropriate time, attendees were asked to introduce themselves and tell the group a little about themselves, such as where they moved from, why they chose Seabrook Island, etc.

Virginia seemed to be a popular "home" state and the variety of everyone's backgrounds was amazing. But what struck me most as I listened was that these newcomers were so HAPPY to be here. And over and over, they said they "fell in love" with Seabrook because of its natural beauty and its sense of community. It reminded me of the time, only 5 years ago (!), when my husband and I shared with other newcomers our dazzling sense of wonder, joy and excitement about living here.

As I was watching this group of newcomers, I commented to a friend, "it's so nice to see happy people!" As you might imagine, in my current role, I

often interface with property owners who are not happy for various and sundry reasons, so seeing this brilliant joy uplifted me and fortified my faith in our island.

But their comments also got me to thinking: "what am I personally doing to take care of the island's natural beauty" and "what am I doing to continue building a sense of community"? And as we enter this season of special thankfulness, I'd ask all of you to challenge yourselves with those same questions.

How are you taking care of our natural beauty? Do you diligently recycle? Are you pesticide-free in your yards? Do you let "wildlife be wildlife" by not harassing the alligators or feeding the deer? Do you pick up plastics and cans often found in common areas and on the beaches? Do you take care in where your dog runs free on the beach? Do you stay the heck away from the dolphins as they are strand feeding? Do you "leave no footprint" after a day at the beach?

How are you building community? Webster's Dictionary defines it as: "a

feeling of fellowship with others as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests and goals." Maybe like some of you, I often get caught up in my own life and group of friends and don't really reach out to people I don't know. For example, when I work out the Lake House, I'm so focused on sweating, I barely recognize there are others in the area with me. I've gotten out of the habit of going to Friday night happy hour at the Club, preferring a quiet glass of wine at home. And sometimes when I'm driving around the island, I forget about doing the Seabrook "friendly wave" that I found so utterly charming when I first moved here. Shame on me!

So to all of my fellow property owners, for my friends and my yet-to-be friends, I challenge you to do your part to keep our island vibrant and full of that special community spirit. Be a positive voice and a friendly handshake. Because whether we realize it or not, we are all ambassadors for our beautiful home. ▲

*Happy Thanksgiving.*