

## Sea Coast Mission to honor Sabah-Maren and DeLong

BAR HARBOR — Philanthropist Emily Sabah-Maren and Maine Sea Coast Mission Executive Director the Rev. Gary DeLong will be honored by the mission at the seventh annual Sunbeam Awards Gala on Aug. 20 at the Bar Harbor Club. Each year the mission honors individuals who contribute to the well-being of Down East and island communities.

Sabah-Maren is a seasonal resident of Salisbury Cove and, with four others, leads the Maren Foundation, whose mission is to give where it could make a difference. Funding from the foundation has made a substantial difference to a number of local groups, including the Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory, Jesup Library, MDI YMCA, Island Connections, the Bar Harbor Food Pantry, Mount Desert Nursing Association, MDI YWCA, Beth C. Wright Cancer Center, Take Home Reading at the Ella Lewis Elementary School in Steuben, Willow Wind Therapeutic Riding, Friends of Acadia, particularly the Acadia Gateway Center, and the mission's EdGE program, an after-school and summer program for more than 500 young people from Down East Maine. In addition to her philanthropic activity, Sabah-Maren volunteers on a regular basis at the Jesup Library.

Because of her concern that those working on Mount Desert Island cannot afford to live on the island, Sabah-Maren recently began a new philanthropic venture by subdividing land she owns into four 1.5-acre lots on which she began constructing affordable housing for families qualified by the Island Housing Trust. In December 2009, her first house was sold to a young couple with a preschool-age child.

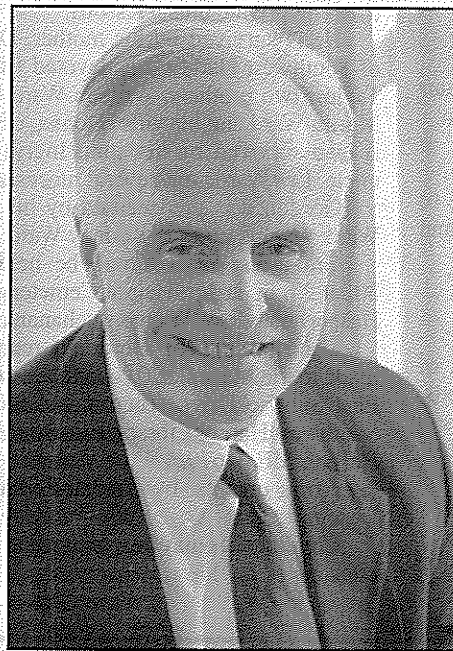
"My focus on affordable housing is a way of paying back Mount Desert Island for what it has done for me and my family," said Sabah-Maren.



Emily Sabah-Maren

graduated from Beals High School and attended college with the support of a Maine Sea Coast Mission scholarship. After serving as a youth minister for churches in Boston and Springfield, Mass., DeLong became associate pastor of the First Church of Christ in Longmeadow in 1975, co-pastor in 1977 and senior minister from 1987 until he returned to Maine to serve as executive director of the Mission in May 1999.

During DeLong's tenure, the mission's budget has grown from \$827,000 in 1998 to \$3,116,000 in 2010, a 285-percent increase. With the increase in funding came new programs and initiatives: EdGE was started in 2002 and currently serves 500 children in 17 communities, through nine schools in Washington and Hancock counties.



The Rev. Gary DeLong

provides access to health care to residents of Maine's outer islands through a nurse, and telemedicine equipment on board the *Sunbeam V* and in island clinics — clinics that link island patients with health care providers.

Because of his own experience attending college on a mission scholarship, DeLong not only expanded the number of scholarships, but also initiated a program whereby scholarship students maintain regular contact with mission staff. Food pantries now serve islands as well as Down East communities, and the mission provides emergency assistance for hundreds of people each year with fuel costs and weatherization efforts.

"Life is often harsh along this coast,

glimmer of caring," said DeLong.

In July 2005, the Mission launched its \$12 million Centennial Campaign, "Hope in Action," a successful campaign that was concluded in 2009. This campaign provided funding for youth development and island outreach programs.

"Leading the 105-year-old mission means striving to honor the competence and commitment of staff members, volunteers and donors," said DeLong. "It means being grateful for the opportunity to know and partner with our constituents. My most enjoyable and productive moments were spent at the kitchen tables of those the mission is privileged to serve on the islands and way Down East."

As in previous years, the gala will begin with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres at 6 p.m. followed by dinner and a program at 7 p.m., and concludes with dancing to the music of Brian Catell and Jump City Jazz at 9 p.m.

Fundraising events, such as the gala, chaired by Shari Roopenian, allow the Mission to continue its programs to residents of offshore islands and Down East. With the *Sunbeam's* telemedicine facility, island residents on Frenchboro, Matinicus, Swans, and Isle au Haut receive high quality health care — care that includes screening clinics for diabetes, cholesterol, prostate and skin cancer. Last year 96 island residents received seasonal flu and H1N1 shots.

The gala's lead sponsor is Bar Harbor Bank & Trust. Other sponsors include The First, Jasper Wyman & Son, Prime Buchholz & Associates, Acadia Corporation, Coastal Kayaking Tours & Acadia Bike, E.L. Shea, Inc., Geddy's, J.T. Rosborough, Inc., The Kimball Shop & Boutique, Machias Savings Bank, Manor House Inn, Mount Desert Islander, and Snowman Printing and Presort Express. For more information about this fundraising event, call Sarah Clemens at