

Mission continues to flourish

BAR HARBOR—At last Thursday's 103rd annual meeting of the Maine Sea Coast Mission, incoming president Lee Judd and incoming treasurer Henry Schmelzer called the mission's financial status healthy with a 9.5 percent return on investments. Both expressed optimism that the mission would successfully conclude its \$12 million centennial capital campaign by the end of the year. That campaign is now in its public phase with less than a Million dollars left to raise.

In his remarks, Mr. Judd attributed much of the health of the mission to outgoing president Jill Goldthwait who began the strategic planning process and strengthened board governance. In the last five years under the leadership of development director Steve Richards, income from the annual fund has increased and the endowment is robust enough to support the mission's programs, said Mr. Judd.

Additionally, Executive Director Gary DeLong noted that when measured by all the institutional indicators, the state of the mission is solid. In part this solid status comes from the staff and its dedication to the mission's vision and goals. The budget is balanced in such a way that it "builds for the future while at the same time being generous to our programs in the present, always in line with our donors' intentions," said Rev. DeLong.

Donors contributed \$4.3 million to the Mission last year at a fundraising cost of only six percent. But while the numbers are important, what is more important is the impact of the programs.

"If the clothes we distribute aren't really helping families make it financially and with an increased sense of pride and well-being, if the food isn't getting to the truly hungry, if our medical efforts aren't resulting in healthier lives, if after-school programs are just baby sitting for youth who are marking time, if our spiritual programs aren't life

changing, and if our congregations aren't centers of outreach and caring, then we are mispending our donors dollars and we should stop," said Rev. DeLong.

As part of its self-evaluation, the mission is asking those questions and is committed to making changes based on that evaluation.

"We aren't just grasping at the status quo and trading water," said Rev. DeLong. "And I can assure you that the stories I hear daily tell us volumes about the state of the Mission."

In other business, outgoing board members Chester Norris and Alan Baker, along with outgoing president of the board Jill Goldthwait were honored for their service to the Mission at the Mission's 103rd annual meeting.

Mr. Norris, who joined the board in 1995, was lauded for bringing the depth and breadth of his international service in combination with his local Maine upbringing to ably serving the Mission. "With his broad knowledge and love for Maine and his deep belief that that Maine's children were at risk and therefore so, too, was the state, Ambassador Norris was an early proponent of the mission's involvement in youth development, beginning with proposing an outreach program for girls in Washington County," stated the resolution in his honor.

Mr. Baker joined the mission's board in 1998 and "served with quiet authority and the wisdom and common sense born of experience." Mr. Baker twice unexpectedly assumed the presidency of the board.

Although Ms. Goldthwait is not leaving the board, she is stepping down as president of the board and was recognized for her service as president. As the incoming board president Lee Judd noted at the beginning of the meeting, Ms. Goldthwait initiated the development of a strategic plan for the Mission and strengthened board governance.