

# 2004 Defender of the Trust Award to Dennis Tito

**D**ennis Tito, Founder, CEO, and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Wilshire Associates, Inc., and former Chairman of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power Commission, received the 2004 Mono Lake Committee Defender of the Trust Award. The event was held March 28 in Los Angeles at the home of Mono Lake Committee Board member Amy Holm.

Mono Lake Committee Board members Tom Soto and Martha Davis were joined by Tom Houston, former Deputy Mayor of the City of Los Angeles and environmental inventor, in presenting the award to Mr. Tito, praising his skill in working with the City of Los Angeles, the City Council of Los Angeles, and his fellow Commissioners to gain their acceptance of the 1994 State Water Resource Control Board order that DWP share its water with Mono Lake. Martha Davis pointed out that this is the first time the Mono Lake Committee Board has given this award in recognition of how important it was to have someone within the Department of Water and Power agree that the legal battles should end and conservation and restoration should begin. Tom Soto linked Mr. Tito's pioneering role as the first space tourist to his willingness to pioneer a new relationship between DWP and the Mono Lake Committee.

Mr. Tito responded, "For me, it was a business decision. LA was unlikely to win, and it seemed senseless to spend more and more money on attorneys." Then he added, "My son is very interested in the environment, too."

The Committee's Board of Directors has given the Defender of the Trust Award since 1993 to a person or persons who have made extraordinary contributions to champion the protection of Mono Lake. ❖



*Tom Houston, Dennis Tito, Martha Davis, and Tom Soto with the Defender of the Trust award.*

ARVA DEGENHARDT

## Staff Migrations

**T**ioga Pass opened on May 14th this year, and as visitors spill over the mountains, we're full swing into another great summer season. In order to serve visitors with naturalist walks, information, and increased store hours the Committee expands significantly with seasonal staff. We are excited to introduce the crew for this year.

Retail Assistant Heidi Hall joins the Committee from the nearby town of Walker. Formerly of Victor, Idaho, and Johnson, Wyoming, Heidi enjoys skiing, is a massage therapist, and an accomplished guitar player.

Retail Assistant Anna Scofield has returned from her first year at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo to help out again this summer. We're lucky to have someone who knows and loves Lee Vining so much out on the front counter.

Canoe Coordinator Cliff Rocha is spending a summer canoeing before starting the Environmental Science program at UC Berkeley this fall. Cliff has worked extensively in the Bay area and enjoys photography, birding, and backpacking.

Canoe Coordinator Ariel Rown is back! A graduate of UC Berkeley with a BS in Environmental Science, Ariel spent the winter months traveling in Central America, working with special needs students, and researching soil ecology.

Outdoor Experiences Coordinator Kristie Reddick has a BFA in Theater from the University of The Arts in Philadelphia. She recently went back to school to study Biology and is pursuing a Masters in Entomology because she is absolutely crazy about bugs.

Intern Erin Brandt is a graduate of University of Richmond with a BA in Spanish and a minor in Biology. Erin has also studied in Argentina and Spain and she is excited to explore and rock climb in the Eastern Sierra this summer.

Intern Ryan Carle is no stranger to the Mono Basin or the Mono Lake Committee. While he is currently studying literature at UC Santa Cruz, Ryan grew up in Lee Vining and has helped out the Committee on vacations in years past. Welcome home Ryan!

Intern Reagan Heater will be returning to the Mono Lake Committee this summer for his second year as an intern. Currently studying at Sierra College near Lake Tahoe, he's another local excited to be back on his home turf for the summer.

Intern Elin Ljung is an English major with concentration in Environmental Studies from St Olaf College in Northfield Minnesota. Arriving here straight from Australia, Elin is returning to her family's vacation grounds for a crash course in water policy.

Intern Kim Rollins is a graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University with a B.S. in Mass Communications, and a minor in Writing. Most recently from Bishop, Kim brings with her a love for environmental issues, natural history, and exploring the outdoors.

Birding Intern Alison Young is a graduate of Swarthmore College where she earned a BA in Biology. Alison has also studied in British Columbia and Alaska. We're lucky she migrated south to help out here in the Mono Basin.

Here's to another great summer season at Mono Lake! ❖