

# GREATER GORGE

## Order of Canada honor goes to Gorge tech pioneer Tad McGeer

*In situ founder among 120 awardees*

By **ELAINE BAKKE**  
White Salmon Enterprise

A Nobel laureate, a former prime minister, a Hollywood director and a Gorge resident and businessman are among 120 people honored in the New Year's appointments to the Order of Canada by Rideau Hall, the official residence in Ottawa of the Governor General of Canada. Governor General Julie Payette announced the names from across the country to receive the Order of Canada on Dec. 27.

The Order of Canada recognizes Canadians for their dedication to serving their communities and country. It was established in 1967. The Order of Canada (French: Ordre du Canada) is the second highest honor for merit in the system of orders, decorations, and medals of Canada.

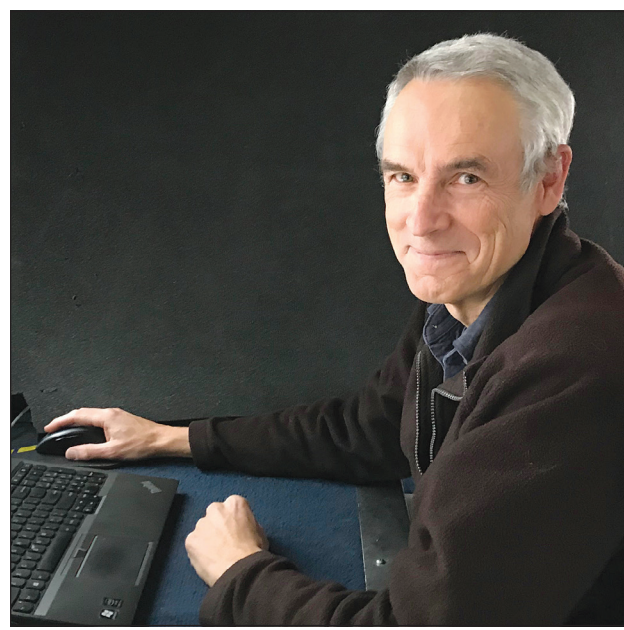
The highest of the Order's three levels is that of "companion." There can be no more than 165 living companions at any time. This year's companion list includes James Cameron, the Oscar-winning director of Titanic and Avatar, former Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper and physicist Donna Strickland.

Individuals appointed as officers of the Order of Canada, the second highest honor, are recognized for national service or achievement. And, those inducted as members are recognized for "outstanding contributions at the local or regional level" in a specific field.

Bingen businessman and Vancouver resident Brian Theodore (Tad) McGeer is being made a member of the order for his contributions to aeronautical engineering and for his innovative designs for unmanned aerial systems.

"I was in fact asked about a month ago whether I would accept the honor, and I would hardly be so rude as to say no, but I did suggest that I wasn't quite up to the usual standards as set by members whom I know or know about — not least my parents," McGeer said of the honor. "They (his parents) are among the world's most-cited neuroscientists, so pretty obvious choices, as are other Canadian scientists whose contributions are substantial. I on the other hand have been enjoying myself in my own little niche, but I suppose that recognition has value if the story raises interest in engineering as a career. The current Governor General, incidentally, is an engineer and astronaut."

While recipients will receive their honors in Ottawa, Canada, sometime in 2020, McGeer has yet to be notified of the



Submitted photo

**HOOD RIVER'S** Tad McGeer will travel to Ottawa to accept his honor.

exact date.

"I'm told that formal ceremonies in Ottawa occur four times per year, and I suppose that I'll be at one of those in 2020. I haven't been to Ottawa for more than 20 years! Must take the opportunity to sell some Flexrotors," he said.

Although McGeer is "very much Canadian," he is more of a frequent visitor to Vancouver, Canada (where he was born), than a resident. These days, the Princeton and Stanford graduate primarily lives in Hood

River and works at his company Aerovel's headquarters in Bingen. McGeer founded Insitu in 1992. After selling it to Boeing, he then founded Aerovel, maker of the "flexrotor" in 2006.

"Flexrotor is now contending for U.S. Special Forces' Medium Endurance Unmanned Aircraft System program (which over the years has mainly used Scaneagle and Aerosonde)," he said of his new unmanned aerial system.

## Gorge Commission meeting set back to Jan. 21

*White Salmon meeting will include UGB discussion*

The Columbia River Gorge Commission Meeting scheduled for Jan. 14, has been canceled.

The meeting has been rescheduled for Jan. 21, at White Salmon Fire Hall, 220 NE Church Ave, White Salmon.

First on the agenda will be a welcome by Marla Keethler, Mayor of White Salmon.

The commission will hold a 9:30 a.m. work session on Urban Area Boundaries, in response to the Commission from letters to counties and 13 urban areas. Based on the responses, the Commission will discuss the implications for Gorge 2020 Update or subsequent work, staffing and budget.

At 10:30 a.m. staff will present an updated roadmap for completing the Gorge2020 Management Plan review and revision process, also in work session. The Commission will discuss each focus topic and identify issues that have been adequately addressed, issues

that Commissioners believe have not but should be addressed, and issues which the Commission has provided guidance to staff but final resolution is pending. This discussion is also the opportunity to decide which issues will be deferred for action after and outside of the Gorge2020 update.

The intent is that by the end of the work session, the Commission and staff will have agreed on all remaining Gorge management plan update tasks.

Following a lunch break, at 2 p.m. the Commission will continue a work session on the 2021-2023 Biennial Budget. Executive director Krystyna U. Wolniakowski will discuss the current 2019-2021 budget, and the development of the new budget for the next biennium. The Commission will provide guidance and feedback, and a draft budget request will be prepared and presented at the February Commission meeting based on Commissioner input. At 2:30 p.m. Wolniakowski will give her report, including updates on agency staffing, Klickitat County, Zimmerly mine issue and other matters.

At 2:45 p.m., U.S. Forest Service Manager Lynn Burditt will provide an update on Forest Service activities in the National Scenic Area.

## Hermiston man dies in crash

On Jan. 10, at approximately 6:24 P.M. Oregon State Police Troopers and emergency personnel responded to a single vehicle crash on Highway 207 near mile post 19B.

Preliminary investigation revealed that a Freightliner truck pulling a loaded trailer, operated by Phillip Sharkey, 56, of Hermiston, was northbound when it struck the guardrail, traveled off the road, and down an embankment. Sharkey sustained fatal injuries and was pronounced deceased.

OSP was assisted by Boardman Fire, Echo Fire, Umatilla County Fire District No. 1, Morrow County Sheriff's Department and ODOT.

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### Up, up and away with Aerovel and its Flexrotor

After more than a decade of buzz surrounding the business of "drone" aircraft, no corporate buyout in the sector has yet overshadowed the sale of Insitu to Boeing in 2008.

That deal, for about \$400 million, was made less than three years after Insitu accepted its first corporate venture capital. It returned their investment many times over, according to Insitu Founder Tad McGeer.

"Insitu's business today continues to be based on Scaneagle, which essentially created and still dominates the military 'Group 2' class of small long-endurance drones. But its market, worth about \$1 billion per year worldwide, is beginning to move toward a new entrant offering a quantum jump in capability: Aerovel and its extraordinary Flexrotor," he said.

In fact, both Insitu and Aerovel were founded by McGeer, a dominant figure in "Group 2" as designer of Scaneagle, of Aerosonde, its predecessor and perennial runner-up in the market, and now of Flexrotor.

McGeer said Flexrotor offers a compelling set of improvements, most remarkably by being, in military parlance, exceptionally expeditionary. "It is small like its predecessors, but it dispenses with their not-so-small 'footprint,' including literally tons of launch, retrieval, and ground-control impedimenta."

Its light footprint derives from vertical takeoff and landing like a helicopter, but in cruise it has the wing-borne efficiency of a sailplane. The power of this combination was demonstrated in 2017 when Flexrotor smashed the endurance record for VTOL aircraft, flying more than 32 hours nonstop, and at a speed fast enough to cross an ocean.

Yet it has also demonstrated, as long ago as 2013, fully autonomous launch, retrieval, and turnaround from an unmanned rowboat. In early military and civil service, ashore and at sea, its ease-of-use and imaging capability have been well beyond anything previously available, according to McGeer.

## Skyline Mammography Spa Jan. 29

Having a mammogram is a great idea. Turning it into a spa day makes it even better, state Skyline Hospital providers in a press release.

Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among women. In an effort to provide a relaxed atmosphere

for its patients, Skyline Hospital is hosting its quarterly Mammography Spa Day on Jan. 29 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Participants can take advantage of complimentary spa services and refreshments before or after their mammography appointment.

"This is a positive way for patients to come in and be as comfortable and calm as possible when having this life saving test," said Michele Sturdavant, Skyline Hospital's diagnostic imaging manager. "We strive to provide a pleasurable experience allowing patients to be

pampered, while also addressing their breast health care. We also hope this enjoyable day can help alleviate the anxiety some associate with this recommended annual screening."

For more information or to make an appointment call 509-637-2957.

## CGCC offers 'Dog handling' class

Do you own a dog that has the potential to be a show dog? Take that beautiful pup to the next level by taking a dog handling class at Columbia Gorge Community Education.

Your four legged friend will learn about AKC conformation with an emphasis on proper gaiting and ring presentation.

Columbia Gorge Community College is now offering the non-credit class "Dog Handling." The class meets every Wednesday from Jan. 22 to Feb. 26 at The Dalles Readiness Center Drill classroom from 7-8 p.m. Cost is just \$69.

To register, visit cgcc.edu/community-ed or call 541-506-6011.

## Got News?

Do you have a news tip or announcement you would like to share?

Let the Hood River News know at 541-386-1234, or hrnews@hoodrivernews.com. Send sports items to gbravo@hoodrivernews.com. Wedding, anniversary and

engagement announcements go to twalker@hoodrivernews.com.

Happenings (individual events) and Gatherings (recurring ones) may be submitted to twalker@hoodrivernews.com. Items may be edited for brevity.

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**SUDOKU**  
This week's Sudoku is presented by:  
**BRIEN D. GIBSON**  
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

1								2
	3		4	5			1	
	6		7				3	8
	7		1				6	4
8			6		3			2
4	5				9		3	
5		8			7		1	
		9		6	4		5	
	2							7

Fill in all 81 squares on the puzzle with numbers 1 to 9. You can use each number 1-9 only once in each nine square section, in each horizontal line of nine squares, and in each vertical column of nine squares. The puzzle is completed when you correctly fill every square.

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