

# SHELTON-MASON COUNTY Journal

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## Auditor to observe election in Ukraine

State Dept. selects  
Paddy McGuire for  
international mission

By Michael Heinbach  
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While the Elections Department of the Mason County Auditor's office kicked off election season earlier this week by sending ballots for the Aug. 6 primary election, first-term Auditor Paddy McGuire focused on another election on the other side of the globe.

The U.S. State Department recently selected McGuire, a

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## Watch for Primary ballots in the mail

By Michael Heinbach  
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Believe it or not, it's already election season in Mason County.

Registered county voters should receive their ballots for the Aug. 6 primary election by early next week after the Elections Department of the Mason County Auditor's office mailed ballots Tuesday to registered voters.

"The election period officially begins Friday, and that's 20 days before the election," said county Elections Superintendent Fina Ormond. "Our goal with mailing them on Tuesday

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William L. McDonald Jr., a Lake Limerick resident since 1997, was a 28-year-old Air Force captain when he led a C-141 crew that took part in Apollo 11's return to Earth on July 20, 1969. Certificates from July 1969 note McDonald's role in the Apollo 11 mission. Journal photo by Gordon Weeks / Courtesy documents

# Recovering Apollo 11

Lake Limerick resident helped astronauts safely return to Earth after moon mission

By Gordon Weeks  
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On July 20, 1969, a man who now lives near Lake Limerick helped ensure data streaming from Apollo 11 reached receiving stations on Earth as it plummeted toward the South Pacific Ocean.

Capt. William L. McDonald Jr. of the U.S. Air Force's 4th Military Airlift Squadron headed the crew of a C-141 Starlifter jet transport based out of McChord Air Force Base south of Tacoma. His crew provided logistical support for an Air Force EC-135 jet aircraft, an electronic-laden plane that served as a communication link between Apollo 11 and receiving stations on Earth during the late orbits of the flight when direct communication was impossible.

McDonald's C-141 Starlifter joined forces with 52 other aircraft, nine ships and more than 6,800 people to help support the return of the planet's first trip to the surface of the moon.

McDonald was 28 years old at the

time.

"It was quite intense being part of it," said McDonald, now 78.

Born in Wheeling, West Virginia, and raised in Santa Fe, New Mexico, McDonald was accepted to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1959, with an eye on a career in the military. He passed the flight physicals and applied to the Air Force. He learned to fly at Vance Air Force Base in Oklahoma, and was introduced to Washington after being assigned to McChord Air Force Base.

In Vietnam, McDonald was a forward air controller, looking for targets over the Ho Chi Minh Trail. He returned to McChord in 1967.

On July 8, 1969, McDonald and crew departed McChord for Australia. After three days there, he and his crew headed for Honolulu to await the Apollo 11 crew splashing down in the South Pacific. Teams of EC-135 and C-141 aircraft were stationed throughout the world in case the splashdown point was altered at the last moment.

McDonald didn't see the splashdown up close. "We were tracking it on

TV," he recalled.

One of the planes airlifted the command module from Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii to Ellington Air Force Base in Texas. McDonald's crew flew maintenance personnel and film footage nonstop to Florida.

Three astronauts spent 21 days in quarantine so they could be monitored for germs. The next two crews underwent the same process until the practice was dropped for Apollo 15, 16 and 17.

McDonald continued to watch the progress of the moon missions, including the aborted mission in April 1970 that produced the memorable phrase, "Houston, we have a problem."

"I think we were all glued to the TV with Apollo 13," he recalled.

McDonald said he believes the Apollo missions were worth the enormous cost because of the science and medical data that was amassed. Also, "The international space station is a fabulous thing," he said.

McDonald and wife, Bona, lived in

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