

Vote for Tom Carroll – Montaup Country Club – Vice President

October 13, 2015

Dear Montaup Country Club Member,

If you like the status quo and don't like change you may be offended by my letter. Upsetting you is not my intent. I decided to send you this letter after learning many of you were hearing rumors conflicting with facts and my on-going efforts to constantly improve Montaup. In addition, this letter offers me the opportunity to share my message - I want Montaup to take the next step in becoming the best course it can be and restore the value we deserve and pay for. I've recently received many phone calls, emails and text messages from members expressing their gratitude for my efforts and voicing their support for my vision of our most valuable asset ... the golf course.

I first played Montaup over 40 years ago with my grandfather and uncles who were all members. Back when Montaup was growing into its own and the 12th hole was still a dog leg left par 4. Montaup afforded my relatives a reasonable alternative to the more expensive and private courses they couldn't afford. I joined Montaup in the early 1990's almost 25 years ago and I have thoroughly enjoyed being a member of the club since. During the majority of the last 25 years of my membership I have served on the Board in some capacity or another. I've held the executive positions of Vice President and Club Secretary. I've served as Membership Chairman. I've led and participated on numerous committees. The bottom line is I have the requisite experience, knowledge, and most importantly, the desire to take our club to the next level and where it belongs.

A little history ... About 15 years ago while serving on the Board, I initiated and performed a market survey on compensation packages for area course superintendents. I felt our superintendent was underpaid especially for someone with 35 years of experience. I spent months of my own time researching then formulating a business case analysis which I eventually presented to the other Board members. My next challenge was to convince the Board a 25% pay raise was warranted. The expected resistance was there but due to my business background and convincing argument our superintendent received a well-deserved contract extension and a pay raise for the record books. In addition to the pay raise, five (5) weeks paid leave, medical benefits, company truck with expense account I also helped convince the Board we should fund an IRA for his eventual retirement. We've been paying a handsome sum of money into his IRA since that day over a decade ago. I should say you've been paying. Like all past and current members, everyone is responsible for the establishment and creation of our course. We all paid for this creation by paying and enabling our employees to meet the requests of the then sitting Board of Governors.

During this past summer, our course superintendent submitted a request for an additional two (2) year contract since his current contract expires this coming December. In addition to the two (2) year term there was an additional contractual request of a retirement package. Needless to say I emphatically disagreed with both these demands. Fiscal responsibility is and will always be a high priority.

Vote for Tom Carroll – Montaup Country Club – Vice President

We have two important decisions quickly approaching which will affect our membership in a number of ways. If we approach these decisions based on logic and sound business practices we will reap the benefits. If we approach these decisions based on emotions we are doomed. With our superintendent retiring in just over a year we need to be proactive now in filling this vacancy. We need to be loyal yet fiscally responsible with what we present as a going away gift. With 50 years of service I believe a gift is appropriate. Like I mentioned earlier, the members have been funding an IRA for him over the last decade.

With regards to our next superintendent, I've done more due diligence and I'm happy to report there are quite a few qualified and experienced superintendents available and willing to make Montaup their place of employment for the next 25+ years. They are local residents not looking to make this a 2-year training stop. They have the certifications and requisite education to take us where I think we all want to go. With the ever changing genetics of grasses and the biologics of the diseases it's imperative to hire someone with an education in turf management.

As we all know from the food we eat and the clothes we wear there are all kinds of chemical and biological interactions happening on a daily basis. If care isn't taken a lot of unintended damage will occur. This is not the same environment as it was 10-20 years ago. A chemical used last year to treat a common turf disease or pest doesn't necessarily work the following year. It's important to have the proper training to be able to test and identify the best mitigation strategy to prevent and manage common and reoccurring issues. Do any of these pictures look familiar <http://www.nysipm.cornell.edu/factsheets/turfgrass/abw.pdf>? My point in all this is to show we need a qualified individual to step up and fill some big shoes. I'd like to be involved to ensure our investment is protected and pursue the vision I believe we all want and deserve.

Did you know we own all of our golf carts? We buy at least six (6) new carts every year (we pay cash) and trade-in the six (6) oldest carts thereby keeping a fresh and well-running fleet. This is a business model established years ago and we've been following it since. How many public or semi-private courses do you play which have golf carts in the shape of ours? Most courses rent or lease them. We own ours. Our revenue from our cart rentals generates well over \$100,000 of *net* profit per year. The annual averages of our other main sources of revenue are members' dues (\$850K), green fees (\$275K), initiation fees (\$75K) and private cart space rental fees (\$50K). On the expense side, the majority of our budget is spent on the course. We all know the other expenses such as healthcare, wages/salaries, utilities, cost of goods sold, etc., will continue to escalate.

Over the last decade we have applied over \$3,000,000 of fertilizers and chemicals to the course. That's a lot of money! And what has happened during this period? I know for a fact mold and fungus is now all over our greens. We continue to spend money on dangerous chemicals trying to get rid of this nuisance. If not treated the correct way very soon we will be spending a lot more money on replacing our greens. End of story. The only way to get rid of this disease is to dig it out. What started out on the 7th green is now on every green and spreading.

What about our bunkers? Can they get any worse? We continue to dump in sand without fixing the underlying problem. Where have the tons and tons of sand gone? The perimeters of

Vote for Tom Carroll – Montaup Country Club – Vice President

our bunkers continue to grow in width and height. Why? Because they are not properly maintained or cared for. We currently have 55 bunkers and they are all in awful shape. We can remove at least five (5) bunkers from the course today without affecting the intent of the hazard. This 10% reduction in bunkers will allow more time for the workforce to properly care for and properly maintain the bunkers on a daily basis. Less bunkers, less sand, less maintenance, more time available, more savings.

Like our cart replacement program we need to adopt a bunker repair program. We have over \$100,000 set aside in our capital improvement fund. Bunker repair qualifies as a capital improvement! The average shelf life of a bunker is 10 years. With a qualified superintendent and support from the Board we could be repairing five (5) bunkers per year. After the 10th year we start all over again repairing the oldest five (5) bunkers which are now 10 years old. This repair process is a simple one. All sand is removed from the existing bunker and dug out down to solid earth. All perimeter “growth” is removed then leveled and re-sodded. Sod is then placed inside and at bottom of the bunker turf side up to allow proper drainage and also prevent rocks from surfacing. Sand is then added inside and we’re done. \$5K per bunker. \$25K per year ... pretty straight forward. Another business model putting Montaup in the fore front.

I’m a firm believer (along with many other members who have contacted me) we need a different approach to how we maintain our turf and greens. Applying tons of expensive fertilizers and chemicals every year is not the answer. We need to implement a regimented monitoring and sampling program and only treat when necessary. I understand a superintendents’ anxiety of cutting their budget one year with the fear it will become a permanent cut the following year. We need to be a little more responsible on both sides of the table when reducing a budget or line item one year and reconstituting it the next.

We do not need more members to generate more revenue to meet the increasing expenses or funding needed to improve our course. As a matter of fact, I believe we can reduce membership quotas and even reduce membership dues! Our eventual new superintendent will save us \$25,000 from the get go just in salary. Reducing fertilizers and chemicals will save money. Improving our product (course) will increase demand thereby increasing revenue and make Montaup the envy of every private club around. Better greens save money and in turn will make us money. Better greens don’t equate to faster greens but it wouldn’t hurt to gain a notch or two. Think of putting at Wannamoisett ... Shelter Harbor. Pure smooth roll. Add Montaup to the list. Imagine the interest and enjoyment when we have the best greens around. While some of you think what we have today is perfect we need to improve our product. If we don’t improve our product then member dues will become the predominant source of our revenue and you know what that means ... more members and higher dues. The death spiral afflicting so many other courses.

Speaking of sound business practices ... all members should be proud of the recently installed state-of-the-art irrigation system. There’s not many, if any, courses around able to install such a system without having an assessment or raising dues. Did you know this system can be operated from a smart phone from across the country at any time? It’s in our best interest for our new superintendent to take advantage of the advanced capabilities offered by this million dollar system. We need to throttle back on the amount of water we apply. We shouldn’t be

Vote for Tom Carroll – Montaup Country Club – Vice President

soaking the greens all night to keep them moist throughout a hot summer day. We need to apply water throughout the day which is healthier. It shouldn't matter electricity usage is a little cheaper at night. The cost to repair the damage is offset by any savings by watering all night. Our greens are just too wet, too soft and always look like minefields. They are obliterated when a golf ball hits them. Indentations are easily imprinted from walking on them causing more bumps. Fungus and mold thrive where the soil is too moist. The proper moisture level for greens is around 20%. Ours are twice that. We water the entire green when only a small section requires it. We need to buy a hydrometer and map our greens with topography and moisture data so we know where they dry out the fastest. Do you soak your entire lawn if only a section needs it? Just because we have an endless supply of water, fertilizers and chemicals doesn't mean we have to use them. Imagine the condition improvement and savings.

Less water, less bumps better greens, more enjoyable experience. Golfers love beautiful greens. Our greens are average. We need to be above-average or excellent. Word will spread like wild fire. Montaup will become the talk of New England. The best course anyone can play. As a result our green fee sales will increase along with cart sales. Bar revenue goes up. Everyone wins. We haven't raised our green fees in years because we can't. We've had to reduce our outing rate to entice outside business. Public play is the revenue area needing growth. Our dues are high enough. With more demand for our product comes more revenue.

We have over 600 eligible voters for this election yet we will be lucky if 250 members vote. If you agree we need to take Montaup to the next level and reconstitute the value which is the foundation of our club then please find the time to vote this weekend or on Monday between 5pm and 7pm.

Your vote does matter. If you've never voted before now is your chance especially if you share the same vision for our club.

Thank you for your time and interest in making Montaup the best it can be.

Sincerely,

Tom Carroll

tomcarroll@cox.net