



Evanston GOLF COURSE

By Shaunacy Ferro

and weeds, a depository of tin cans, glass and other such material dumped from nearby residences,” C.M. Cartwright wrote in his history of the course in a 1946 issue of the *Evanston Review*.

The community’s solution was to build a golf course – the Evanston-Willmette Community Golf Course, which today remains a vital community asset. The full 18-hole course is public, meaning you don’t have to be a member to play there, and relatively inexpensive. It stretches across both Evanston and Willmette, with 11 holes in Evanston and seven in Willmette, on land owned by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District.

In the past, the course has been called the Peter Jans Golf Course, after the enthusiastic golfer who was instrumental in organizing the course initially. He felt that people didn’t take up golf because of its expense, and wanted to spread the sport to more people. At another point, it has been called the Frank

Govern Memorial Golf Course. But for now, it is sticking to the simpler name, the Evanston-Willmette Community Golf Course.

“It’s very unique. It’s kind of challenging -- it’s long and narrow, and you have to walk a lot,” says Deborah Weixl, who lives across the street from the course and has become more involved in the past year in promoting it as a community resource. “It’s a little different from other golf courses where there’s a big fence -- this is really open. I would think the golfer’s don’t know if they’re walking in someone’s yard or on the golf course.”

Last summer, the course ran into some financial challenges due to the weather. With

To many, the stretch of open land off the Central Street Purple Line station just looks like open grass. But the Evanston-Willmette Community Golf Course, an institution almost 100 years old, runs through both communities. For years, it has provided a scenic public space to grab a quick game or just take a peaceful walk past the Baha’i temple.

But back in 1919, the property around the North Shore Channel -- a marvel of modern engineering holding back sewage and water drainoff from Lake Michigan -- was in a state of disrepair. “It was a mass of rubbish, brush



as drawing different groups in to golfing. Offering football parking may be another solution, since the course is only a few steps off the Central Street El stop near Ryan Field. They are also in talks with the city to restructure their billing to reflect the fact that it's more than a golf course, arguing that it's a community resource much like a public park. "There's wildlife out there - people go to watch birds, walk, snow ski in the winter, you name it they do it," Weixl says.

Aside from the various groups that use the course for golf, whether that's Parks and Recreation programs, hospital employees that come out after work, or women's leagues, those that live near the course enjoy the open parkland. "Part of what the community loves about it -- it's this great green open area all along the channel, and people use it for all kinds of things throughout the year in addition to golf," notes Weixl, who is attached to the course despite the fact that she isn't a golfer. "You do see people out with their dogs, you see people gardening and putting flowers out -- a lot of volunteer efforts in addition to the association that makes it work."

The course is also looking to draw more people to golf as a sport, in part by offering a special "baker's dozen" route, a shorter 13 hole round which is easier for newcomers. "It's the only course in the Midwest now offering this shortened course opportunity," Weixl says about this new fashion in the golf world.

And with the sun coming out in earnest these days, it's the perfect opportunity to spend some time outdoors. "The minute it's warm, the golfers are out there."



bad rain and a large number of fallen trees, the course had to be repaired, but most people don't golf in the rain, and so income became a challenge. But in the past few years, the association has invested more in maintenance and taking care of the course, as well