

# A hole-in-one

## Tee off at Elmhurst Art Museum's new artistic mini-golf course

Submitted by Amanda Berrios

In a unique collision of recreation and art, the Elmhurst Art Museum joins forces with Colossal founder Christopher Jobson to curate two, 9-hole golf courses made by artists Par Excellence Redux.

The "Front 9" opens at the museum July 7 through Sept. 16, 2021, and "The Back 9" will continue the fun Oct. 13 to Jan. 2, 2022.

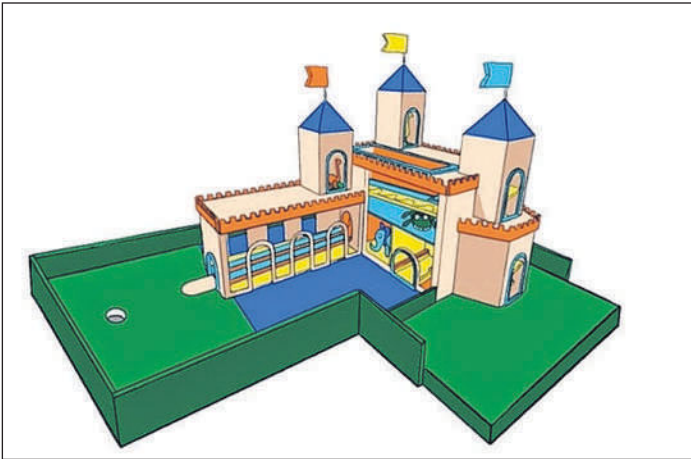
The fully playable course, designed by artists and architects from the Midwest and beyond, pays homage to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago's popular 1988 exhibition titled "Par Excellence." Tee time reservations are available at [elmhurstartmuseum.org/golf](http://elmhurstartmuseum.org/golf).

Par Excellence Redux promises an unusual twist on a familiar pastime throughout the museum's galleries as players explore a surprisingly varied collection of themes — from social justice to the occult. The exhibition includes a fortunetelling hole that has the power to dramatically change scores, as well as a hole that challenges players with an optical illusion.

The exhibition was originally slated to open May 9, 2020, but was postponed due to COVID-19 and has since been re-imagined to abide by current city and state safety mandates.

"Front 9," on display throughout the museum's main galleries, includes:

- Hole No. 1, "Cross-Section Castle" by A Couple of Putts



COURTESY OF ELMHURST ART MUSEUM

**Rendering of Hole No. 1, "Cross-Section Castle" by A Couple of Putts (Robin Schwartzman and Tom Loftus)**

design duo Robin Schwartzman and Tom Loftus (Minneapolis, Minnesota), features an alternative take on a mini-golf castle by providing players a glimpse at the ball's journey through ramps and around custom-made figures inside.

- Hole No. 2, "Participation Trophy" by Jesse Meredith (Chicago) features numerous golf holes on a rounded turf, providing multiple routes for a winning shot.

- Hole No. 3, "Straight Shot," created by design collective Current Projects (Milwaukee, Wisconsin) sends players through a small room constructed to skew perspective and create an optical illusion of greater depth.

- Hole No. 4, "Razzle Dazzle" by Andrea Jablonski & Stolatits Inc. (Chicago) utilizes ramps, a loop, and intersecting geometric shapes to

provide fun and difficulty through contrasting camouflage patterns.

- Hole No. 5, "Greens of Cabrini," by Julie Cowan (Evanston) allows the player to putt through time, starting with the aspiration opening of The Cabrini Green Homes, through the rise of the Old Town Square retail development.

- Hole No. 6, "Just Desserts" by Latent Design (Chicago) is a spiraling colorful cone that a golfer must use to bridge from the heights of the putting green and the lows of the hole.

- Hole No. 7, "Chairy Who?" by Gautum Rao (Indianapolis, Indiana) features obstacles of iconic mid-Century furniture in homage to the museum's McCormick House.

- Hole No. 8, by Elmhurst Art Museum's Teen Art Council, a putter-free hole, sends golf balls through mazelike



COURTESY OF COLOSSAL

**Four archival photos of Par Excellence & ArtGolf exhibits from 1988-1992. The first popular exhibition Par Excellence in 1988 was the brainchild of sculptor Michael O'Brien.**

tubes with their own set of rules.

- Hole No. 9, "Determine Your Fate" by Annalee Koehn (Chicago) is equal parts skills-challenge, game of chance and fortune cookie.

The original 1988 Par Excellence exhibition at the School of the Art Institute was the brainchild of Chicago sculptor Michael O'Brien and opened to queues down the block. The exhibition in Elmhurst will pay homage to the original course through ephemera, newspaper clippings, and photos.

Designer Annalee Koehn, who was one of the organizers of the original 1988 exhibit, will re-create her fortunetelling hole, Determine Your Fate.

Par Excellence was likely the first artist-designed mini-golf course ever created and paved the way for future artistic golf courses that would follow.

"Back 9" artists will be

announced in July.

Colossal is an international platform for contemporary art and visual expression that celebrates a vast range of creative disciplines. Founded as a blog in 2010 by writer and curator Christopher Jobson, the site has more than 6,500 published articles from contributors across the globe and reaches tens of millions of readers monthly on several online channels.

Colossal is based in Chicago, and now works internationally to curate and produce large-scale art exhibitions and film events. Learn more at [thiscolossal.com/about](http://thiscolossal.com/about) and [christopher.jobs/on/](http://christopher.jobs/on/).

### New museum hours

The Elmhurst Art Museum is at 150 S. Cottage Hill Ave. On the museum's campus is the McCormick House, a single-family home designed in 1952 by Mies van der Rohe,

one of the great architects of the 20th century. The McCormick House is one of only three residences designed and built by Mies in the United States — and one of only two open to the public.

As a unique arts complex, the Elmhurst Art Museum is deeply committed to three distinct areas of focus to inspire and enrich our community: art, education, and architecture.

Beginning July 7, the museum will resume its new hours and will be open from noon to 5 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday to Sunday. It also is open every second Friday of the month from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Golf prices are \$10 for ages 16 or older, \$8 for seniors, \$5 for children ages 5-15, or free for kids younger than 5.

For more information, call (630) 834-0202 or visit [elmhurstartmuseum.org](http://elmhurstartmuseum.org).

# Thomas the Tank tour to pull into museum

Submitted by Illinois Railway Museum

Thomas the Tank Engine invites little engineers to join him and his best friend Percy for a day of big adventures at "Day Out with Thomas: Big Adventures Tour 2021" at the Illinois Railway Museum in Union.

Children are invited to spend the day with their friend Thomas when the #1 Engine and Percy pull into Union on Saturdays and Sundays, July 10-18.

In addition, they will meet Sir Topham Hatt, Controller of the Railway, and enjoy a day of Thomas-themed activities, including crafts, photo ops, and more.

The tour, now in its 26th year, will make 42 stops across the U.S. and Canada and is expected to welcome nearly one million

passengers in 2021.

The visit includes a 25-minute ride with Thomas and Percy; interactive story time and photo opportunity with Percy; a meet & greet with Sir Topham; and a Thomas & Friends Imagination Station featuring a variety of activities.

Children will receive a "Passport to Adventures" booklet to track their journey and a special prize upon completion.

The adventures will be from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekends at Illinois Railway Museum, 7000 Olson Road, Union.

Tickets are on sale now and available by calling the Illinois Railway Museum at (815) 923-4391 or by visiting [www.irm.org](http://www.irm.org).

In response to heavy demand for tickets,

the Illinois Railway Museum was able, in early June, to add additional coaches to the trains in order to provide additional capacity.

For information on Thomas & Friends, visit [www.thomasandfriends.com](http://www.thomasandfriends.com).

Follow Thomas & Friends on [www.facebook.com/thomasandfriends](http://www.facebook.com/thomasandfriends) or [twitter.com/ThomasFriends](https://twitter.com/ThomasFriends).

**Thomas the Tank Engine is traveling around the U.S. and Canada in the Big Adventures Tour 2021. Spend a day with stars of the popular "Thomas & Friends" at Illinois Railway Museum in Union July 10-18.**



COURTESY OF THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE

# Waubonsee's financial landscape remains strong

BY DOUG MINTER

Waubonsee Community College

The game of Taboo challenges players to describe a word for their team members to guess, but strikes certain words from the list of clues that may be used.

For example, you might be asked to describe the word "circle" without using the words round, arc, circumference, or diameter. A keen ear from the other team will, of course, try to catch you in the disqualifying act of using one of the taboo words as you race against the clock.

As Waubonsee's senior finance official, I think one of the most important things I can — and should — do is help stakeholders understand the college's financial health and circumstances. I don't like to do this with lots of charts and numbers, but rather with some very basic and straightforward concepts.

Think of this like finance or accounting for the non-major or, better yet, like a game of Taboo, where I get to explain finance and accounting stuff but can't use numbers or dollar signs.

I like to describe the financial health of any business or organization, Waubonsee



COURTESY OF WAUBONSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**Doug Minter, Vice President of Finance and Administration at Waubonsee Community College**

included, first from the "balance sheet" perspective. This report quantifies and lists what the college owns (assets) and what it owes to others (liabilities). The college's balance sheet has benefited from a history of strong financial management practices and decision-making. Our assets include:

- Beautiful campuses and buildings;
- State-of-the-art instructional equipment;
- Liquidity to pay our bills;
- Long-term investments to ensure ongoing viability.

Our liabilities exist primarily as bonds, which we've sold to investors over the years to

finance our construction and remodeling projects, very similar to the mortgages homeowners often have. When we subtract what we owe from what we have, we refer to the difference as "net position."

The second statement of importance for the untrained eye is the "income statement." It quantifies and lists what the college receives (revenues) and what it spends (expenses). The most prominent revenue sources for Illinois community colleges are tuition, local property taxes, and state support.

Expenses include salaries, benefits, tuition waivers, and pretty much anything we purchase — computers, instructional equipment, books, supplies, etc.

In the corporate world, the difference between revenues and expenditures would be called a profit or loss. As a nonprofit organization, though, "profits" do not get distributed to shareholders, but rather get added to our assets at the end of the year. This means that instead of profit or loss, we refer to the difference between our revenues and expenditures as "change in net position."

Waubonsee Community College is accountable to

many stakeholders:

- The board of trustees, elected by our district residents to be responsible stewards of their tax dollars.

- Students who entrust their tuition dollars to us with an expectation of a high-quality education.

- Employees who rely on us to support them and the high-quality services they provide to our students and the community.

From a financial health perspective, how do we know how we are doing? I'll break the "no numbers" game rule here to describe two measures of particular importance: the public Composite Financial Index (CFI) and our Bond Rating, both of which collapse dozens and dozens of financial metrics into simplified, aggregated scores.

Our accrediting agency, the Higher Learning Commission, requires us to report our CFI every year. On a scale that ranges from -4 to +10, Waubonsee's most recent score was 6.6 and has been on a general upward trend for the last 10 years.

Our bond rating agencies use a letter-based grading scale. Akin to an academic grade scale, A-level ratings are the highest, but the rating

agencies have multiple levels for each letter. With a rating of AA+, Waubonsee's creditworthiness is just one notch shy of the highest possible rating of AAA. The primary financial variable within our control to eventually achieve the AAA rating would be to further increase the balances of our savings accounts (our supply of cash and long-term investment balances).

Even before the pandemic, the higher education sector was experiencing a gradual but steady decline in enrollments nationwide. Recognizing the importance of tuition as one of the three primary revenue sources on our income statement, a negative bottom line, or in other words, a reduction in net position runs the risk of eroding the college's financial strength.

Accordingly, we continually monitor both enrollments and tuition rates.

In light of the pandemic, though, we have been able to leverage the college's financial strength to benefit both our students and our taxpayers. Last semester, the college funded two scholarship programs, a Spring Forward scholarship of \$40 per credit hour for every registered student, and an

application-based Pandemic Relief Scholarship.

In addition to nearly \$3,000,000 in savings for students provided by these two programs, the board endorsed maintaining a level tuition and fees rate for the academic year 2021-2022. And our district taxpayers recently received their property tax bills, which reflect a decrease in the Community College District 516 detail line.

While the amounts of those reductions vary based on property values, the aggregated savings to district taxpayers was nearly \$9,000,000.

We will continue to work with all of our stakeholders to maintain and strengthen the college's financial footing while providing outstanding education and services to our students and the district.

Even though I may have bent the Taboo game rules a bit, simply remember the college's financial standing is sound. We are well-positioned to continue serving our students and our community because we diligently manage our annual revenues and expenditures.

**• Doug Minter is Vice President of Finance and Administration at Waubonsee Community College in Sugar Grove.**