

# Off The Fringe

**Y**ou are all well aware of the catastrophes that hit Japan on March 11, 2011. Our hearts go out to all those who lost family members and loved ones. The 9.0 earthquake and tsunami that followed struck the shores of Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures, sealing the fate of not only some 30,000 unsuspecting people, but also affecting the livelihood of the whole country, including that of the entire Japanese golf industry.

The problem is, looking forward, with the gloom of a three-punch disaster: earthquake and tsunami followed by a nuclear incident, the hopes of international golf tourism taking hold here are gone for the short- to mid-term, at best.

The sad truth is that the ripple effect in the golf industry has caused a full stop, affecting the entire country's courses, regardless of geographical location to the three affected prefectures. So a single mother who caddies part-time in Kyoto at a course that has seen zero effect from the radiation, earthquakes or tsunami can't pay her bills for the next six months as customers just aren't showing up. The affected Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures have a total of 126 courses between them, making up approximately 5 percent of the courses in Japan. Although important, they are just a small part of the larger picture.

Regardless of the courses' proximity to the disaster-struck areas, nuclear radiation just isn't something any country's image can bounce back from easily. Without swift closure to the nuclear issue, people will just choose to travel and golf elsewhere. In an in-



Only 5 percent of the courses in Japan are in the devastated areas.

dusty where perception equals reality, a discerned preemptive effort from the Japanese tourism authorities is needed.

In an attempt to counter this disaster, many clubs all over Japan are looking to not only help out with fundraising for charities on the ground in the disaster-stricken areas, but also to increase rounds at their courses to help their own staffs get back on their feet. Let's face it, the majority of your green fee doesn't go to the club; it goes to the people who work there and to the upkeep of the course that makes it all viable.

The Japanese are a resilient and hard-working people who, with the help of all of us working together, will survive. So in the not-so-distant future, stay tuned for great and exciting things from an industry and people that may be down, but are by no means out. ■

*Bennett J. Galloway is the director of golf at the Gotemba Golf Club in Japan. To read more from him and to keep up on Japan's progress in golf, visit [www.golf-in-japan.com](http://www.golf-in-japan.com)*

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# Georgia golf descends on capital

**G**olf was on Georgia's mind recently at Georgia Golf Day at the state's capital.

On hand to present the significance of the game to state politicians were representatives of the Georgia GCSA, as well as Steve Mona, CEO of the World Golf Foundation and Joe Steranka, CEO of the PGA of America.

One of the presenters was Ken

Mangum, CGCS, director of golf and grounds at the Atlanta Athletic Club, site of this year's PGA Championship. He was happy to share with an audience that included Georgia Governor Nathan Deal, how significant golf is in the state, especially in 2011 with the state hosting two of the four majors in golf and the Tour Championship.

"It's about as big as it gets, it's one

Anthony Williams, CGCS, CGM, at Stone Mountain (Ga.) Golf Club talks on camera about the importance of golf.

of the biggest years ever for golf in one state," Mangum told *Golfdom*. "It really puts us on the golf map."

As a whole the Georgia golf industry generated a total economic impact of \$5.1 billion in 2009, supporting nearly 57,000 jobs with \$1.5 billion of wage income.

Georgia's House of Representatives and Senate each presented resolutions proclaiming 2011 as the "Year of Golf in Georgia," citing golf's numerous contributions to the state. It was the first Georgia Golf Day, but *Golfdom* contributing editor Anthony Williams, CGCS, CGM, promised it would not be the last.

"It was such a successful event, we will certainly have it again," he said. "It's a great opportunity for us to get the word out on golf, and honestly, it went even better than we expected." ■

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## Golfdom adds to staff

Beth Geraci has been named senior editor of *Golfdom*, officially joining the staff on March 29th.

Geraci has worked as a professional journalist for more than 15 years, including six years as a writer for the *Chicago Tribune*.

A graduate of Allegheny College and Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, Geraci began her career as an editor at a newswire service in Washington, D.C., where she edited and distributed press releases from the White House and congressional leaders. She went on to become the community news reporter at the *Jackson Hole Guide* newspaper, winning two national feature writing awards. Her other ex-



perience includes working as a book editor in Chicago and as a professor of business communications at Cleveland State University.

"Beth has the right combination of education, experience and enthusiasm," Seth Jones, *Golfdom's* editor-in-

chief, says. "I'm excited for her to get out and meet this fantastic industry. I know *Golfdom's* readers are going to enjoy working with Beth as much as I do."

"I'm excited about joining the Questex Media team as senior editor of *Golfdom*," Geraci says. "I'm looking forward to working with everybody and making my own contributions to the company."

Geraci can be reached at 216-706-3756 or bgeraci@questex.com. ■

### To the people at *Golfdom*,

Thank you for the publication of the quote from Judy Rankin's GIS keynote, regarding golf design and the importance of nine hole courses to the game. She caught both the prejudice toward nine hole courses and the benefit of them in a busy world. We hope that we can continue to do the industry proud with our management/maintenance practices and commitment to the spirit and growth of the game.

Sincerely,

**Mark W. Renner**

President, Argument Golf Course  
New Glarus, Wis.  
[www.argumentgolf.com](http://www.argumentgolf.com)

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