

# JOAN CONOVER, COORDINATOR EXTRAORDINAIRE



Conover's Morgan 51,  
*Growltiger*, in Bermuda

Joan Conover literally has her fingers on the pulse of the world, the cruising world that is! From her home in the Hampton, Virginia area, noticeable for the tall SSB antenna in its back yard that Joan and husband Greg pass off jokingly to neighbors as "just another part of the local flora and fauna," Joan keeps in close contact with nearly 160 Seven Seas Cruising Association (SSCA) hosts around the globe. Her ample experience as a cruiser herself, and a wealth of knowledge she's gained along the way, make her a SSCA's Cruising Station Coordinator extraordinaire.

Conover received her first taste of boating as a child, fishing with her grandfather in the Pacific Northwest's San Juan straits. Several boats later, she, husband Greg and their two children moved up to their current Morgan 51, *Growltiger*. The family started sailing all along the East Coast in 1995, then made an initial offshore trip in 1998 in Steve Black's Bermuda Rally. In 2005/6, the Conovers joined the SSCA. That association, founded in 1952, is an international, non-profit organization for cruisers. The family cast off with their then 18-year-olds as crew on a year-long voyage of the Northern Atlantic and Caribbean. For the last leg they joined Black's Atlantic Cup in the BVI en route home to Virginia, where they have since navigated their kids through college and into adult life.



Joan receiving the South Bound II Blue-water Sailing Service Award. Photo – from left to right, SSCA President Dave Skolnick, Joan Conover and SSCA Association Director Judi Mkam.

"I became involved heavily with the SSCA Cruising Host program after seeing the critical need for this internationally. It's just so important!," says Conover, who has served at her coordinator post for eight years. In this role, her background in information systems, proficiency as a radio operator and her love of cruising enabled her to amass a large



network of Cruising Station hosts from Asia to Africa, North to South America, New Zealand to the Netherlands.

This position calls for Conover to do not only the day-to-day work of keeping global hosts' contacts updated, but also to band hosts and SSCA members together in times of need. One of these occasions occurred three years ago during a cruising rally that embarked off the U.S. East coast.

"A vessel in the Caribbean 1500 lost part of a keel and suffered major damage due to a grounding in Oregon Inlet," Conover explains. "We were able to monitor the boat, reach out to them as soon as they got through the inlet and find SSCA friends and members to help them with housing and boat repair. Members even personally took the family members home to relatives."

Conover's skills served international needs when she worked as communications volunteer for the SSCA's Clean Wake Project to aid Haiti following the country's devastating 2010 earthquake. In this role, she assisted in locating safe havens inside Haiti where vessels might land, using a combination of Skype, cell phones, email and HAM radio. One of the vessels involved in this effort, *S/V Tranquility*, has continued to provide assistance for the island's agriculture and schools.

Sometimes the situation has been a little lighter.

"A friend with an amazing around-the-world sailing resume visited us in Hampton and then managed to find a 'sand' bar at Duck, N.C., as she was rounding Hatteras," Conover explains. "Two days later she called to say she had arrived in Miami. We already knew the story as the video of twenty-something young men carrying her boat back into the water had gone viral! CBS even contacted her due to the video; a hint that everyone knew about her adventures."

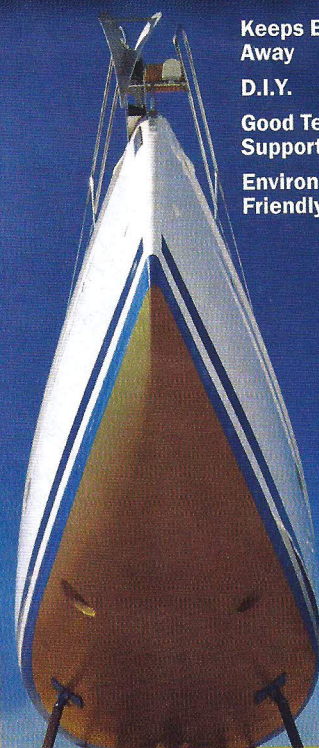
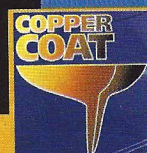
Conover and her husband take their SSCA membership seriously. In addition to Joan's volunteer work as Cruising Station Coordinator, the two have coordinated the SSCA booth at the Annapolis Boat Show and started the tradition of a pre-boat show barbecue. They also attend the local area GAMS or get-togethers. The boat show and GAM events combined to earn the couple a special record. First, they became the only Morgan 51 to ground at a GAM when anchored at the Rhodes River prior to the Annapolis Boat Show. Second, they set a record the following year by arriving with thirteen dogs onboard – their three Havanese and 10 newborn puppies. The Conovers, who discovered the Havanese while cruising in the Caribbean, are both avid dog lovers who show their dogs plus train them as service dogs and provide them as gift boat-dogs.

"Our Cruising Station network is not just about the emergencies," says Conover. "It's about meeting other members whether it's at a pre-planned potluck or an impromptu get-together. It's the SSCA camaraderie that makes this program so special!"



## A CLEAN HULL FOR 10+ YEARS!

Keeps Barnacles  
Away  
D.I.Y.  
Good Technical  
Support  
Environmentally  
Friendly



321.514.9197 • coppercoatusa.com



# Charterbiz

Charter Insurance from Offshore Risk Management

USA 800-773-0105  
Caribbean 284-494-8925  
International 305-743-7711

**Insurance for Charter  
& Watersports Operators**

CALL OR CLICK  
[www.CharterBiz.com](http://www.CharterBiz.com)

The CharterBiz website caters to Charter & Tour Operators including bareboat and crewed charters, dive-boat and tour operators, daily rental and PWC renters.

**No fees, no hassles and no Prima Donnas. Just common sense!**

GET A  
PERSONALIZED  
INSURANCE  
QUOTATION  
FOR

**Charter Yacht Insurance** - Bareboat or crewed  
**Captain & Crew** - Personal Accident +Weekly  
Income+Medical Expense Insurance  
**Health Insurance** - call for more info  
**Watersports Operators** - contact us

The CharterBiz insurance program is managed by



**Offshore Risk Management**  
Marine & Specialty Insurance  
Services Worldwide

