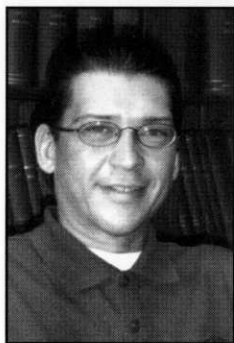


Staff spotlight: Bill Snyder



Bill Snyder

On Valentine's Day 2004, Bill Snyder began working as a server at the Club. Here in his fourth year, we asked him his story.

• **Tell us your path. How did you get to the Engineers Club?**

I'm from here, but I was away for a long time. I grew up in Trotwood, but in my junior year I moved to Tampa to stay with my aunt and play baseball year round. At Trotwood they didn't have a very strong baseball program. After high school, I traveled some, went to New York for a little bit, then returned to Florida and studied at the University of South Florida in Tampa. I dropped out in my third year because I had been on an athletic scholarship, playing for the university's South Florida Bulls, when I threw my shoulder out and my baseball career was over.

• **What position did you play?**

I was a commodity as a left-handed pitcher and was going to be drafted by the Tampa Devil Rays before they started as a franchise team. But I tore my rotator cuff. The end of my baseball career kind of worked for me because when my scholarship ceased I ended up working for George Steinbrenner.

• **As in, owner of the New York Yankees?**

Yes. He owned the Radisson Bay Harbor in Tampa and I started working for him as a bartender, then got promoted to maître'd. I quit school because work hours grew and I was making a lot of money - for a kid. Then the hotel changed the five-star restaurant to a Damon's sports bar, causing me to lose interest because I was used to fine dining. George helped me out with a loan to start my own bar and I became a restaurateur. It was a bar-hopping place for kids, but after four years I got a little burned out, tired of the night life—I never saw daylight. I sold my business to my partner and opened up a little tapas bar, Ceviche, and did that for seven years. That worked out well,

and I ended up selling it to a man who created a second one and still has the franchise going. After that I got my second divorce; the bar business was not good for marriage. I have a son and a daughter. My 14-year old daughter lives in Clearwater. My son is doing well in Los Angeles as a DJ and producer of rap music.

When in 2000 I returned to Dayton because my mother passed away, I saw the girl that I'm with now because her father had passed away at the same time. We had been best friends in high school. She talked me into moving to Atlanta where I started my own catering business, Amore. In 2004 I was tired of the big city, and my father was ill, and my girlfriend's family was here, so we decided to return to Dayton.

While I was here taking care of my dad, I was really bored. I wanted to do something to keep my skills up, so I started at the Club working two or three days a week. That way I could keep running my Atlanta business through the phone, computer and trips. A year and a half ago, when my Atlanta business got too much for me, I sold out my interest. A little over a year ago, a friend opened up another tapas bar in Tampa, based on my concept, and I invested in it as a silent partner. It's been a whirlwind.

• **What's distinctive about working at the Club?**

The people. It's not a lot of young people, who are different to deal with. I like the more mature people. Everyone's friendly, and everyone's usually nice to me, though in every operation there are occasional exceptions.

• **And in your spare time, you - ?**

Play a lot of golf. I'm about a two-handicap player now, and I want to be a scratch player by the end of summer.

• **What about baseball?**

I play in a softball summer league in Brookville. I can't throw the ball 90 miles an hour any more, but otherwise the shoulder works well. I can still throw around 80, which isn't bad for an old man.

'08 Trailblazer Award to Mary Ann Johnson

Mary Ann Johnson, aviation historian and author who has supported aviation-related projects in the Dayton and Miami Valley for over 25 years, is the 2008 recipient of the Trailblazer Award presented annually by Aviation Trail, Inc.

Ms. Johnson's *A Field Guide to Flight: On the Aviation Trail in Dayton, Ohio*, tells stories behind the more than 40 designated sites on the Aviation Trail. Her recent book, *McCook Field 1912-1927*, describes the history and achievements of the United States' first aviation test field located across the river northeast of the Engineers Club.

Currently secretary of the Aviation Trail Board of Trustees,

Ms. Johnson is a founding member of the Trail and a board member since its incorporation as a nonprofit in 1981. Her acceptance speech will tell some of her experiences in writing the two books.

The public is welcome to attend the award banquet April 16 at the Presidential Banquet Center in Kettering, with a social hour at 6:30 p.m., dinner at 6:45 and program at about 7:30. For reservations (\$40 per person), mail payment and choice of entrée (beef, chicken or vegetarian) to Aviation Trail, Inc., P.O. Box 633, Wright Brothers Branch, Dayton, Ohio 45409 by Friday, April 11.