

Witness to history: Synakowski's story, part II

BY ALICE GERARD

Senior Contributing Writer

Note: In January 2025, I shared Joe Synakowski's story about his World War II experiences. He joined the U.S. Army at the age of 15, and he used his brother's baptismal certificate as proof that he was 18 years old. He is one of the youngest World War II veterans.

After retiring from the Buffalo Water Department in 1994, Joe and his wife, Marilyn, moved to Grand Island.

"I was looking for a house because my house was a little bit too big for us to handle," Synakowski said. "It was only me and my wife, Marilyn. I spotted an article in The Buffalo News of a house fixer-upper on Grand Island. I came to look it over. Luckily, I had enough for a down payment. We made a deal, and I landed up in Grand Island.

"I fixed the house up some. It's a nice, comfortable little house. We were happy with where we were for over 20 years. My friends in Grand Island are great. I can't ask for any better, and I thank them all. As far as getting acquainted with people, I transferred into the DeGlopper Memorial Post (VFW Post 9249). At that time, the American Legion was not really active. It took a little while, but finally, I got acquainted with a few of the guys who belonged to the Legion. By chance, they invited me to the annual dinner and I became the membership chairman. The membership was falling down. World War II veterans were dying off. A few members that I knew transferred in, and we accumulated a decent membership.

"We got American Legion Post 1346 going. The membership kicked in: Richard 'Shorty' Vanthoff, Earl DeGlopper, and a few of the other ones. There are quite a few members that pitched in and got the post moving. We started a Mother's Day flower sale. That worked out well. Little by little, it built up. It's a good source of income for the post. It's still going."

Marilyn Synakowski, who died on Jan. 28, 2024, served as the newsletter editor for the post.

Shortly after getting involved with Grand Island's American Legion post, Synakowski learned about Charles DeGlopper's story.

"When he was in the service (during World War II), there were only 600-800 people on the Island. A lot of the new people never heard of him. I thought we should give him a spot on the earth, where people could know who he was," Synakowski



Joe Synakowski and Mary Cooke at the Air Force Memorial. (Submitted)

said.

"In 1994, we organized a memorial for Charlie (DeGlopper)," Synakowski explained. "We had a display of World War II articles, and a few troopers came up from Fort Bragg to present the 82nd Airborne Division, to show their appreciation. We had a parade at what is now known as DeGlopper Memorial. We had a display at Trinity Church. We had a parade of cars of different years that Charlie was a young man. We had skydivers come down and present the flag to Lillias Bell, who was Charlie's sister. It was a nice event, and I'm glad we kicked it off with a nice event for Charlie. We progressed. Mary Cooke took over the job from Town Hall. Linda Tuffiaro (former director of the Grand Island Recreation Department) helped. Freddie Killian, who was a classmate of Charlie's, helped a lot. It was a community event."

"From there, we went on to do other things, to keep the ball rolling, to keep Charlie in people's minds for what he did. He was only 22 when he died. It was a shame that he had to go that way, but war is war and you've gotta go with it.

"It's been a great honor to keep the memory of Charlie alive."

DeGlopper is also remembered in France, Synakowski said.

"There's a big memorial for Charlie in Normandy," he noted. "There are other memorials there, too. For the fellows who flew over in the

planes. It was really nice of them, and it was all done by the American Legion. They all chip in. They all help. If anyone figures on taking a trip to see World War II items and World War II memorials, they should go to Normandy. Normandy is the prime D-Day spot. It's the place to go. You won't be sorry.

"I hope this war today doesn't pan out like World War II. I hope it's over quick. When we had this display, there were many people involved, from our organization and from the Niagara Frontier chapter of the 82nd Airborne. The town has been very nice in presenting a proclamation every year for remembrance of Charlie, that he was 82nd Airborne, and we try to keep the memory of the

first troopers who became airborne alive.

"World War II was not a good war. Europe was damaged greatly. We, as a country, did the damage, and we helped these people restore their countries. Most of them are appreciative. France, especially. Normandy. They appreciate Normandy. Every year, they have a celebration of Normandy. They have an organization there (the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC))."

One other person who provided a great deal of help in ensuring that Charles DeGlopper had a memorial was Lt. Col. Kelly M. Carrigg.

"She lives in France now and is instrumental in keeping the memorial sites to Charlie there in excellent condition," Cooke explained.

"As far as Charlie goes, he is well remembered now with the memorial in the center of town, with a large-as-life statue, which was dedicated (June 2021) by (sculptor) Susan Geissler," Synakowski said. "She did a wonderful job depicting him in uniform, in battle dress. It's really a marvelous piece of work. I hope it stays up there for years and years. Everybody should recognize what that park is all about. The park is about all our heroes. Not only Charlie, but all the boys. All the boys who gave their lives and so forth while they were in the service. I'm sure all the veterans are appreciative of having a spot in your town where you show your appreciation.

Synakowski himself was honored in October 2024, when he had the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C., as part of Buffalo's Honor Flight. All veterans travel with a guardian, and Synakowski chose Cooke as his guardian.

"The people that organized the honor flight are marvelous. They get you on an airplane, take you to Washington, D.C., and put you in a hotel. They pay all the expenses for you. They take you to almost all the monuments of any value in Washington, D.C. It's one of the greatest things that could happen. The person who runs it, Tom Petrie, and all of the ladies ... they work feverishly to make you happy (the veterans). I enjoyed my trip, and I'm sure the rest of the veterans also enjoyed theirs. I see that they had an Honor Flight for the women veterans. That was a nice thing to do, too. They have many contributors. Tops Markets is one of them. National Fuel is a big contributor. There are so many. They really use their money wisely by doing this for the veterans. The veterans are really appreciative of what they do. We thank them very much."

Cooke explained that, before the trip, the Honor Flight organizers work with the guardians to create a surprise for the veterans in the form of a mail call.

"One of my jobs as a guardian was to let people know that he was going, without him knowing because the mail call was a surprise," she said. "School kids did this. There were school kids in Grand Island, and then Joe and Marilyn had a friend who teaches in Brockport. Some of these are from them. Classes did letters. A lot of friends from the American Legion and townspeople and people from Town Hall. Historical Society people. They all sent letters. That's what was amassed in that picture. That's why the pile was so gigantic. I had to give all these people a deadline and an address. They send all that stuff somewhere, and the Honor Flight people package it up to have it available for that night at the hotel."

"(Mail call) was at the Baltimore hotel," Synakowski said. "They presented us with mail call after dinner. I got so much mail from friends, from schoolchildren. From schoolteachers. They brought the mail in to us, put it in front of us. 'Here's your mail.'"

"It was a big surprise. We enjoyed every piece of mail from every kid and school and every person that sent us mail. Like I said, the Honor

Flight is a marvelous idea to honor veterans."

For soldiers serving overseas, mail call is a huge deal.

"Mail call, if they could, was presented every day after dinner or lunch," Synakowski said. "The mailman, who was the company clerk, brings out the mail and starts naming everybody's name who gets mail. He'll say, 'Synakowski!' 'Joseph A.' That's the way you say, 'Here I am.' Everybody's last name is presented. Then they respond with their first name. I'm a Joseph from the Army by accident. The mail call in the service is very important. It's very important to keep up with your local news. I understand that Shirley Luther had a newspaper. She and a few others got together and made a newsworthy mail call. The fellows enjoyed this ... news from home."

Mail call was not always dependable, however. Joe talked about the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, which was the only all-Black, all-female battalion to serve overseas during World War II. The subject of a 2024 movie, directed by Tyler Perry, the movie depicts the efforts that Maj. Charity Adams made with her troops to sort, organize and distribute a backlog of more than 17 million pieces of mail. The WAC battalion completed this task in three months. In 2025, the battalion was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal.

"They were very efficient," Synakowski said. "If they could get the mail to the front lines, that's where it went, to the men in the front lines."

Not everyone received "news from home," Synakowski said. "A lot of poor guys sat there. When you were done with your mail, if it wasn't personal, you showed them your mail."

Synakowski, who recently celebrated his 96th birthday, explained that his birthday "is April 22. It's Earth Day. Many people know it's Earth Day. They'd better treat this planet right because it's the only one we have. With the talk of going to Mars and so forth, that's a long way off. But who knows? Eventually, it may happen."

The most recent Honor Flight from Buffalo occurred April 18-19. It was for veterans of the Korean War, the Cold War and the Vietnam era. Veterans who traveled there included two from Grand Island: Wayne Anstett and Mike Cutini.

Niagara County Public Notice

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice of formation of Happy Easel, LLC. Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 04/29/2026. Office location: Niagara County. SSNY designated as an agent of Limited Liability Company (LLC) upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY should mail process to The LLC: 2 Freeman Ave Middleport NY 14105. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. Tribune/Sentinel May 8, 15, 22 and 29 and June 5 and 12, 2026

LEGAL NOTICE

Hayek Properties LLC has been formed as a limited liability company (LLC) by filing a certificate with the NY Secretary of State (NYSS) on 4/29/2026. Office located in Niagara County. NYSS designated as agent upon whom process against LLC may be served. NYSS shall mail process c/o the Company, 35 Cardinal Lane, N. Tonawanda, NY 14120. Purpose of LLC is to engage in any lawful purpose. Tribune/Sentinel May 8, 15, 22 and 29 and June 5 and 12, 2026

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice of Formation of Maeve Maria Enterprises LLC. Art. Of Org. filed Sec'y of State (SSNY) 5/4/26. Office Location: Niagara County. Street Address of principal business location: 1155 Master St.,

N. Tonawanda, NY 14120. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process: c/o The LLC, 1155 Master St., N. Tonawanda, NY 14120. Purpose: any lawful purpose. Tribune/Sentinel May 8, 15, 22 and 29 and June 5 and 12, 2026

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF A DOMESTIC LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY. Name of LLC: MCF Trucking LLC. Date of filing of Articles of Organization with the NY Dept. of State: 4/2/2026. Office of the LLC: Niagara County. The NYSS has been designated as the agent upon whom process may be served. NYSS may mail a copy of process to the LLC at 4529 Lower Mountain Rd, Lockport, NY 14094. Purpose of LLC: Any lawful purpose. Tribune/Sentinel May 8, 15, 22 and 29 and June 5 and 12, 2026

LEGAL NOTICE

LLC Name: Dvijan LLC Filed: April 27, 2026 County: Niagara Registered Agent: Amit Bhutani, 4971 Cloverleaf LN, Lockport NY 14094 Purpose: Digital consulting services Tribune/Sentinel May 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29 and June 5, 2026

LEGAL NOTICE

Open Door Laundry Co LLC. Filed 1/21/26. Cty: Niagara. SSNY design. for process & shall mail 3761 Trails End, N Tonawanda, NY 14120. Purp: any lawful. Tribune/Sentinel May 8, 15, 22 and 29 and June 5 and 12, 2026

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR AUTHORITY OF A FOREIGN LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY PPA Residential Holdings I LLC is a foreign limited liability company. Application for Authority was filed with the New York Secretary of State on April 27, 2026. The jurisdiction of organization is Connecticut. The office location in New York is Niagara County. SSNY is designated as agent upon whom process against the LLC may be served. SSNY shall mail a copy of any process to: 233 Beatrice Dr. West Haven, CT 06516. The address of the office required to be maintained in the jurisdiction of formation is 233 Beatrice Dr. West Haven, CT 06516. The purpose of the LLC is to engage in any lawful act or activity. Tribune/Sentinel May 8, 15, 22 and 29 and June 5 and 12, 2026

LEGAL NOTICE

QUALITY RIDGE CONTRACTING LLC Arts of Org. filed SSNY 4/15/2026

Orleans Co. SSNY design agent for process & shall mail to 41 STATE ST.# 112, ALBANY, NY, 12207 General Purpose Tribune/Sentinel May 8, 15, 22 and 29 and June 5 and 12, 2026

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice of Formation of T&T ELECTRIC SERVICES LLC. Arts. Of Org. filed Sec'y of State (SSNY) 01/06/2026. Office location of the LLC: Niagara County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process: c/o the LLC, 9704 Town Line Rd., Barker, NY 14012. Purpose: any lawful purpose. Tribune/Sentinel May 8, 15, 22 and 29 and June 5 and 12, 2026

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice of Formation of TERRY SNOW REMOVAL, LLC. Arts. Of Org. filed Sec'y of State (SSNY) 05/01/2026. Office location of the LLC: Niagara County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process: c/o the LLC, 412 Old Falls Boulevard, North Tonawanda, NY 14120. Purpose: any lawful purpose. Tribune/Sentinel May 8, 15, 22 and 29 and June 5 and 12, 2026

LEGAL NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE: Our client is pro-

posing to build a 159-ft tall monopole telecommunications tower to be located at 2901 Dickersonville Rd, Ransomville (Town of Porter), Niagara Co, NY 14131 (43° 17' 00.93" N, 78° 56' 14.32" W). Public comments regarding potential effects from this site on historic properties may be submitted within 30-days from the date of this publication to: V. Schaefer, Terracon, 930 Harvest DR, Ste. 430, Blue Bell, PA 19422, 267-512-7035, or vanna.schaefer@terracon.com. Tribune/Sentinel June 12, 2026

LEGAL NOTICE

Job Posting Town of Wheatfield Water/Sewer Department The Town of Wheatfield Water/Sewer Department is accepting applications for two (2) Laborer positions. Pick up applications at the Town of Wheatfield Water/Sewer Department at 3113 Nia. Falls Blvd, North Tonawanda, NY 14120. Please return them to the Wheatfield Water/Sewer Department NO LATER than June 26, 2026 at 3:30 PM. Tribune/Sentinel June 12, 2026

LEGAL NOTICE

Public Information Meeting Notice Please take notice that the Planning Board of the Town of Wheatfield will hold a Public Information Meeting on

Wednesday, June 17, 2026, at 6:00 PM, in the Council Chambers, 1st floor, Town Hall, 2800 Church Road, Town of Wheatfield, NY 14120.

An application has been received from Sentry Development Corp., requesting permission to build a gasoline service station and restaurant / drive-in restaurants, on the corner of Niagara Falls Boulevard (NFB) and Nash Roads. The project consists of 8 fuel stations, a 7,000-sf Circle K convenience store, a Wendy's, and an additional 1-2 quick service restaurant. That location is within a Commercial (C-1) Zoning District and the NFB Overlay District. The petitioner or their authorized representative will present the project and answer questions from the public.

The application is available for public inspection at the Building Department office located at the Town Hall (lower level), 2800 Church Road, Town of Wheatfield, NY, 14120, Monday through Friday, during the hours of 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

All persons interested in these matters may appear at the aforementioned time, date, and place and be heard.

Vice Chair Planning Board Tribune/Sentinel June 12, 2026