

# New bridge has K.G. couple rethinking plans

BY CATHY DYSON  
THE FREE LANCE-STAR

Peter and Barbara Karabots worry that their dream home on the water may turn into a nightmare when a new bridge is built over the Potomac River between King George County and Maryland.

It's not the drilling of pylons, noise from construction or glare from large lights used at night—basically in their extended backyard—that has them worried the most. They're more concerned because the bridge is taking waterfront acreage from Wayside Park, which is on one side of them, and federal law dictates that any land taken has to be replaced with a parcel of equal value and use.

The couple is afraid the home on the other side of their property might be the replacement.

"We could be sandwiched between two parks," Barbara Karabots said, adding she and her husband have agonized over the impact on their daily lives and property value. "The hardest thing about all this is not being able to find out any information."

"And you always assume the worst," he added.



The view of the Harry Nice Bridge from Wayside Park in King George County. A new bridge is expected by 2023.

The Karabotses are in informational limbo, stuck between government agencies responsible for clearing the way for the new Gov. Harry W. Nice Memorial/Sen.

Thomas "Mac" Middleton Bridge. As of last fall, that's the name, both of the existing structure whose 1938 groundbreaking was attend-

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## WILL BIGGER U.S. 301 SPAN ACCOMMODATE BICYCLISTS?

BY CATHY DYSON  
THE FREE LANCE-STAR

To bike or not to bike is one of the questions brewing over the new Potomac River bridge.

The Maryland Transportation Authority has gone back and forth over whether it can afford to include separate lanes for bicyclists and pedestrians on the new Gov. Harry W. Nice Memorial/Sen. Thomas "Mac" Middleton Bridge between King George County and Charles County, Md. Construction on the \$765 million project is scheduled to begin early next year.

The lack of the separate lane threatened to halt the bridge progress, but a key vote on Wednesday by the National Capital

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ed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and for the new bridge on the horizon.

The Maryland Transportation Authority hopes to start construction for the new span next year, and open it by 2023. The new bridge will have four lanes of traffic, two in each direction, doubling the carrying capacity. Additional lanes are meant to ease backups on both sides of U.S. 301—in King George and Charles County, Md.—particularly on summer weekends.

Maryland is covering the estimated \$765 million cost, and the Virginia Department of Transportation has allocated \$13 million to widen and align the approach to the bridge on the Virginia side. VDOT also will relocate the intersection of Roseland Road, the last left turn on the King George side before the bridge.

VDOT is charged with securing the needed rights of way on its side and finding a replacement for the 5.8 acres of land affected by the road widening at Wayside Park, Barnesfield Park and the Dahlgren Heritage Museum.

And that's where the Karabotses and their property, valued at \$849,300 by King George County, come into play.

### APLAN FOR THE FUTURE

When the couple bought the 2-acre site in 2003, they had their choice of four same-size lots on Roseland Road in a small development called Park-bridge on the Potomac. They chose the one next to Wayside Park because they thought the wooded piece of park property would be a good buffer against future development.

Over the years, they've shooed off the occasional park visitor who's climbed onto their private dock or scaled the bank to their pool. Those instances aside, the property has been a beautiful place to come home to, the couple said, and they'd like to retire there.

"From Day One of our marriage [almost 30 years ago], we said we were going to work hard and save



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Paul Hall (seated) watches as Brandi Householder plays in the Potomac River with her children, Rayna and Deyanon'Di, during an outing at Wayside Park in King George, which is adjacent to the Harry Nice bridge.

and retire at 55," he said.

"So we could enjoy life," she added.

They haven't quite met the age goal. She's 58, and for the last 2½ years, has worked most of her time in a retail store in Hong Kong. He's almost 61, retired, and travels back and forth between an apartment in Hong Kong and King George.

She was hoping to retire next year, but when news of the bridge construction loomed large, the two gave up their apartment so he could focus on finding out what's happening with their King George property.

"We knew about the new bridge," she said, "but we thought we'd be dead and gone by then."

### 'CONCERNS ESCALATE'

The Karabots' neighbors are Lewis and Shirley Buckler, whose home is worth \$685,200, according to county records. In early June, Peter Karabots said he learned from his neighbors that the Bucklers had a contract on their property with Virginia officials, who planned to use their land to replace what was being lost at Wayside Park.

As the Karabotses

updated the King George Board of Supervisors on developments and encouraged board members to support a separate path.

As King George and Charles counties continue to grow, Lynch believes a separate bike and pedestrian path on the new bridge "could very well become a destination attraction in its own right. We're hopeful that Maryland officials with vision will step up."

Meanwhile, the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland recently wrote that, while they've always supported the separate lane for bicycles and walkers, "four

full travel lanes for vehicles is the single most important feature of the new bridge."

MDTA and Maryland Department of Transportation officials have said they'll provide a path, if the bids on design and construction come in low enough this fall. If not, bicyclists can share a lane of the bridge with motorists, just as they can on state roads.

The Transportation Planning Board wants Maryland officials to report back to it by December on the progress of the bike lane.

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## ABOUT THE BRIDGE

**NEW NAME:** As of October 2018, the official name of the bridge over the Potomac River is the Gov. Harry W. Nice Memorial/Sen. Thomas "Mac" Middleton Bridge.

**COST:** \$765 million for the structure, paid for by Maryland. The Virginia Department of Transportation estimates it will spend \$13 million to expand the approach to the bridge and realign U.S. 301 on the Virginia side and consolidate traffic on Roseland Road.

**SCHEDULE:** Bridge groundbreaking is slated for early 2020, with completion by 2023. VDOT plans to start its work in summer 2020.

**WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE?** Not known at this point. The Maryland Transportation Authority will select one team to design and build the bridge, which may be

steel, concrete or sectional.

**FEATURES:** Two 12-foot lanes in each direction separated by a median and 2-foot wide shoulders on each side. It will be 1.8 miles long—slightly longer than the existing bridge—but 1,000 feet shorter than the original 2012 design. That length change, and other modifications, saved \$200 million, according to the MDTA.

**WILL IT BE STEEPER?** Yes. If the existing bridge already gives motorists the willies as it rises over the water, the new structure will be even taller. Its maximum grade will increase from 3.75 percent to 4 percent.

**TRAFFIC:** The bridge handles 18,600 vehicles a day. MDTA expects the new one to support traffic for more than 100 years.

reached out to county and state officials to learn about the future use of the property, they were told that no final decisions have been made. And that officials are prohibited by state code from discussing property acquisition in such cases. Or that the couple should talk to another agency because the information they were requesting was beyond that agency's realm of responsibility.

"My concerns escalate," Peter Karabots wrote in an email to VDOT last week. "We cannot allow you folks to ruin our property

values and our lives."

Here's what's known so far.

No real-estate transaction between the Bucklers and VDOT has been recorded in King George County. The Bucklers declined to comment on the situation, but for some time, they've had their home on the market for \$795,000. They often told friends they didn't want to live through bridge construction.

The Buckler property is one of about a dozen sites county and VDOT officials have looked at, said King George County

Administrator Neiman Young.

VDOT officials can't say if they've signed a contract on any site they've researched or if they're looking to replace what's lost at Wayside with one parcel or several.

"It could be anything," said Marcie Parker, Fredericksburg District's engineer for VDOT.

### NO EMINENT DOMAIN

One thing seems certain—King George officials have drawn a line in the sand in terms of what they want as a replacement for lost parkland.

They want waterfront property that's easy to access, said Jeff Bueche, chairman of the King George Board of Supervisors. He said VDOT has shown them property with riverfront views, but they were from the top of cliffs or through the woods.

"We're losing basically our only [public] beach in the county, and that's what we want" as a replacement, Bueche said.

Parker said some of the sites the county presented contained easements for

open space or deed restrictions. The National Park Service will not accept land into its system with either, and Wayside Park and Barnesfield Park are both part of the National Park Service's Federal Lands to Parks program.

Young said county officials haven't limited their search to property near Wayside. They've looked elsewhere on the Potomac, as well as the Rappahannock River and even on lakes.

"Every time a waterfront property comes up for sale, we automatically submit it to VDOT," said at-large Supervisor Ruby Brabo. "We are all in agreement that we are not using eminent domain" to take land for the project.

When the county does get replacement land, Young said he wants to provide "more robust services" than currently offered at Wayside, which includes a strip of beach, picnic tables and a few grills.

Young wants a facility where residents who don't have private access to water could rent canoes and kayaks. Peter Karabots said Young told him a parking lot could be built across Roseland Road from his home, and Peter Karabots started sending out emails asking for detailed plans about the county's proposed "water park."

"The board hasn't come to a conclusion on anything yet," Young said, adding that the county can't describe the plans it has until it knows what piece of property it's getting. "I've been trying to convey that to him."

### GIVING UP A DREAM

VDOT has until next summer to get the right of way issues with replacement property and utilities resolved, because that's when construction on the Virginia side is expected to start. VDOT has \$1.8 million allocated for those expenses.

While King George maintains it can't move forward until VDOT presents a deed, it's not as if county officials don't know what land is being considered.

"It would be foolish to start the process without getting the approval of the county," Parker said.

As for the Karabotses, they said they're going to try to get away from the impending bridge over troubled waters.

"After everything we have discovered this week, we have no choice but to give up our dream retirement home," Peter Karabots said in an email. "County is forcing us out. Home is going on the market soon."

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## BIKE PATH

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Region Transportation Planning Board allowed Maryland to move forward with plans to apply for a much-needed, low-interest federal loan. The approval came "on an unusually contentious 17-7 vote" by board members, according to WTOP news.

King George resident and trail enthusiast Jim Lynch long has advocated for a path for pedestrians and bikes, separated by a barrier, on the bridge. In recent years, he's



# Cost cutting falls on ‘the most fragile’

BY CATHY DYSON  
THE FREE LANCE-STAR

The sign on the door tells visitors they’re at the home of a medically fragile child and would they please wash their hands, remove their shoes and use sanitizer upon entering—or not enter at all if they’re sick or have been around someone who is.

“We appreciate your help in keeping our sweet girl healthy and germ-free,” reads the Welcome sign at the Louisa County home.

Parents Amy and Shannon Fields are trying to keep 7-year-old Cary Lynn stable. They adopted the girl when she was 9 months old—just a “little butter bean”—her mom recalled, and she was about to be put in an in-

stitution because no one wanted to undertake her lifetime of care. One glance changed everything.

“She opened her eyes and looked at us,” the mother said,

**SEE MEDICAID, A8**



Cary Lynn Fields, 7, was born with a variety of disabilities and requires full-time care that is covered through Medicaid waivers.

## GLITCHES CAUSE PAY DELAY FOR ATTENDANTS

BY CATHY DYSON  
THE FREE LANCE-STAR

At least three local elected officials are working with the state on an additional glitch with Medicaid that has left providers unpaid for weeks—or months—at a time.

“This is impacting so many families statewide,” said King George County Supervisor Ruby Brabo. She’s working with Stafford County Supervisor Meg Bohmke, state Sen. Richard Stuart, R-Stafford, and the National Association of Counties on the matter.

Brabo and Stuart got involved when Lisa Pitts of King George County went two months without a paycheck. She’s the personal care attendant for her son, Hunter Pitts, a 26-year-old who suffered a brain injury eight years ago.

Lisa Pitts said she filed necessary paperwork, but didn’t get paid in January or February. She went through several layers of bureaucracy

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# MEDICAID

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“and we felt like she fit in our family.”

Since then, Amy Fields has become her daughter's caregiver, with help from personal care attendants paid for by Medicaid. Cary Lynn and Marvin, 11, who asked for a “baby scissor,” both receive Medicaid as all children adopted through Virginia agencies do. Their father, Shannon Fields, works in information technology for a supermarket chain based in Mechanicsville.

Cary Lynn has “about a bajillion things going on,” her mother said, including cerebral palsy that's taken away all body movement, fluid on the brain, visual impairment and mitochondrial disease. Her needs are so severe, she qualifies for placement in a nursing home.

Yet as a result of recent changes, the amount of time Medicaid will pay attendants to help with her care has dropped from 80 hours to 49 hours a week. Similar reductions are happening statewide as the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services, which administers Medicaid, tries to cut costs.

“A physician who has never laid eyes on my child made this decision, and I'm just one of many this is happening to,” Amy Fields said. “Between the eternal waiver wait list, reduction of hours and lack of support, we truly are in a lose-lose situation.”

## SENDING SHOCK WAVES

Medicaid waivers pay for services for those who would otherwise be in an institution, nursing home or hospital. The program gives recipients the option of staying with their families or maintaining independence in community homes, said Jennifer Ryan, service facilitator at the disAbility Resource Center in Fredericksburg. There aren't figures available on the difference in costs between keeping a medically fragile child at home versus institutional fees, but comparisons for senior citizens shed some perspective.

Nationwide, it costs \$82,128 to \$92,376 a year for nursing-home care, according to the website seniorliving.org. Paying health-care aides to come to the person's home and help with daily activities is considerably less, averaging \$59,040 annually.

In Virginia, 37,671 people get eight different types of Medicaid waivers, and news of cuts in attendant hours is sending shock waves through the “waiver community,” said King George County resident Lisa Pitts.

Her son, Hunter, has been disabled since suffering a traumatic brain injury in a motorbike crash eight years ago.

Lisa Pitts quit her teaching job to take care of her son, and the money Medicaid pays her to be his attendant has gone to therapies, trainers and treatments not covered by insurance. Hunter Pitts is 26 and needs constant su-



Lisa Pitts helps her son Hunter, who has a brain injury, move from the car into their home in King George.

PHOTOS BY MIKE MORONES / THE FREE LANCE-STAR

## LENGTHY WAITS

An anecdote from Mary Lou Nissim-Sabat, a home health care nurse in Spotsylvania County, illustrates the way the Medicaid process has changed.

When she started working with Medicaid patients 12 years ago, the agency focused on keeping people out of nursing homes. If

a stroke victim needed a hospital bed and wheelchair at home, she'd fax the doctor's order to a medical supply company, and the equipment would be delivered in two days. She recently had a similar case—and it took 11 months and rounds of lost paperwork and authorizations to get the equipment.

## APPEALS AND ADVOCACY

The disAbility Resource Center will address the denials and delays of Medicaid waivers at 10 a.m. March 29 at its Fredericksburg office at 409 Progress St.

The program will include Medicaid's recent changes, how costs have been cut and the roles of facilitators and case managers. The

group also will discuss how recipients can appeal the cuts and join advocacy efforts.

Individual cases will not be addressed. Seating is limited, and registration is encouraged online or by calling 540/373-2559 or 540/373-5820 for captioned telephone.

## PAY RATES FOR ATTENDANTS

A personal care attendant, who helps the most severely disabled children and adults with their basic needs, can make \$2.71 more per hour by crossing a county or city line. Medicaid pays attendants \$11.93 per hour

in Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania and Stafford counties and all jurisdictions north because of the areas' higher cost of living. Everywhere else in Virginia, the rate is \$9.22 per hour. Attendants don't get health insurance or any other benefits.

## WAIVERS MEET THEIR GOAL

Funding problems with Medicaid waivers don't mean the services themselves aren't working, said Kim Lett, deputy director at the disAbility Resource Center.

She's seen evidence with her own son, Ryan, who's 30 and has significant disabilities. With the waivers, he's been able to live indepen-

dently in a group home, and the purpose of the waivers is to help others do the same—or to be able to stay with their families instead of being institutionalized.

“We truly believe that people really are much happier when they are part of the community and a part of their family,” she said.

persions, like Cary Lynn.

Yet his attendant care has been reduced from 56 hours to 31.5 hours per week because another medical official determined the additional time wasn't necessary. As in the case with Cary Lynn, the doctor never examined Hunter.

No aspect of Hunter's condition has changed. If anything, he's getting worse, his mother said, because she hasn't been able to take him to needed therapies. She almost died from a ruptured spleen in 2017 and is still dealing with complications.

## 'PICKING ON' THIS GROUP

All this is happening as Virginia works to enroll an estimated 400,000 uninsured people as part of the Medicaid expansion. One seemingly doesn't have anything to do with the other, but Lisa Pitts has to wonder.

“How are they going to pay for that?” she asked. “On the backs of the severe and profound that

they just shoved off? It feels like they're picking on this population.”

A policy change did impact waivers for some recipients under age 21, said Christina Nuckols, media relations manager for DMAS, the agency that administers Medicaid. DMAS is working with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid to resolve the matter.

Nuckols said her agency has been sharing information with families so young patients can get the services they need. But she said the policy change affected only those under 21 through the Early and Period Screening Diagnosis and Treatment waiver, or EPSDT.

She didn't have an answer for why recipients such as 26-year-old Hunter Pitts had his care hours reduced.

## 'WERE WE ALL WRONG'

Medicaid has always been a difficult system to navigate. Things got even trickier in 2017 when

Virginia joined others nationwide in having its Medicaid waivers program operated by private health-insurance companies.

Recipients and their families “were all told not to panic and that things would not change that much,” Amy Fields said. “Boy, were we all wrong.”

The private companies are known as MCOs, or managed care organizations, and workers in Virginia's six companies performed additional evaluations when they took over the system.

In many cases, waiver recipients were told they no longer were eligible for some services they'd had in the past, said Lucy Beadnell, a director for The Arc of Northern Virginia, which advocates for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

“Read between the lines, and this is a cost-cutting measure,” she said. It affects “the most fragile in our Medicaid system.”

# PAYCHECKS

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with the managed care organization that oversees her son's care.

If her case manager told her the necessary papers had been filed, the health care agency would say it never received them.

“So I'm caught in the middle, going back and forth, with both of them screaming at me,” she said. “Then it becomes, ‘We got 400 faxes in one day, and we don't know whose came and whose didn't.’”

“I don't give a crap whose fault it is, just fix it. I need to get paid.”

Her family won't go in the poorhouse without the income as her husband, Al, works at the Navy base in Dahlgren. But when their son got hurt, Lisa Pitts quit her job as a teacher so she could take care of him, and the money she receives through his Medicaid waiver helps pay for his therapies.

The disAbility Resource Center of Fredericksburg has helped a lot of clients with similar payment problems, said Jennifer Ryan, service facilitator.

“One attendant did not get paid for five weeks,” she said. “I couldn't go without my check for five weeks.”

Lucy Beadnell, advocacy director for The Arc of Northern Virginia, also has dealt with “lots of people whose care hours went unpaid” for long periods. Even worse than the delay is the fact no one's accountable, she said.

“There's no repercussions for that, no one responsible when these care attendants making \$20,000 can't pay their mortgages,” Beadnell said.

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the family income by doing transcription work at home while an aide cared for Cary Lynn. That isn't possible if the mother is working full time on giving Cary Lynn therapies to keep her from developing pneumonia or doing stretching exercises to flex her spastic hands and feet.

Likewise, Lisa Pitts wondered if a clinician reviewing her son's case simply marked items off a checklist. If a client can put a fork in his mouth or slip on a shoe, does that mean he doesn't need help with the tasks?

Lisa Duggan, the King George physician assistant who's taken care of Hunter Pitts for years, stressed in a letter that he's completely dependent on an attendant for all aspects of personal care.

“He cannot do any of these tasks without supervision or assistance,” she wrote.

The cuts are the latest change in what seems like an ever-growing list: a redesign of the waiver system, move to managed care organizations, expanding Medicaid and changes to the organizational structure as part of a Department of Justice settlement, all in the last three calendar years.

“All of these pieces were moving simultaneously, which makes it all the more complicated,” Beadnell said. “There are so many changes, it's almost impossible for families to keep up.”

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Amy Fields holds her daughter Cary Lynn, 7, at her home in Bumpass.

The MCOs had to hire thousands of employees to act as facilitators and case workers for Medicaid clients, Beadnell said, and some staffers don't have much experience with patients who will need services for the rest of their lives.

“They're not into the long-term care side of things; they don't understand what that means,” said Jennie Gratz, a Medicaid specialist with the disAbility Resource Center. “They're still on the medical model.”

That means the workers know all about processing prescriptions and medical care, Gratz said, but not about daily life for those who can't take care of themselves.

These patients “would starve to death if they didn't have somebody feeding them,” she said.

Or without supervision, they're at risk for choking or other hazards. Ryan has one client who technically can feed himself, but he's been known to chew on anything he can get his hands on, even batteries.

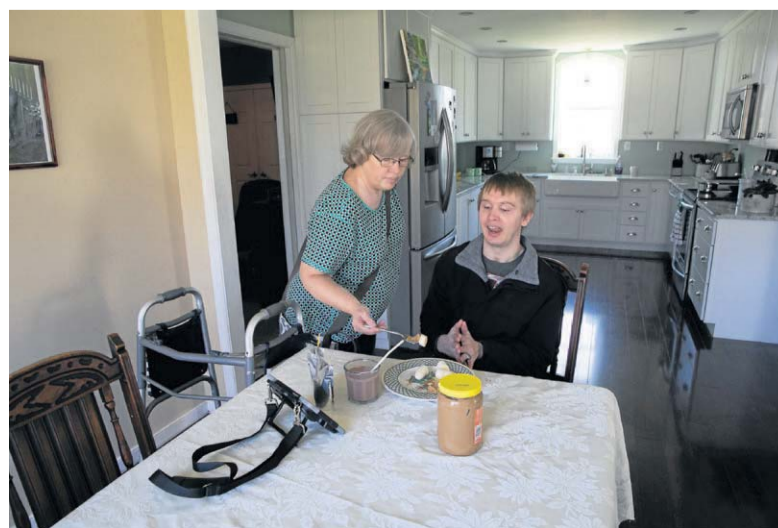
## IMPOSSIBLE TO KEEP UP

Amy Fields believes a person reviewed her case and assumed her daughter doesn't need personal attendants during school hours. But Cary Lynn doesn't go to school anymore. When she did, she kept getting exposed to germs—and getting sicker—and her mother decided “it's not realistic for her to be in school.”

But it was realistic for the mother to support



Medicaid has reduced the amount it will pay for Cary Lynn's care.



Lisa Pitts helps her son Hunter with lunch at their home.



# Embracing her Corps experience

BY CATHY DYSON  
THE FREE LANCE-STAR

Jackie Huber was one of the few, but she never felt particularly proud as a woman Marine.

She spent 20 years in the Marine Corps, from 1984 to 2004, and rose from the enlisted ranks to chief warrant officer.

She worked in MISSO, the Manpower Information System Support Office, entering data about service members at installations on the East and West coasts. She volunteered for the same duty in Somalia as part of Operation Restore Hope and lived in a sand-filled camp that smelled of dirt and death.

Huber said it wasn't cool to be a Marine during most of her tenure, which was before the days military members were thanked for their service. Some of the men she worked with made it clear they looked upon women as more trouble than they were worth—unless they needed someone to sleep with, Huber said.

"We were treated like second-class citizens, and we had few rights and fewer advocates," Huber said.

"That's why I didn't want anyone to know what I had done. I didn't want to be treated like that anymore."

Huber, who lives in Stafford County, is glad the tide has shifted.

The 2017 revelation that male Marines posted nude photos of female Marines online and made lewd and violent comments about them brought charges to those involved. Huber believes

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Huber (standing on left) volunteered for duty with Operation Restore Hope in Somalia in 1992.

some of the injustices she experienced are no longer part of the Corps.

As a result, the 53-year-old is doing what she can to support other service members as she embraces her status as a retired Marine.

“It was awful at times, but there’s this pride of being a Marine that comes from having earned it, and you can’t take that away,” she said.

## ‘A CARING HEART’

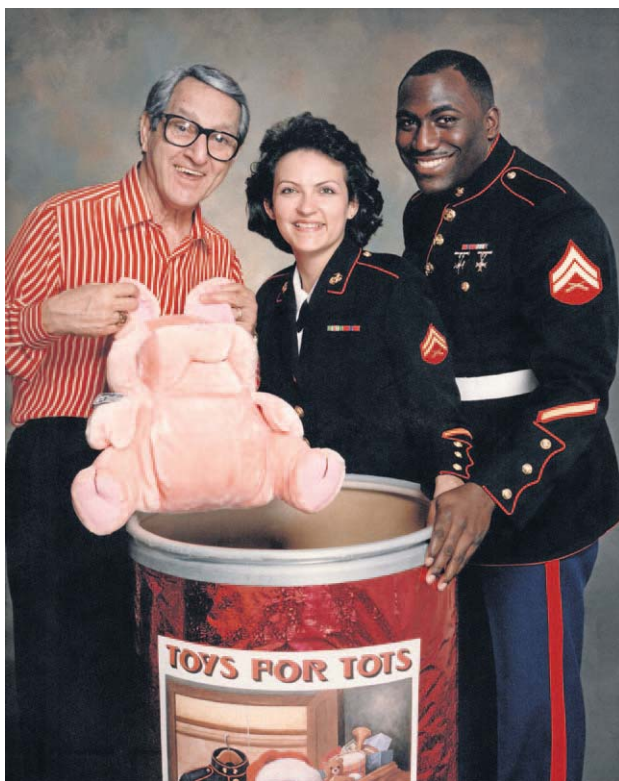
Huber pursued her passion—photography—after she left the Corps and moved to the Fredericksburg area in 2005. She worked locally with another photographer before starting her own business in 2011, calling it Bella-wood Photography.

The name suits on several levels. She has a dog named Bella, and her family lives in the woods of Falmouth, but she’s also giving a nod to Marine lore. After the World War I Battle of Belleau Wood in France, Germans called Marines “devil dogs” because of their tenacious fighting.

Huber has donated her photography services to Semper K9 Assistance Dogs, a Woodbridge group that rescues dogs from shelters and trains them for disabled service members. She plans to devote one day a month at her studio, off State Route 3 in Fredericksburg, to providing free headshots for all service members transitioning into civilian work.

And, her studio is a collection site for Toys for Tots, the annual holiday effort by the Marine Corps Reserve. In the late 1980s, she posed for a national campaign poster promoting the effort, alongside comedian Danny Thomas.

“When you have someone who understands



Huber posed with comedian Danny Thomas (left) in 1988 to promote the Marines’ Toys for Tots project.

the military culture and lifestyle, it helps keep our veterans at ease because they know the person has been there, too,” said Amanda Baity, who runs the Semper K9 program with her husband, Christopher, a former Marine dog handler. “I can tell she truly has a caring heart and wants to give back.”

## ‘WOMEN DIDN’T SPEAK UP’

Amanda Baity has met several women who were reluctant to advertise their military status.

“I see that a lot,” she said. “Maybe it’s a stigma and they don’t want to be defined as that.”

The Marine Corps has the fewest number of women of any branch in the military. About 8 percent of its enlisted ranks and officers are female—a percentage that’s at least twice as high in the other services, according to the Department of Defense.

Huber’s best friend, Carrie Lynch of Stafford, also served in Marines for 20 years, and the two have

talked about their experiences. Lynch followed her father into the Corps and said her service didn’t always include rainbows and unicorns, but was still “the best thing that ever happened to me.”

She’s seven years younger than Huber and believes the small age gap accounts for a big difference.

“I don’t want to say they were seen and not heard, but when she came in, women didn’t speak up as much” because that’s how they were raised, Lynch said. By comparison, she said, women of her era had no trouble pointing out problems and expecting solutions.

Also, there are plenty of people who give the impression that “to be a real Marine, you have to fight the battle,” Lynch said.

She believes her friend is finally starting to see that everybody contributes, whether they’re on the field of combat or not.

“She doesn’t give herself enough credit sometimes,” Lynch said, “but

she’s been there, she’s been through the trenches, and she is an amazing woman.”

As for combat, Huber knows that at 5 foot, 2 inches, she’d never be strong enough to carry a fellow fallen Marine who could be twice her weight and a foot taller. She faced that scenario in training once.

“Can all women do it? No. Would all women want to do it? No,” she said. “But for the ones who want to do it and can do it, wow.”

## FOCUSING ON HER CAREER

Rachel Huber, the third of Jackie Huber’s four children, enthusiastically tells everyone she knows of her mother’s service and even reminds her mom to pluck up her courage when she’s feeling down.

“There’s no crying in the Marines,” she tells her mother.

Huber’s husband, James, is also a retired Marine who’s had several combat deployments. She’s grateful for his encouragement as she’s found her second career as a photographer.

Her studio is full of headshots—not glamour portraits of models, but attractive images of everyday people. One is her mom, who lived with Huber for more than a decade and took care of the children when Huber and her Marine husband were called away on duty or training.

When she has a camera in front of her face, Huber blocks out everything else around her. She doesn’t feel hunger, pain or fatigue, but focuses only on her objective as she concentrates on capturing “the essence” of a person.

“It puts me in a difference zone,” she said. “I see that moment and I have to have it.”

Some might say she’s as determined as a devil dog.

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