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## "Extreme Makeover" excitement builds as first lady expected for reveal



Staff photo by Melissa Sue Gerrits

An assistant producer explains a scene to soldiers during filming on 'Extreme Makeover: Home Edition' on Wednesday. See more photos at [fayobserver.com](http://fayobserver.com).

By Amneris Solano  
 Staff writer

Hope Mills resident Faith Barnes returned to Langdon Street for the fourth time since Saturday in hopes of finally meeting an "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" celebrity.

Off and on since the weekend, Barnes had been traveling to the construction site where an army of volunteers has erected a sensational home for Barbara Marshall and the women of Steps N Stages Jubilee House. Barnes, a fan of the ABC reality series, wanted to meet the show's host, Ty Pennington.

"Each time I've come I've just missed him," she said. "Or he showed up after I left."

On Wednesday, the last day of construction, Barnes took a few hours off from her job at the Crown Coliseum thinking this would be the day she'd get to meet at least one of the show's celebrity designers.



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Spectators show their support from the viewing area across from the "Extreme Makeover" house.

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 "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" It's down to the wire

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Armed with a camera, a notepad and a black marker, Barnes waited beneath the blazing July sun for a Hollywood sighting. Her heart fluttered as John Littlefield crossed her path.

"Finally!" Barnes exclaimed after greeting Littlefield. "He gave me two signatures and he used my pen! I'm so excited."

Wearing a white T-shirt beneath a welding apron, Littlefield took a moment from his design duties to meet fans in the spectator area across the street from the construction site. Behind him, volunteers furiously worked to finish the house in time for the "Move that bus!" reveal today at 2 p.m.

With first lady Michelle Obama scheduled to be at the site this afternoon, Littlefield said, they wanted to make sure everything is perfect.

"It's the final moments, and we have to bring this family home," Littlefield told reporters Wednesday afternoon. "We have a special guest coming - Michelle Obama - and we're down to the wire."

Littlefield has been designing a room for Marshall's son, Bert, and a fitness room for the women.

Marshall, a 15-year Navy veteran, runs the Jubilee House, where she assists women veterans in transition.

"Bert loves drum lines and marching lines hint, hint, hint," said Littlefield. "Also our home is a transitional home for homeless veteran women. As a woman that's served in the military, you've got to stay in shape. How do you do that? Well, you put a gym in the house. Hint, hint, hint."

Details of the home's interior design are being saved for the episode scheduled to air this fall. From the street, the house appears enormous with large windows, two-stories, a basement and a pair of expansive front porches on the first and second floors. Volunteers moved furniture Wednesday evening. Workers painted white trim on the windows and added a stone retaining wall and a stone walkway in front of the house.

"It's wild and crazy out here," said Greg Landess, vice president of sales and marketing for Blue Ridge Log Cabins, the project's builder. "There are so many volunteers here. It's 100-some degrees right now, and they're running around. We're just trying to keep them hydrated."

The day before the reveal often is a flurry of activity on an "Extreme Makeover" build, but the first lady's expected arrival has turned up the volume on the excitement. George Verschoor, the show's executive producer, said Obama's appearance on the program has added a new level of "extreme" to "Extreme Makeover."

"For all of us, this is just incredible. It is a pinnacle for many of us who are on the show," Verschoor said. "It's just such an honor that she's coming, particularly for the Jubilee House - for Barbara Marshall and the veterans that she's helping. That's the real reason that the first lady is coming - to support the veterans and help them."

In anticipation of today's reveal, spectators and volunteers alike said they've enjoyed watching the progress. Kathy Hone and her 10-year-old granddaughter, Katie Lanier, drove from Burgaw to visit the "Extreme Makeover" construction site. They are staying in a hotel and plan to return today for the unveiling.

"We enjoy watching the build and the design," Hone said. "It's cool."

The two came prepared carrying folding chairs, a cooler with drinks and towels to wipe off beads of sweat. It's their second time watching an "Extreme Makeover" house being built. They saw a house in South Carolina go up last year.

Hone marveled at the house going up on Langdon Street. She saw pictures online of Marshall's old one-story house and couldn't believe the difference.

"I didn't think they could fit something that big where that little house was," Hone said. "It's amazing."

Owen Clark, a retired Army chief warrant officer, has been volunteering with the project daily since last week. He brought his own hard hat - decorated with a bald eagle and stars and stripes. Clark, who has volunteered about 18 hours a day, said he's enjoyed seeing the project from beginning to end.

"It's an experience of a lifetime. It's getting a whole lot done in a very short amount of time," Clark said. "This build is a humongous task with a lot of help from a lot of people. One of the crews was on for 36 hours straight. They left at midnight and came back at 6 the next morning."

Their effort and hard work, Clark said, will pay off today when Marshall, her son and the home's residents return from their Disney World vacation. Marshall will no doubt be amazed, Clark said, when she sees her old 1,600-square-foot house replaced by a chic log cabin.

"I think it's going to take her a week just to try to figure out where all the rooms are and just to get situated," Clark said. "It's going to be awesome."

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