

FINDING A PURPOSE...AND THEN MAKING A NEST

IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK...FROM INSIDE THE EAGLE'S NEST with Lynn Womack

Ok y'all. I know it's early, but I am just SO excited to share my conversation with Eagle Board Commissioner, Lynn Womack! So, go grab that cup of coffee, or juice if you are trying to sit still at work wishing you had stopped before that 5th cup! Here's my birthday/anniversary present to all of y'all!

It was pouring rain, and as I drove around trying to find a Starbucks, I don't know if it was the rain, or the serious lack of caffeine, but I was actually nervous! I mean, why? I admit, I have been nervous before, like when I had to plan and throw the night before party for the final homecoming for the USS Enterprise-CVN 65 Aircraft Carrier or speak in front of ALL 29,000 family members and friends waiting on Pier 12 for their loved ones to return home after 8 long months at sea, and let's not forget that I am raising three children by myself! I have even met celebrities, people like Norman Reedus, an actor who starred in *The Boondock Saints*, and who currently plays Darryl on *The Walking Dead*, Luke Bryan, and even Gwen Stefani, but I have NEVER been more nervous than I was, driving to The Eagle's Nest; the home of Mr. Lynn Womack, Eagle Commissioner for the Boy Scouts of America, Blue Ridge Mountains Council.

In less than ten minutes from that moment, I was going to be talking to a man who has conducted 542 Eagle Boards of Review, been the Cubmaster and Scoutmaster for Troop 51 in Salem, a high-demand public speaker for Amway, an international entrepreneur, and a proud father to two Eagle Scouts. But Mr. Womack, Lynn as he is known to friends and family, embodies so much more. He is a selfless and servant leader, an Eagle Scout himself, a Virginia Tech graduate, an inspiration to many, and an all-around sweet, FUN, person!

Walking into the Eagles Nest, the downstairs rec room /office that Lynn Womack has decorated with years of Scouting memories and Eagles, for himself and his children, was completely moving! So much history, passion, love, and gratitude in one place! So much time, thought, and care was put into every nail, every Eagle, every carefully hung frame; that hold decades of campfires, canoe trips, laughter, fellowship, tears, and pride. 90 Scouts have walked through those doors, just as I did, and prayed that they didn't hurl (just as I did)! 90 Scouts, walking into quite possibly the most important interview of their lives, their Eagle Scout Board of Review, hoping and praying that they will be deemed worthy of Scouting's highest honor; Eagle Scout.

Back in 1967, when 14-year-old Scout, Lynn Womack became an Eagle Scout, little did he know what a HUGE role these experiences were preparing him for. In 1966, when Lynn began his Eagle Scout Project, it was only the second year that a project was even required to achieve the Eagle Rank! At that time, an Eagle Scout candidate was given 3 Boards of Review and had to pass all 3.

Upon finding out that he only passed two out of the 3, he was given the option of completing his Eagle project again or, forgoing Eagle. Lynn went to his father, not really wanting to do his project over again, and asked what he should do. His dad looked at his son and said, "What do you want to do?" Now at 14 years old, and I know this because I have a 14-year-old son (insert eye roll and do some Fortnite© dance), if faced with the same decision, I could only hope that he would act as mature and purpose driven, as Lynn did that day. These, among many other character traits, values, and integrity, are what Eagle Scouts are made of.

Sitting across from Lynn, it felt like him and I had been lifelong friends. He is the most patient, gentle, kindest, sincere gentlemen that I have had the pleasure of speaking with. He has a way about him that instantly calms you and makes you want to just sit there, say nothing, and listen. Lynn has so many precious memories; so many beautiful, tear jerking, and inspiring stories; and so much pride, passion, and love, as he is telling them.

After his son's became Eagle Scouts, rather than stepping away from Scouting, Lynn remained. Pretty soon, his Troop had over 100 Scouts, just like his Troop did when he was a boy! Lynn reached out to his former Scoutmaster, Mr. Adams, and asked him HOW ON EARTH he was able to handle all of those Scouts and he gave him sound advice, which Lynn still follows to this day:

Rule #1: HAVE FUN!

Rule #2: Remember Rule 1

Rule #3: Listen, Listen, Listen

So WHY DID he stay in Scouts after his children had aged out? He smiled as he started by saying that his Troop was amazing. "We had so much fun and went to Canada, Maine, and New York." Having the opportunity to relive that with his children became his passion and was his way of giving back, finding his purpose, and having an impact in the life of a child.

Lynn has succeeded in making dynamic impacts on not only the youth, but also the parents and Scouters, and anyone who has the pleasure of meeting him, throughout his years in not only the Scouting programs, but in his life.

The most effective leaders know what they stand for. They know their personal purpose and are able to connect it with the mission of the greater organization. They believe in what they do and that becomes the inspirational driver for motivating, engaging, and creating our future leaders. That is exactly what Lynn has done and continues to do.

Thank you, Lynn Womack, for inspiring, motivating, teaching, and believing in the Scouts, the programs, and in all of us!

-The Star City Scout Mom 