

Kirk Everette Binning

When an experienced tenor appears out of nowhere and joins the chapter, you simply count your blessings. Our most recent blessing is Kirk Binning.

Kirk was born in the St Louis area but his family moved to Albuquerque, NM before he was a year old. He grew up in New Mexico and attended school in the Albuquerque system. He was not too keen on school as he was growing up but he maintains he was consistently in the top 80% of his class.

When he graduated from high school he wanted to join the Navy. His parents convinced him it would be a better plan to go to college. After a semester or two at college, the professors were convinced that the Navy idea was the better one. He went back home and at that point his parents surrendered and he joined the Navy.

He hit his stride with the Navy, was selected for the nuclear power program and he undertook some serious studying and enjoyed the work. He served on a fast attack submarine and then on an FBM (Boomer) submarine. He remained on active duty in the Navy for nine years.

One of his assignments had taken him to Vallejo, California and this turned out to be very fortunate. He became active in a church group there and was quite attracted to a young lady named Clayann who played a good game of softball, did some bike riding and obviously appealed to him in many ways. He and Clayann were married and they began life's journey together.

Kirk went to work at the Los Alamos Laboratories in Los Alamos, NM using the skills he had gained in the Navy. He resumed his education while working at the Labs and graduated from the University of New Mexico at Los Alamos. He also continued to serve in the Active Naval Reserves at the "shipyard" in Albuquerque. How they got the subs up to Albuquerque I'm not too sure, but it is not the strangest thing the Navy has been known to do.

Kirk had retired from the Navy and when he retired from the Los Alamos Laboratories after twenty-six years service there, many years he became a full time RV resident. He sold his home and obtained a very nice home on wheels and he and Clayann embarked on what he calls a "work camping" adventure. They would locate in an area, find employment, get to know the local people, get a feel for the area, and then move on to the next adventure. One of his early work camps was in Waynesville, NC. The lush springtime in the mountains contrasted sharply with the arid desert he had been living in for many years and this experience inspired him to move on and discover more of this great country. They spent time in Gettysburg, worked for the Park Service in the Lake Champlain area, Lived for a while in NE Vermont, spent some time in Lancaster, PA and spent last summer in Wisconsin. They enjoyed five years of adventure meeting many fine people in the process.

The Binnings have one daughter, Stacie, who lives with her family in Hampstead. Her husband is an engineer at GE and they have two daughters, Gracie and Harley. It was this young family that drew the wanderers to our part of the world. Kirk now has a home in the Topsail area, has become active in a church there, is a guide at Poplar Grove Plantation (you should go out there some Saturday and catch his act!), and is close enough to properly spoil his granddaughters. He still has his RV but my guess is that it will give way to a camping rig before too long.

About 15 years ago Kirk attended a show by the "Lads of Enchantment". He was blown away. He says, "those guys were having fun" and "I wanted to be part of it." He joined the Lads of Enchantment and soon it was time for singing Valentines. There were many potential customers in the Los Alamos Labs, but it took a Top Secret clearance to get in there. Fortunately the chapter had enough members with Top Secret clearance to form a quartet. They called themselves the "Blue Badge Quartet". The group stayed together for ten years but they changed their name to "Gone Fission"

While on his 5 year odyssey Kirk occasionally visited chapters and did visit Asheville, NC while living in Western Carolina. He reports that the society information on where and when chapters meet is very unreliable and that may very well include information on the Chordsmen.

Kirk enjoys the Chordsmen, thinks our director is terrific, and looks forward to a lot of good singing in Wilmington. When an experienced tenor appears out of nowhere and joins the chapter, you simply count your blessings!!