

# Sierra Christian Church

## *An Open and Affirming Congregation*

## So the Question Became: Who Am I?

Years before Kevin Fields was sentenced to 20 years in a state prison for armed robbery, which was but a handful of years after he walked away from our junior high campus on a Thursday afternoon without a word to anyone, we were in Mr. Mashburn's 5<sup>th</sup> grade class together. Kevin and I lived a few blocks from each other and on occasion we would find ourselves walking to school together. I never got to know him well enough to understand his homelife, but there were days when he had bruises on his arms and a swollen face with black eyes I never thought to ask about. Maybe he played football in the street, or wrestled with his older brothers, or jumped off the roof of his house with an umbrella thinking it would work like a parachute. This was back in the 1960s, and the trauma and danger of living with alcoholic fathers who beat their wives and kids when drunk was not yet the topic of TV movies and heart wrenching but ultimately triumphant memoirs. I was 14 years old when I last saw Kevin. Until the morning in 1988 when he walked into my newspaper office and asked if I would tell his story.

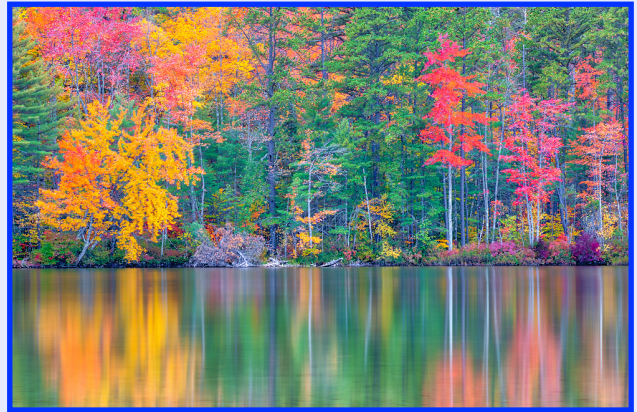
"I think everyone here in town knows it," I replied.

"No," he said. "The whole story. I think it's worth telling."

I got over my shock and acknowledged. "They all are."

Kevin was short, with, searing eyes and the thick muscular arms that can break men in half. When he got to prison, he was quickly recruited by the White Aryans and became what is known as a missile—that is, when the yard goes off and the whites are lined up against the Mexicans who are lined up against the Blacks, missiles are the first ones sent in, like blitzing linebackers, causing disruption and chaos and as much pain as they can manager. Kevin said he hurt a lot of people, and in turn had a target on his back.

He was 18 when he went in. A few years into his term he found himself in the infirmary healing from a beating. "No big thing," he said. In the bed next to him was a kid even younger than he was, a "genuine



October means colors

peckerwood," who didn't know anything about the rules that govern life inside. He had been stabbed several times in retaliation for offering his dessert to a Black inmate sitting across the table from him one evening at dinner.

The kid was visited by a correctional officer checking on him during a break in his shift. He had been the first one to the kid's side after he had been stabbed and did his best to stop the bleeding with a towel he had pulled off a nearby bunk. The CO was shaking his head, examining the kid's pasty face and swollen eyes. An IV was feeling fluid into a thin, hairless arm. The CO asked, "What are you doing here? Is this who you are? Want to be? Why in the hell are you in a place like this? You should be walking across some college campus holding the hand of prettiest girl you'd ever laid eyes on." He just stared at the kid. "Who are you?"

The kid shook his head. Kevin saw tears form in

# A Blessing Then A Smashing Time Together

Following Sunday's worship on September 15, we gathered in Locke Hall and blessed it and Placer Enrichment, which started classes the following day. After Pastor Christine's blessing, we fired up the Blackstone grill and with Daven Stelter armed with the the smashing tool, we fired up the latest culinary craze, Smash Burgers. While we fed on the burgers and salads and cookies and pudding, and more, we were unquestionably nourished by the time spent with each other—long overdue and to soon be repeated!



It started with Pastor Christine's blessing of the deeply cleaned and polished Locke Hall. Then we moved outdoors for smash burgers and some much needed socializing over food..



Manning the Blackstone in preparation of smashing the burgers...



We even had as Placer Enrichment teacher and her family join us for the blessing and food.





Sofie and her boyfriend, Isaac, getting to know Karen and Liz, and they them.

Sandy Barry making her way to get in line for lunch, which she obviously succeeded in doing judging by the photo directly below.



Beth convinced her boyfriend, Kendall, to join us for worship and food, though Beth believes it was more food than worship that got him there.



Sandy and Gaye

Beth and Norma



## KEVIN

*(Continued from page 1)*

the his eyes.  
 “Fair enough,” the CO said. “How about this? Who do you want to be? If you don’t figure that out this is going to be your life,” and he swung his arm around, like Satan painting a grim future. “And for that matter,” he said, turning to Kevin, “What about you? You want to be this hard piece of wood your whole life, some bitter kid until you become a harder more bitter man? Is that what you want? Who in the hell do you think you are? Who the crap do you want to be when you grow up?”

Kevin found himself muttering, quietly to himself, “Grow up? Who do you think I am? Grow up? I’ve been this for so long I know nothing else.”

*There was a time when he was a boy who loved his dog, and then one day the dog was gone. He came home from school and instead of being a boy who played with a dog he loved he became a human punching bag. An alcoholic by the 7th grade. A convicted felon by age 18.*

About the time the rest of us started asking those kinds of questions of ourselves, Kevin was hiding from his old man to avoid the beating he was sure to get for no reason other than having been born. Then he got too busy packing a gun and robbing liquor stores on Saturday nights when they had the most cash to bother with those questions or pick apart those vague doubts the rest of us had about the future and what if the wicked witch’s flying monkeys really existed. I don’t know if he ever had the chance to experience the slow sadness of Sunday afternoons, or the prospect of making a living, or if he ever scratched his head over the mystery of girls and how do you know who you’re supposed to marry, and I couldn’t know how growing up being taught violence as solution twisted you into something not quite recognizable, but I was starting to understand a little listening to Kevin tell his story.

For some reason, the CO had poked him in the right spot at the right time, and even after leaving the infirmary and returning to his cell and the few hours a day out on the yard looking over his shoulder, those questions kept picking at him. Who was he? Who did he want to be? He remembered thinking about the dog he had as a boy.

There was a time when he was a boy who loved his dog, and then one day the dog was gone. He came home from school and instead of being a boy who played with a dog he loved he became a human punch-

ing bag. An alcoholic by the 7th grade. Armed robber. A convicted felon by age 18.

There was a wood picnic table on the yard he used to sit at when done walking laps. One afternoon he was sitting at that table and realized that who he had become was nothing but a collection of wounds. He tried to flip it and see himself as a collection of accomplishments, but he had never accomplished anything.

“I even sucked as a criminal. I mean, look at where it got me. And the truth is, being in prison you come to think of yourself as whatever other people think of you as. And that’s nothing good.”

It made him sick to his stomach, the answers he was coming up with, which left him wondering only one thing more: Did he have the courage to change those

answers, to be someone different than he had been, or everyone assumed he would be.

As a break in the mind-killing boredom of prison life, Kevin started going to church on Sundays when they weren’t locked down. At first, it was a diversion, but then it became something more. He was encouraged to attend the Tuesday evening AA meeting, which he did, and which, in a word, knocked him to his knees. He soon learned that if he truly wanted to change the answers to the questions he now couldn’t stop asking himself, he had to become savagely honest with himself and the other men in the room about what he could and could not do without help, and it wasn’t long before he learned just how unbelievably, awfully hard that kind of desperate honesty is.

Kevin had learned from an early age to take the violent way forward. Where it got him was time in a state prison and a self-loathing buried so deep there were days he thought that was all there was in the world. It dawned on him that the chill he often felt came from nowhere but inside himself, and with the help of the men who sat together each week in that AA meeting, if he was willing to battle ferociously, he could maybe turn the horror that defined his life into some small shivering peace that would be enough.

Enough?

“To answer those questions without getting sick to



## Prayers & Celebrations

- ➔ Prayers for Connie Cole. Fresh off her birthday last month, her throat constriction worsened forcing a trip to the ER. She remains hospitalized and tests, as of this writing, are ongoing without any conclusive answers yet.
- ➔ October birthday blessings to Steve Kindle, born on October 15 a few years ago.
- ➔ Oh, and his wife, Diane Kindle, born on October 31.
- ➔ And while we're at it, great prayers of recovery and grit sent to Diane Kindle as she ramps up her healing from months of pneumonia assaulting on her body.
- ➔ Birthday wishes and prayers for all good things to come her way to Sandy Barry, whose birthday is celebrated on Oct 22.
- ➔ Traveling mercies are sent out over the highways and interstates of this land to Susan Lane as she heads toward family east of here, pulling that trailer of hers.
- ➔ Prayers and love to Diane Wilson, recovering from surgery.
- ➔ And as we write this, fingers crossed that Beth's garage sale went well and she was able to equip half of Grass Valley, Auburn, and Nevada City with the items she has "kept safe" all these years.
- ➔ Continued blessings to Norm and Iris Pobanz, enjoying their time together and finding comfort sharing meals and an occasional laugh and reminisce.
- ➔ And prayers for Daven as he navigates his teenage years and learns to face head on the challenges directly in front of him. It's not easy. He's angry and scared.

## Some Notes Worth Noting

1. **Books that Bind** now meets every other month. The book club will next meet Thursday, October 17, 6:30 pm on Zoom. We are reading "Daughter of Molokai" by Alan Brenner. It is his sequel to the immensely popular "Molokai," which we also read.
2. The **Men's Fellowship Breakfast** is scheduled for Saturday, October 5, at 9 am, on Zoom. The invite will be going out later this week-week.
3. First Christian Church invites us to join them in the celebration of the installation of their new pastor, Rev. Kevin R. Deibert, on Sunday, October 20, at 2 pm. The church is located at 3901 Folsom Blvd.,
4. **Repairers of the Breach**—"You shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in."—Isaiah 58:12. This is the call of the Reconciliation Ministry Special Offering Sunday, October 6. The donations received will enable the Reconciliation Ministry to "repair the breaches that keep us apart—the sin of racism and oppression." It often translates in community activism.
5. **Women's Fall Retreat Registration** is now open! Register here for the September 20-22 retreat held in Applegate: <https://ccncn.regfox.com/20240920-womens-fall-retreat>
6. Speaking of retreats, the **Men's Ministries Regional Retreat** is scheduled for October 25-27. We know Mike Carlson and John Hartmire will be attending. See Page 9 for registration information, and if interested let John know. We can figure out transportation if needed.
7. Still Making Noise! In late September, the General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Rev. Terri Owens, participated in the 125th Still Making Noise Celebration! And it was a celebration! The link below take you to the service and her reflection. Making Noise for 125 Years link!

[125 Years of Still Making Music](#)

**KEVIN***(Continued from page 4)*

my stomach,” he said. “To maybe experience a small slice of joy.”

The men who went to that AA meeting, and the men who went to church Sunday mornings, became Kevin’s family. It didn’t matter to him that they were thieves, murderers, and swindlers. He saw them as great because they knew they were not great, healthy because they knew they were sick, admirable because they knew they were not admirable at all by measures of the outside world. And yet they wanted—beyond measure they wanted—to grab Holden Caulfield’s infamous brass ring, and they would reach across worlds to get it.

I had no experience with Alcoholics Anonymous at this point in my life, so I was taking Kevin’s word for all this. But I could see his hardness soften as he told his story, and there was no doubt that he had found something that resonated in him, a softer light. Kevin could break a man in half with those arms of his, but I got the sense that was now the very last thing he wanted to do.

“I want to help put people back together,” he said. “I paroled a few years ago and got lucky. My parole agent wasn’t burned out. He was actually a good guy and wanted to help me. Which he did. I got a job at a recovery house—no parolees or ex-cons, mind you—but men who wanted to know who they really were and wanted to become something they had not been. I’m the assistant manager there now and there are days when I actually experience joy.”

Kevin never had that one epiphanic moment, the burning bush, bright light, but he slowly realized

that who he was had not been written in stone, and who he wanted to be was his call and his alone. He pulled out a Bible from his backpack and turned to 1 John 3:2 and read, “Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed.”

I didn’t understand at the time, but I wrote Kevin’s story because it was worth telling. It elicited some favorable responses and plenty of criticism, too, because the pages of a local community newspaper should not be spent extolling the accomplishments of a violent man who had left pain and harm in his wake. I took it all to heart, even though I didn’t really understand what Kevin’s story meant other than he was not the vicious kid I knew back in the day.

I think I understand a little better now. I think we are, no matter what traps we’ve fallen into, no matter what addictions we have given our hearts and wallets over to, no matter how many times we have focused on accomplishing something big, done it and felt nearly as empty after as when we began—we are more than anything else, God’s own. And no matter how old we are, no matter what we have done, what we will be is still to come, still unfolding, and closer to the unvarnished truth than anything else could possibly be.

Kevin walked out of my little managing editor’s office that day the perfect illustration that we are more than our criminal record, more than our report cards, more than our ideologies, more than what our families say we are, more than what society says we are, and for sure we are more than the sum total of what we have done and maybe tried but failed to do.

—John Hartmire

## PSR Lecture Series on AI, Christian Nationalism, & Democracy

The Pacific School of Religion’s (PSR) 2024 Earl Lecture Series continues its series on Artificial Intelligence, Christian Nationalism, and their relational threat to Democracy.

Featured speakers include Dr. John Robichaux, Executive Director for UC Berkeley’s Coleman Fung Institute, and Dr. Susan Abraham, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of PSR. They will explore the relationship of AI and religion, the risks each poses to democracy, and the potential of both for marginalized and faith-based communities.

The free and public four-week series will be de-

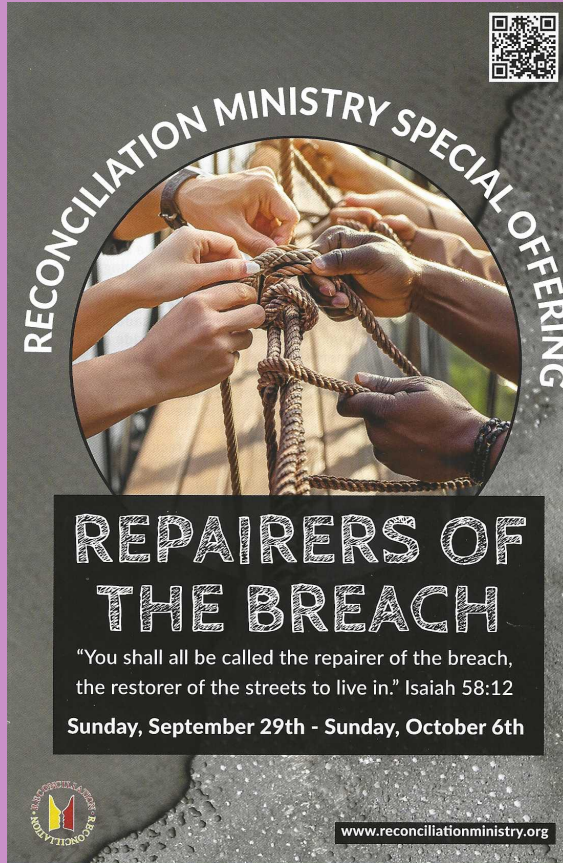
livered both face-to-face and online and includes lectures and a screening of the documentary film, “Bad Faith: Christian Nationalism’s Unholy War on Democracy.”

The lecture series is open to the public—either in person or online—at no cost. The links to the 5 sessions are below for registration.

[October 1st: What Was Meant for Evil: Making AI and Religion Work for Us](#)

[October 8: Manufacturing Hope: Leveraging Religious and Technological Connectivity to Advance the Common Good](#)





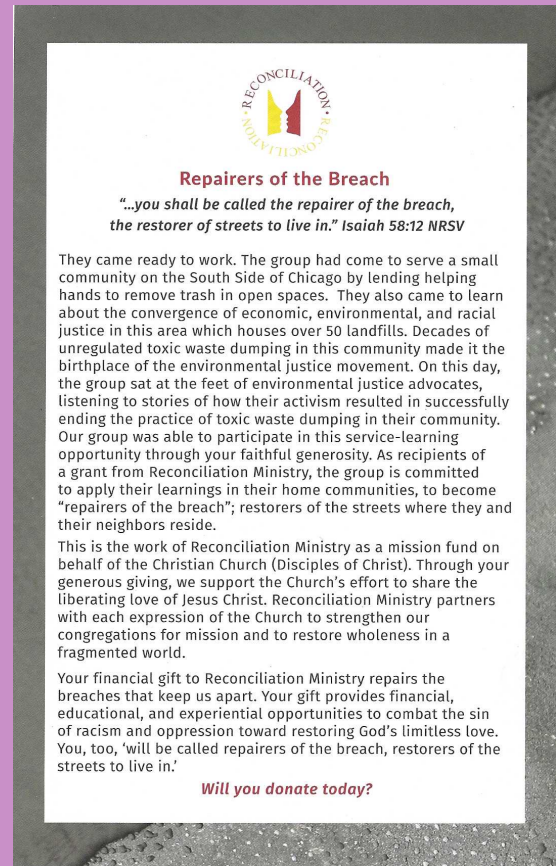
RECONCILIATION MINISTRY SPECIAL OFFERING

**REPAIRERS OF THE BREACH**

“You shall all be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of the streets to live in.” Isaiah 58:12

Sunday, September 29th - Sunday, October 6th

[www.reconciliationministry.org](http://www.reconciliationministry.org)



RECONCILIATION MINISTRY

**Repairers of the Breach**

“...you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.” Isaiah 58:12 NRSV

They came ready to work. The group had come to serve a small community on the South Side of Chicago by lending helping hands to remove trash in open spaces. They also came to learn about the convergence of economic, environmental, and racial justice in this area which houses over 50 landfills. Decades of unregulated toxic waste dumping in this community made it the birthplace of the environmental justice movement. On this day, the group sat at the feet of environmental justice advocates, listening to stories of how their activism resulted in successfully ending the practice of toxic waste dumping in their community. Our group was able to participate in this service-learning opportunity through your faithful generosity. As recipients of a grant from Reconciliation Ministry, the group is committed to apply their learnings in their home communities, to become “repairers of the breach”; restorers of the streets where they and their neighbors reside.

This is the work of Reconciliation Ministry as a mission fund on behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Through your generous giving, we support the Church’s effort to share the liberating love of Jesus Christ. Reconciliation Ministry partners with each expression of the Church to strengthen our congregations for mission and to restore wholeness in a fragmented world.

Your financial gift to Reconciliation Ministry repairs the breaches that keep us apart. Your gift provides financial, educational, and experiential opportunities to combat the sin of racism and oppression toward restoring God’s limitless love. You, too, ‘will be called repairers of the breach, restorers of the streets to live in.’

*Will you donate today?*

[www.reconciliationministry.org](http://www.reconciliationministry.org)

## Another Overheard Conversation with God

Me: Hey God.

God: Hello, My love.

Me: I'm falling apart. Can you put me back together?

God: I would rather not.

Me: Why?

God: Because you aren't a puzzle.

Me: What about all of the pieces of my life that are falling down onto the ground?

God: Let them stay there for a while. They fell off for a reason. Take some time and decide if you need any of those pieces back.

Me: You don't understand! I'm breaking down!

God: No - you don't understand. You are breaking through. What

you are feeling are just growing pains. You are shedding the things and the people in your life that are holding you back. You aren't falling apart. You are falling into place. Relax. Take some deep breaths and allow those things you don't need anymore to fall off of you. Quit holding onto the pieces that don't fit you anymore. Let them fall off. Let them go.

Me: Once I start doing that, what will be left of me?

God: Only the best pieces of you.

Me: I'm scared of changing.

God: I keep telling you - YOU AREN'T CHANGING!! YOU ARE BECOMING!

Me: Becoming who?

God: Becoming who I created you

to be! A person of light and love and charity and hope and courage and joy and mercy and grace and compassion. I made you for more than the shallow pieces you have decided adorn yourself with that you cling to with such greed and fear. Let those things fall off of you. I love you! Don't change! Become! Become! Become! Become who I made you to be. I'm going to keep telling you this until you remember it.

Me: There goes another piece.

God: Yep. Let it be.

Me: So...I'm not broken?

God: No - but you are breaking like the dawn. It's a new day. Become!! Become!!

—John Roedel



**CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)  
in the United States and Canada

*We are a movement for wholeness  
in a fragmented world*

The "[Read More](#)" link below will take you to A Statement in Support of Immigrant Communities. It is written by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Dear Disciples, and dear friends of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),  
As members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) we recognize the Biblical mandate to welcome the stranger, [...]

[Read More](#)

## In Memoriam: Rev. Dr. Charles (Chuck) Blaisdell

As Cliff shared with the congregation September 22, the Rev. Dr. Charles (Chuck) Blaisdell died that morning. Though he was a great lover of puns, both good and bad ones, sadly this isn't one. He served as Regional Minister from 1997-2004 and is remembered as a man of deep faith and intelligence almost as clearly as he is remembered as a man who loved greatly—his wife and children, and the church.

Born in Fort Worth, Texas, Chuck excelled in math and engineering courses at Southwest High School, later received a bachelor's degree from Texas Christian University, a master's in religious studies from the University of Chicago, a master's in philosophy from Vanderbilt, and then to top it off, both master's and doctoral degrees in divinity from Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis.

Chuck spent more than 40 years in ministry with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ. He served congregations, regional bodies, and national church organizations in Texas, Indiana, Northern California, Hawaii, and Colorado. A fine writer and astute theologian, he was a highly sought after mentor. .

In his ministry, Chuck pastored First Christian Church (Monahans, Texas), Stylesville Christian Church (Stylesville, Indiana), Hilo Coast United Church of Christ (Hawaii), and First Christian Church of Colorado Springs (Colorado). He served

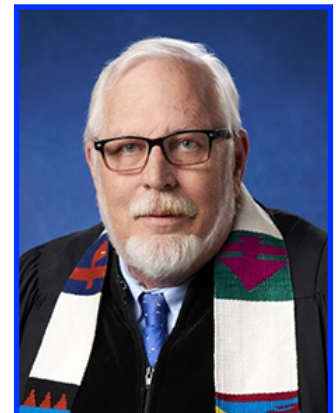
as a lay leader at First Church Sterling, Massachusetts.

Chuck also served as the Associate Regional Minister of Indiana and the Regional Minister of Northern California-Nevada. He also worked for UCC Church Building and Loan Fund, Week of Compassion, and CBP in development.

As a volunteer, he nine years as a director on the Christian Board of Publication, including a stint as board chair, and was recognized as a director emeritus in 2021. He also served on the board of directors of Higher Education & Leadership Ministries.

In his free time, Chuck was a voracious reader. He enjoyed piloting his Cessna 150 and, later, listening to air traffic control. He spent copious hours moderating online forums, ejecting rude people with great glee.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Humane Borders, your local food bank, or the congregation in which you serve God as he served so faithfully for decades.





## Sierra Christian Church Monthly Calendar

# October 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3	4	1	2	3	4	5  9 am Men's Fellowship Breakfast
6 Cliff Cole at the Pulpit Reconciliation Ministry Special Offering	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17  6:30 pm Books That Bind	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2

## MEN'S FALL RETREAT AT CAMP ARROYO, LIVERMORE

October 25-27

Keynote speaker is Doug Wirt, who served as Co-Regional Minister for the Christian Church in Oregon and SW Idaho along with his wife, Cathy Myers Wirt until 2023.

THEME: "HOPE IS REAL"

To register: Follow this link:

<https://ccncn.regfox.com/2024-ccnc-n-mens-ministry-retreat>

## What Happened In September in California's History

**October 2, 1816**—A scientist aboard the Russian expedition ship, Rurik, gave the California poppy its latin name *Eschscholzia californica*. Today it is the state flower.

**October 2, 1916**—San Diego Zoo was founded in Balboa Park. Today it is home to some 3,700 animals of more than 650 species and subspecies. It pioneered open-air, cageless exhibits that re-create natural animal habitats and is one of the few zoos in the world that houses the giant panda.

**October 3, 1933**—The Griffith Park Fire began in Los Angeles. Between 29 and 52 untrained volunteers died fighting the blaze, the deadliest in Los Angeles history.

**October 3, 1957**—California State Superior Court ruled that Allen Ginsberg's "Howl and Other Poems" was not obscene.

**October 3, 1995**—O. J. Simpson was acquitted of murdering Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman in Los Angeles.

**October 4, 1880**—University of California, now known as University of Southern California, was founded in Los Angeles. Tuition was \$15. There were 53 students and 10 teachers. Today, USC is home to more than 33,000 students and nearly 3,200 full-time faculty,

**October 5, 1857**—The City of Anaheim in Orange County was founded by 50 German-Americans from San Francisco. After traveling the state looking for a suitable area to grow grapes, they bought land from Rancho San Juan Cajon de Santa Ana for \$2 per acre.

**October 5, 2006**—A California state appeals court ruled 2-1 that gays and lesbians have no constitutional right to marry in California. Same-sex marriage became legal in California on June 16, 2008.

**October 6, 1966**—LSD, the psychedelic drug, was declared illegal in California, the first state to do so.

**October 7, 1846**—To lighten his wagon, Louis Keseberg put elderly Mr. Hardkoop out. He was last seen sitting by the road. Keseberg survived the Donner Party tragedy by resorting to cannibalism.

**October 7, 1996**—CA fire in Monterey County that burned 25,000 acres was started by Jeffrey Alan Avila. He tried to make money by leasing fire-fighting equipment to the U.S. Forest Service.

**October 8, 1860**—A San Francisco to Los Angeles telegraph line was completed. This became the first modern long-distance communication link in the West.

**October 9, 1936**—The Hoover Dam on the Colorado River began transmitting electricity to Los Angeles, 266 miles away. It generates 4.2 million megawatt-hours of electricity yearly for Nevada, Arizona and Southern California.

**October 9, 1989**—In the first NFL game coached by an African American, Art Shell led the Los Angeles Raiders to beat the New York Jets, 14-7.

**October 10, 2001**—Representative Nancy Pelosi, of San Francisco, was elected House Democratic Whip, the highest post held by a woman in Congress.

**October 11, 1906**—The San Francisco public school board ordered Japanese students be taught in segregated schools, causing Japanese outrage. President Theodore Roosevelt requested the order be reversed and promised to reduce Japanese immigration.

**October 12, 1812**—Indians at Mission Santa Cruz revolted and killed Father Andres Quintana. Turns out he was fond of using a metal-tipped whip to punish Indian laborers at the mission.

**October 12, 1933**—The Rock opens. Alcatraz Island, in San Francisco Bay transformation to a maximum high-security federal prison to hold prisoners who caused trouble at other federal prisons was completed and opened to its first inmates. It was closed in 1963 when prison incarceration philosophy started embracing the notion of rehabilitation. Today it is a museum that draws some 1.5 million visitors annually.

**October 13, 1858**—The California Central Railroad from Lincoln reached Folsom. Groundbreaking took place on June 1, 1858.

**October 14, 1848**—Sacramento was founded by Sam Brannan and John Sutter, Jr. at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers.

**October 14, 1864**—The Klamath Lake treaty forced Modoc and Northern Paiute people from their traditional homeland, removing them to a reservation on Klamath land, which set the stage for the Modoc War of 1872-73.

**October 14, 1947**—“Chuck” Yeager became the first

*Please see HISTORY, next, page*



## HISTORY

*(Continued from page 8)*

person to travel faster than the speed of sound when he flew the X-1 at Mach 1.07 from Edwards Air Force Base.co reached a record 101 degrees.

**October 15, 1966**— Huey Newton and Bobby Seale began the Black Panther Party for Self Defense. Their Ten Point Program called for adequate housing, jobs, education, an end to police brutality and more

**October 17, 1989**— The 6.9 Loma Prieta Earthquake struck the San Francisco Bay area during the start to the 3rd game of the World Series: Oakland A's vs San Francisco Giants. 67 people died, 3,000 injured. It caused \$7 billion worth of damage to 28,000 structures and several freeways. 42 people died on the Cypress Freeway.

**October 20, 1984**— Monterey Bay Aquarium opened. It showcases habitats and sea life with more than 35,000 creatures, filling 34 major galleries and nearly 200 exhibits.

**October 21, 1985**— Dan White committed suicide by carbon monoxide in his wife's car. The former San Francisco Supervisor killed Mayor Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk in 1978. Charged with two counts of first degree murder, he served some 5 years after a defense called the "Twinkie defense," essentially argued (successfully) that junk food made him do it. His excessive sugar diet led him to a state of diminished capacity, his defense argued. The jury bought it.

**October 23, 1942**— All 12 passengers and crew aboard an American Airlines airliner were killed when it was struck by a U.S. Army Air Forces bomber near Palm Springs. Among the victims was composer and songwriter Ralph Rainger, "Blue Hawaii" (1937) and "Thanks for the Memory" (1938).

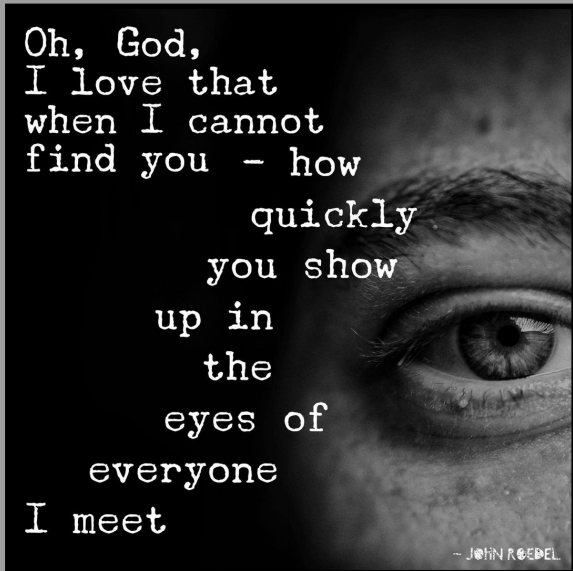
**October 24, 1871**— A mob of white men in Los Angeles killed 18 Chinese immigrants in the largest mass lynching in U.S. history.

**October 25, 1849**— The Democratic Party in California formed at a meeting held in Portsmouth Square, which today is in San Francisco's Chinatown.

**October 27, 1885**— Fresno was incorporated. Today this city in San Joaquin County is the fifth largest in California.

**October 27, 1954**— Walt Disney's first television program, titled "Disneyland" premiered on ABC. "Davy Crockett, Indian Fighter" was possibly the first miniseries.

**October 31, 2007**— U.C. Berkeley physicists announced production of the world's smallest radio out of a single carbon nanotube 10,000 times thinner than a human hair. They had it play "Layla" by Derek and the Dominos and said it could also function as a transmitter.



Oh, God,  
I love that  
when I cannot  
find you - how  
quickly  
you show  
up in  
the  
eyes of  
everyone  
I meet

— JOHN ROEDEL