History Remembered, Honored at Old Jail Event

While the Old Monterey County Jail may not be famous for its architecture, events which took place within its walls have not lost their significance.

The Old Monterey County Jail, which sits in front of the Monterey County Government Center Administration Building, is in the midst of an adaptive
In December 1970, labor leader Cesar Chavez was incarcerated in what is now the old jail for refusing to call off a lettuce boycott, bringing the world’s attention to the plight of farmworkers. His incarceration brought national figures such as Ethel Kennedy to the jail to visit.

Those events and their importance were honored with a special ceremony and the placement of bronze plaque on the building. The plaque notes that the building has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places and describes the events of December 1970. You can see the full ceremony on the Monterey County YouTube channel.

Monterey County Supervisors Luis Alejo and Simon Salinas, who both have connections to the late labor leader, told a gathering of about 75 supporters that Chavez’ incarceration was a pivotal point in the labor movement and needs to be remembered. Alejo’s family walked beside Chavez when he marched to the jail to turn himself in and Salinas, the son of migrant workers, was invited by Chavez to help hand out benefit checks to farmworkers from the Robert F. Kennedy Foundation.

Also speaking at the plaque event, the grandson of the labor leader, Andres Chavez, calling the commemoration event and plaque placement a very important first step toward preserving Latino and farmworker history.
Library Earns Valley of the World Education Award

Monterey County Free Libraries have been honored by the National Steinbeck Center for its work inspiring and nourishing a lifelong love of learning in the spirit of John Steinbeck.

Last month, the Libraries were honored at the Center’s Valley of the World Awards event and received the Education Award.

MCFL was recognized for the life changing impact it makes on children, particularly in agricultural communities, through its wide range of traditional and innovative services such as Homework Help, MakerSpaces, Block Parties and Preschool STEM.

Library Director Jayanti Addleman accepted the award on behalf of MCFL, saying that despite being home to some of the wealthiest communities in California and several institutions of higher learning, approximately 25% of adults in the county are functionally illiterate and the majority of children are not academically or socially ready entering kindergarten.

MCFL is working hard to help fill these gaps. Last year, over 715,000 people walked through its doors and borrowed close to 500,000 items. Students visited homework centers 12,500 times and used the online homework help over 25,000 times.

New Artwork Graces County Walls

The walls at the Administration building have a whole new look!

Each year, the walls at the Government Center Administration Building get a make-over and continue
as a backdrop for a public art exhibit celebrating the county where we live and/or work.

The latest make-over is complete and the wall space is filled with 60 new artwork pieces celebrating Monterey County in a variety of mediums. This year, besides the beautiful land and seascapes captured by artists, animals seemed to be a popular theme, featuring pets to marine life.

The public art exhibit extends into the second floor Monterey Room which also features artwork done by residents of the Youth Center who have created amazing self-portraits, animals drawings and a gorgeous mural “Elkhorn: Wetlands of International Importance” in collaboration with teaching artists.

The new exhibit is organized and curated for the County by the Arts Council for Monterey County. Be sure to check it out!