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Seabees stood together to sing "The Song of the Seabees" that evening, which was written in 1943 and honors their timeless traditions.

showing the true comradery of veterans in the Southeast.

Guests enjoyed the musical styling of Sid Orr and The Tunnel Rats, featuring songs pertaining to the Vietnam War, and enjoyed a decadent catered dinner provided by Amazing Grace Catering.

There were two keynote speakers for the evening, retired U.S. Army Col. Vernon C. Atkinson II, from Statham, and retired U.S. Navy Master Chief John J. Hillyer III, from Live Oak, Florida.

Atkinson is a graduate of Marion Military Institute, Florida State University and the Army's Command and General Staff College. Throughout his career, Atkinson has specialized in aviation and intelligence assignments and has bravely served in Bosnia, Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan) and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Atkinson retired last summer after 35 years of service.

During his address to the group, Atkinson highlighted the importance of veterans and veterans organizations' involvement in the community, specifically with the younger generation. According to Atkinson, teaching young people the importance of hard work and national pride is one of the most powerful gifts veterans have to offer.

"What we can do as veterans is get involved in local schools," said Atkinson. "Try to be a mentor. If there are any types of military programs, try to get involved with them in both the high school and the junior high school."

"These kids are looking for someone with the kind of values that you guys can offer. I think that people like you, who have been successful and been in the service and love this country, should try to get involved as much as you can."

"I think you can make a difference."

The other keynote speaker for the evening, Hillyer, enlisted in the Naval Reserves while still in high school and joined the Seabees in 1963. After leaving active duty in 1966, Hillyer continued serving in the reserves until 1993.

During his years of service, Hillyer traveled all across the world including but limited to Argentina, Newfoundland and Spain.

Hillyer is currently the president of the Navy Seabees of America and commander of the NSVA Island X-11 of Tampa, Florida, and NSVA Southeast District Commander.

Hillyer touched briefly on the history of the Seabees as well as told of the Navy Seabees of America group. Hillyer also encouraged all in attendance to attend the upcoming National

Convention of Navy Seabee Veterans of America, which will take place in Tampa this year.

Island X-3 Chaplain Paul Brown began the evening's ceremony with an invocation, before Jerry Cannon, retired U.S. Army, and Richard Hoibraten, retired U.S. Navy, conducted the Missing Man Table Ceremony.

Ed Crenshaw, secretary of Island X-3, introduced the keynote speakers, and following the speeches, all Seabees in attendance joined in song for the Song of the Seabees before the ceremonial cutting of the Seabees' 75th Birthday Cake.

Many special guests were present for the event, including Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris who, earlier in the week, issued a proclamation honoring the anniversary, which was read earlier in the evening.

As homage to the anniversary and momentous history of the Navy Seabees, literature was provided that evening briefly outlining the courageous journey of the Seabee forces.

"As the United States entered World War II, it quickly became obvious that we would need to build as well as fight our way across Europe and the Pacific to attain victory."

"With the pacific being

a Naval War, the Navy needed construction capabilities. To fill this need, Naval Construction forces were formed and organized into Construction Battalions, CBs. These Seabee forces, trained to fight and build, performed splendidly in both theaters of war.

"Since that time, Seabees have made major contributions in all of America's military conflicts. In addition, Seabees have conducted many people-to-people construction projects to build good will and cement friendships for our country. Special note should be made of



Retired U.S. Army Col. Vernon C. Atkinson II



Retired U.S. Navy Master Chief John J. Hillyer III

their disaster recovery efforts around the world.

"Through their 75-year history, Seabees continue to

respond to all requests and commands with their motto, "Can Do!"

Mountain Regional Library system celebrates Dr. Seuss

On Saturday, March 11, the Mountain Regional Library in Young Harris will be hosting a Dr. Seuss Celebration which will include a wide variety of activities for children. The celebration will run from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m.

"This is our first year to do this and we are really excited to get the word out to the public," says Vince Stone, MRLS Director. "Our new facility gives us ample room to spread out and have many Dr. Seuss related activities going at once."

The new community room will be playing a Dr. Seuss matinee with their 4K television and surround sound. There will

be a rotation of live storytelling in the children's area. Dr. Seuss themed refreshments will be available along with some free books and free tree saplings provided by the local forestry service in recognition of the famous "Lorax" story. These activities along with balloons, face painting and more will make for a nice Saturday afternoon at the library.

Dr. Seuss, aka Theodor Geisel, would have been 110 years old on March 2. During his writing career, he published over 60 books that have enthralled both parents and children for more than 75 years. While many have won awards and been made

into movies, the most important contribution Geisel made to our society was getting young children to enjoy reading through the magic of his talented rhymes. He managed to challenge both children and adults to look at the world from a different perspective. Up top, down below, from afar or inside a tiny speck.

Two free events have already taken place at MRLS. On Monday, February 27th shows were performed by Reuben Haller at the Union County Public Library and at the Fanning County Public Library. Reuben has been entertaining children and adults with his "Cat in the Hat" show for many years.

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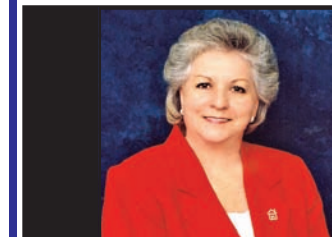


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