

Kudos!

Venessa Stacy, Tiava Beitzel, and Bonnie Winters

At the end of last year, we introduced a way to shine a spotlight on a co-worker who really went above and beyond or to recognize someone for being fantastic. After looking through the nominations from the submission link on the WMRL website, we are recognizing **three** of your colleagues for doing a stellar job.

In November, these three women organized a World War I in Your Attic event in Oakland. It was an amazing community event, far from a dry history lesson. Tiava has been reading the years of 1917 and 1918 of The Republican, a weekly newspaper published since 1872 which is available on microfilm in the library. She sent me the images of news stories about Garrett men heading off to war, their successes there and occasionally their deaths in France. Thanks to her work, I was able put the stories on Whilbr (<http://digital.whilbr.org>).

As the event drew nearer, Venessa decided that some of the stories should be read aloud, not by library staff, but by high school students dressed in costumes from Our Town Theatre. So, for example, we had Tad Rodeheaver reading a letter from Harry Turney from Mountain Lake Park (serving in the American Engineering Corps) to his brother Mike, telling how the Germans “made a plowed field out of a woods in no time and then shipped us a little foul air so we could use our masks.” Not only did this bit of flair engage more of the community, but it breathed extra life into the event.

The event engaged members of the public, who talked about items they brought, including photographs, enlistment and promotion papers and medals which were later scanned or photographed for use on Whilbr. Artifacts included helmets and gas masks, but the pièce de résistance was an army helmet that the soldier had painted with a map of his travels while fighting in France.

In order to pull everything together, Tiava explained the role of the Red Cross during the war, Venessa gave the list of all Garrett men who had been killed during the war and Bonnie, who had produced all the PR and social media before the event, took photographs of the participants and their historical artifacts. Because of the contributions of these three women, it was altogether a wonderful multi-generational community event where students and seniors could contribute and learn.

Well done!

-- Submitted by Jill Craig

If you would like to nominate a staff member for the next issue, you can do so here:

<http://wmrl.info/?q=node/251>