Written by MT Staff
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have been reading a great deal about volunteerism as the U.S. version of National Volunteer Week has just passed.

The 2005 theme, “Inspire by Example,” truly reflects the power volunteers have to inspire the people they help, as well as to inspire others to serve. The Points of Light Web site has many good resources about volunteering.

As I spent time on the site it struck me that volunteerism is alive and well in the maintenance and reliability community.

MIMOSA

As I began this article, Maintenance Technology Editor Bob Baldwin was attending the annual meeting of MIMOSA (Machinery Information Management Open Systems Alliance), a nonprofit trade association which develops and encourages adoption of open information standards for Operations and Maintenance in manufacturing, fleet, and facility environments. The simplistic explanation for MIMOSA is a highly motivated group of people who are working to ensure all software can work together in a meaningful way without adding massive new programming code.

Since 1998, the group has grown in importance and currently offers numerous ways for interested people to get involved. If plant software and its interoperability are important to you, please visit the Web site and contact one of the board members listed to discuss how you can volunteer.

I recently had an opportunity to see MIMOSA in action at the International Maintenance Conference as 15 different vendors who each offer MIMOSA Compliant software came together for the first time and created one fully functioning information system. It was a very impressive demonstration.

AFE

The Association for Facilities Engineering (AFE) provides education, certification, technical information, and other relevant resources for plant and facility engineering, operations, and maintenance professionals worldwide. I recently renewed my membership as AFE has become more active in maintenance and reliability.

It has created councils for people who have specific interests and I am involved with the Maintenance Council. I happen to know that this council is seeking volunteers as I have been asked to lend a hand.

AFE has other benefits including local chapters and a growing resource-based Web site. It would be a great place for anyone in facilities maintenance to get involved.

SMRP

My personal time is spent volunteering at the Society for Maintenance & Reliability Professionals (SMRP). This group has been around for 14 years and the volunteers have worked diligently to share best practices and to promote professionalism.

They are having an impact as you now read articles in this magazine, our Web site, and almost every other industry publication referring to “maintenance and reliability professionals.” That is you—in case you have not figured it out.

SMRP has a number of volunteer activities available including working on the best practices committee, the certification committee, the benchmarking committee, the standards committee, the marketing committee, the conference committee, and more. Once you learn your way around the group, you might even volunteer or be nominated as an officer or director and take on a leadership role.

We are all busy. Being a volunteer is hard work and requires a time commitment. I work hard in my volunteer role at SMRP and I hope that my contribution will also make a difference for the maintenance community. In return the things I have learned at SMRP have contributed to my personal and professional development.

So, get involved and volunteer as each of these fine organizations can surely use whatever help you can give. In return you will make a difference, learn a lot, and make great friends.

If you know of other maintenance-related organizations that seek volunteers, please e-mail me at tohanlon@reliabilityweb.com

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Internet Tip: Network Online

There is a fantastic discussion going on at MaintenanceForums.com with thousands of maintenance and reliability professionals asking questions, posting case studies, and learning from each other in a noncommercial environment. The discussion is taking place on a Web-based, "threaded" discussion board.

The board requires registration to ensure spammers and commercial posters can be removed and your privacy is assured. Your e-mail is never displayed unless you decide to post it. The board is divided into subject-based categories. It is a good idea to cruise through the board and get a flavor for the type and tone of the discussions. Once you are comfortable, go ahead and share your advice, solve a problem, or post a question. You will be surprised at the speed and quality of the responses.

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