

“I think Smithers picked me because of my motivational skills. Everyone says they have to work a lot harder when I’m around.”

— Homer Simpson

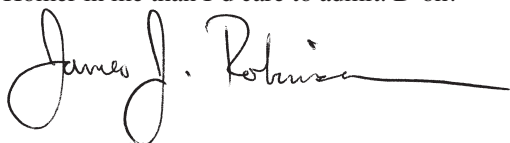
Perhaps the most perfect reverse barometer ever devised is the animated television character Homer Simpson. I can describe Homer for the uninitiated by summoning insight from no less an authority than Wikipedia: “[Homer] has a low intelligence level and . . . shows immense apathy towards work. . . . Homer’s brief periods of intelligence are overshadowed however by much longer and consistent periods of ignorance, forgetfulness, and stupidity.” Suffice to say, Homer is definitely not someone that you would want to work with.

I can gladly report that in my many years at TMS I have never encountered either a coworker or a volunteer in discernable possession of anything approximating Homer’s remarkably substandard qualities. Just the opposite. The staff steps up time and again not just because working at TMS is a job but because they are professionals and want to do their jobs well. They’re wonderful to work with. What is even more marvelous to behold is the work of the TMS volunteers, who receive no direct compensation but put in thousands upon thousands of hours—their contributions advance not just the interests of the society but their own professional skill sets, the profiles of their employers, and the general well being of the materials community. It is rewarding and inspiring to work with them all.

During the TMS 2011 Annual Meeting, volunteers and staff alike will be providing report-outs about myriad recent initiatives. Let me use the remaining space to share a few of the headlines:

- Through a variety of promotional and innovative outreach tactics, TMS professional membership increased by nearly 10% in 2010.
- The Board of Directors just completed an in-depth study of volunteerism. As an output, the Board is finalizing the TMS Enhanced Volunteerism Roadmap to provide even more opportunities for satisfying and meaningful volunteer engagement. If you are reading this editorial while attending the TMS 2011 Annual Meeting, please visit the new Volunteer Concierge Booth for more details on the roadmap and opportunities to participate (and suggest your ideas for how you would like to be engaged).
- TMS volunteers and staff recently completed two major studies for the U.S. Department of Energy on materials for energy. Both studies will be influential in setting near- and long-term research priorities (and associated funding).
- A flurry of planning is underway for 2011’s First Integrated Computational Materials Engineering World Congress, which is shaping up to be the gold-standard conference in this area.
- In recent months, the society collaborated with ASM on Materials Camps, with the ABM (the Brazilian Metallurgical, Materials and Mining Association) on the 1st TMS-ABM International Materials Congress, with the Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum and a number of future ventures, and with many others too numerous to list now.
- The TMS Board decided to conduct a Meeting of the Membership during the TMS 2011 Annual Meeting—a platform for presenting the society’s directions and financial performance coupled with an opportunity for members to ask questions. See you there?

I could go on, but I’ve once again exhausted the space that the editor indulges me with each month. If I’ve inadvertently omitted one or more especially important initiatives from the list above, I suppose that I’ll have to admit to having a little more Homer in me than I’d care to admit. D’oh!



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