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Exercise Your Volunteering Funny Bone

By [Susan J. Ellis](#)

March

2011

Mother Nature seems angry with us. Snow and ice across the northern hemisphere, floods in Australia, earthquakes in New Zealand, volcanoes in the Philippines, rapid ice melt in the Arctic. Next we'll work our way through the ten plagues!

Is the weather getting you down? How about the economy? Things looking generally dismal? I don't know about you, but I definitely could use a good laugh!

One of the earliest covers of *Ms. Magazine* was a cartoon of a man was asking a woman, "Do you know feminists don't have a sense of humor?" To which she replies, "No, but if you hum a few bars, I'll fake it." The beauty of a great cartoon is that it captures the essence of a multi-layered situation. Like feminism, volunteer management can be unrelentingly serious, yet we are in the middle of the human condition and lots of aspects of working with volunteers are pretty funny, if not hilarious.

Here at Energize, we've always tried to [find and share humor](#): cartoons, jokes, funny anecdotes, and other things that show the lighter side of working with volunteers (a few are in the column to the right). But after all these years, there are still only a few postings. Often the humor that can be found is related to boards of directors and association management, not the whole world of volunteering.



It's time to take action! With many countries coming upon their various National Volunteer Weeks (and since this is both IYV+10 and the European Year of Volunteering), let's exercise our collective funny bones and generate more laugh-worthy materials.



Our Challenge to You: Send Us Your Volunteer Humor!

Sandy Sineff in *Secrets of Successful
Boards*, ed
by Carol Weisman

We want to find – or *create* – anything funny that either celebrates the joy of volunteering or illuminates the frustrations we all encounter while working together with volunteers. Bonus points if the humor is about being a director of volunteer involvement! So...

-  **Community Service: It isn't just for celebrity offenders.**
If you have any favorite funny items, jokes, or stories, please type them into our response field below. If you want to send us an illustration, cartoon, audio, or video file, please e-mail those directly to webmaster@energizeinc.com. If the material is copyrighted to someone else, please make sure you have permission to post them. If in doubt, let us know and we'll help you determine the rights. (For example, there is a funny ecard online that we may not reproduce here, but it can be sent as a free postcard from its host site.)
-  **The ark was built by volunteers; the Titanic was built by professionals.**
If you know of any Web sites with a collection of volunteer-related humor – even if it is related to a specific type of setting – please give the URL (often the keywords can be changed to reflect another setting and still apply).
- If you know anyone with skill as a cartoonist (you might see if anyone on staff or in the current corps of volunteers has this talent), invite him or her to create an original humorous image. S/he can retain the copyright, but needs to give us permission to post to our site (with full attribution, of course).

Vote for Your Favorites on Facebook!

We will post your submissions to a special "photo album" on our page on Facebook. **Go to the [album](#) and select "like" for each of your favorite pieces of humor.**

The top three winners will receive a \$25 gift certificate to shop in the [Energize Online Bookstore](#). Please submit your entries by March 31, 2011.

Be sure to follow us on Facebook because we will announce the winners there on April 1st (no fooling!).

Whether March will go out like a lion or a lamb, let's at least make sure the animal has a smile on its face! Looking forward to seeing your submissions.

And the winners are...

:) Congratulations to the winners of this month's volunteering humor contest! Receiving a gift certificate for shopping in the Energize Online Bookstore are:

- **Nicolette Winner** (yes, that is her last name!), HandsOn West Central Ohio Director, Council on Rural Services, Piqua, OH
- **Elizabeth Ellis**, Consultant, Writer, Trainer, WI
- **Mirna Sherberg**, Executive Assistant/Volunteer Coordinator, Fresno Philharmonic, Fresno, CA (who gets a special shout-out for gumption in sharing her photo!)

Thanks to everyone who submitted items and those who voted on [Facebook](#). The contest is now closed, but we are happy to keep accepting and sharing things that allow us to laugh about the lighter side of volunteering.

Related Topics: [Volunteer Resources Manager, Role of](#) | [Image of Volunteering](#) | [Profession of Volunteer Management](#)

Submitted on 04 June 2011 by Mia Baxendale, activites, whittier, Westborough, MA, USA

This is a great way to build connections. Thank you.

Submitted on 09 March 2011 by Glenice Jones, Volunteer Services Coordinator, Metro North Adult Basic Education, Blaine, MN

Here are some songs from an elementary school – used for their volunteers. Also – we have an instructor who taught “[Laughter Yoga](#)” as our speaker one year. It was wonderful and everyone at our banquet enjoyed it. No matter how silly, it was fun and all participated. Was a great, fun event.

I am looking forward to getting ideas from many places. Thanks for doing this.

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:) Volunteer Thank You to the tune of the theme song of the TV show, “[Cheers \(Where Everybody Knows Your Name\)](#)”

Verse 1

Making our way in our school today
Takes ev'rything we've got!
Having you here with all your helping
Sure does mean a lot!

Thanking you... how to find a way?

Chorus

We simply want to say
That we're glad we know your name
And we're always glad you came!
We wanna know you're at [*school name*],
Your hours have given you fame.
We can all see why ev'rybody knows your name.

Verse 2

Giving your time in the school each day
Takes ev'rything you've got!
Hundreds of hours, never stopping
Sure does mean a lot!

Oh, please...don't ever go away....

Repeat Chorus and at end repeat:

We wanna know you're at [*school name*],
Your hours have given you fame.
We can all see why ev'rybody knows your name.



Sung to tune of "**We Are the Champions**" by Freddie Mercury

You've all signed in -
Time after time -
You've done your duty
and committed no crime
And challenging kids
You've had a few
You've had your share of
...the Stock Market & DI
But You've come through

You are the champions - our friends
And You'll keep on helping - till the end -

You are the champions -
You are the champions
No time for losers
'Cause You are the champions - of the school -

You've taken your bows
And curtain calls -
You brought us fame and fortune
...and everything that goes with it
We thank you all -

But it's been no bed of roses
No pleasure cruise -
You consider it a challenge
... before the human race -

And you're not gonna lose -

You are the champions...

:) **"We Appreciate You" by Teresa Jennings** ([listen to a recording](#))

Yell:

You! You! You!

You! You! You!

Sing:

We appreciate you. We think you are great!

We appreciate you. Yeah you really rate!

You make us so happy with the things you say and do.

Oh, We appreciate you!

Yell:

You! You! You!

You! You! You!

Sing:

We appreciate you. We think you are neat!

We appreciate you. Yeah, you can't be beat!

You make us so happy with the things you say and do.

Oh, we appreciate you!

Yell:

You! You! You!

You! You! You!

Sing:

We appreciate you. We think you are cool!

We appreciate you. Yeah, you really rule!

You make us so happy with the things you say and do.

Oh, we appreciate you!

Yes, we appreciate you!

Oh, weeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee appreciate you!

Yell:

You! You! You!

**Submitted on 05 March 2011 by DJ Cronin, Blogger, Speaking out on Volunteer Management!
Blog, Australia**

:.) This is a true story.

I am at a conference for Volunteer Management and I am attending the Welcome dinner.

I am seated at a table with around another 8 volunteer managers and all of them are female.

Being the only male I eventually say after a lovely meal and a few wines

"What I want to know is – where are all the male volunteer managers?"

There is a slight pause before one of my colleague's replies

"What I want to know is – where are all the good looking male volunteer managers?"

**Submitted on 05 March 2011 by DJ Cronin, Blogger, Speaking out on Volunteer Management!
Blog, Australia**

:.) I have just taken an old joke and changed it slightly to apply to Volunteer Managers. Enjoy!

A new volunteer manager spends a week at her new organisation with the volunteer manager she is replacing. On the last day the departing volunteer manager tells her, "I have left three numbered envelopes in the desk drawer. Open an envelope if you encounter a crisis you can't solve."

Three months down the track there is a major drama, everything goes wrong - the volunteers are complaining about lots of things - and the volunteer manager feels very threatened by it all.

She remembers the parting words of her predecessor and opens the first envelope. The message inside says "Blame your predecessor!" She does this and gets off the hook.

About half a year later, the organization is experiencing a huge dip in volunteer recruitment numbers, combined with a lot of volunteers resigning. The manager quickly opens the second envelope. The message reads, "Reorganize, Recognise and Rebuild!" This she does, and the volunteering numbers quickly rebound and improve.

Three months later, at her next crisis, she opens the third envelope.

The message inside says....

"Prepare three envelopes".

Submitted on 05 March 2011 by DJ Cronin, Blogger, Speaking out on Volunteer Management! Blog, Australia



Ok...heres one more adapted oldie

A Volunteer Manager was walking along a Florida beach and stumbled across an old lamp. He picked it up and rubbed it, and out popped a genie.

The genie said, "OK, You released me from the lamp, blah blah blah. This is the fourth time this month, and I'm getting a little sick of these wishes so you can forget about three... You only get one wish!"

The volunteer manager sat, and thought about it for a while and said, "I've always wanted to go to Hawaii, but I'm scared to fly, and I get very seasick. Could you build me a bridge to Hawaii so I can drive over there to visit?"

The genie laughed and said, "That's impossible!!!

Think of the logistics of that! How would the supports ever reach the bottom of the Pacific? Think of how much concrete -- how much steel!! No, think of another wish."

The man said, "OK, I'll try to think of a really good wish."

Finally, he said, "I've been a volunteer manager for four years...So, I wish that I could be paid like other managers and that my sector actually considered itself as a profession and that we had a strong national association for volunteer managers and that there was more dialogue on leadership and more debate at national conferences on our profession."

The genie said, "Do you want that bridge to be two lanes or four?"

Submitted on 05 March 2011 by Elizabeth Ellis, Consultant, Writer, Trainer, , Wisconsin, USA

In 1998, after years of diligent hard work raising four kids as a single Mom, relocating the US from a foreign country, and successful completion of my formal education, self designed BA in Nonprofit Administration & Resource Development, I'd landed my first full time position as a Volunteer Coordination. I was so excited and delighted to have found a meaningful profession that would fully incorporate my passion and skills in resource management. I knew my Mom would be proud to hear of my new position so I gave her a call. After a few minutes sharing my excitement, she asked what the title of my position was. I proudly announced, "Volunteer Coordinator". With some hesitation she replied, "Honey, don't you think you should get a paying job with all those children?"

Submitted on 04 March 2011 by anonymous, Volunteer Coordinator, ND, USA

This is a great way to break up the boredom of work - at times!

Submitted on 04 March 2011 by anonymous, Chief, Vol. Svc., VT, USA

:.) What do you mean, volunteers are free? They're priceless!

Submitted on 4 March 2011 by Mirna Sherberg, Executive Assistant/Volunteer, Coordinator, Fresno Philharmonic, Fresno, CA

:.) "Ever The Professional" (having fun at Halloween J)



Submitted on 02 March 2011 by Deirdre Araujo, Manager Volunteer Services, Exploratorium, San Francisco, USA

:.) I have a copy of *New Yorker* cartoonist Michael Maslin's dog sketch on the door of my office – which all volunteers see. It says: "Just seeing you happy is my reward – I'm not in it for the biscuits."

Submitted on 02 March 2011 by Nicolette Winner, HandsOn West Central Ohio Director, Council on Rural Services, Piqua, OH, USA

:) Top Ten Reasons to Hook up with Your Local HandsOn Action Center:

10. When you stay home, you get too many telemarketing calls.
9. Your family could use a break from you.
8. It's hard to win a game of solitaire.
7. Community service... It's not just for hardened criminals on parole anymore.
6. What else are you going to do with a liberal arts degree?
5. Because you'd like your resume to be at least 3/4 of a page.
4. You can get that warm fuzzy feeling without any morning-after regrets.
3. Because you need more friends than the cast of "The Real World".
2. Meet people from exotic places like Germantown, Yellow Springs and Farmersville.

And the number one reason?

1. Volunteers do it for free!

We used this list at a local rock concert venue on T-shirts, so obviously you might want to tailor it to your own crowd.

Submitted on 01 March 2011 by Jayne Cravens, Consultant, , Portland, Oregon, USA

I have been collecting quotes regarding volunteering and community service from various TV shows. I know there are TONS of hilarious quotes from the Simpson's regarding volunteering and community service, but I can never find them online, and I forget to write them down.

Here is what I've compiled so far from The Simpson's and various other shows:

From The Simpson's:

:) **Homer:** Community service? But that's work! What about jail?
Judge: Community service!

Homer: No, I want to go to jail. Free food, tear drop tattoos, library books that come to you. I'll serve anything but the community!

Season 21, Episode 18: "Chief of Hearts"

:) **Homer:** Marge, there's an empty spot I've always had inside me. I tried to fill it with family, religion, community service, but those were dead ends! I think this chair is the answer.

Season 18 Episode 19, "Crook and Ladder" is when Homer and the guys become volunteer fire fighters. It's hilarious.

From The Vampire Diaries:

:) **Pageant contestant:** Just because my DUI made my community service mandatory doesn't mean I was any less committed.

From Seinfeld:

:) **Jerry:** Volunteer work. See, that's what I love about the holiday season. That's the true spirit of Christmas. People being helped by people other than me. That makes me feel good inside.

The entire episode of "Jerry and the Old Man", where Jerry and his friends volunteer to help senior citizens, is priceless. There are clips on YouTube.

From Scrubs:

:) **Dr. Kelso:** Attention surgical residents still hoping to have a job next year. The annual blood drive is upon us, and I will be needing a volunteer to greet our donors as the hospital's new mascot, the friendly hypodermic needle, Mr. Prick... We'll probably change the name.

From 30 Rock

:) **Tracy:** I just can't turn down community service. 'Cause if I do, that judge will make me join the Coast Guard.

From The Office:

:) **Dwight:** I'm a volunteer sheriff's deputy on the weekends, and you cannot screw around there. It's sort of one of the rules.

:) **Dwight:** Volunteerism is important. Every weekend I volunteer at the local animal shelter, they need a lot of help down there. Last Sunday I had to put down 150 pets by myself.

:) **Dwight:** And I did not become a Lackawanna County volunteer sheriff's deputy to make friends. And by the way, I haven't.

:) **Dwight:** As a volunteer sheriff I can look up anyone's psychiatric records or surgical histories. Yeast infections... there are a huge number of yeast infections in this county. Probably because we're downriver from that old bread factory...

:) **Ryan:** Jim. I wanted to apologize... for how I treated you last year. I lost sight of myself and now that I've quit the rat race I've realized there's so much more to life than being the youngest VP in the company's history. I've even started volunteering. Giving back to the community.

Jim: Well that's great. You're talking about your court-ordered community service?

Ryan: I don't need a judge to tell me to keep my community clean.

Jim: But he did, right?

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