

The Tail Twister: Function and Duties

Duties

The duties of the tail twister are to promote harmony, good fellowship and enthusiasm at club meetings by appropriate stunts and games and a judicious imposition of fines on club members. New Lions may be inhibited and shy and the tail twister can suitably introduce them and make them feel that they are valued members of the club.

Fining members is a key element of a successful tail twister. But fining for funds only and not for fun is a mistake. Where possible, a good tail twister should fine every member at least once every second meeting. It might be considered in poor taste to have a member continually overlooked in fining because that Lion may well come to feel that he or she is not really part of the club. By fining, the tail twister involves everyone and assists the president in general management of the meeting.

One of the primary tasks of the tail twister is to extract humor and laughter with jokes, puns, witticisms, mimicry, acting, singing or dramatizations. Laughter is universal, but the tail twister's rostrum should never be used for insulting anyone. A tail twister who levies fines on members in order to satisfy personal grudges will soon fall from grace. Care need be taken, however, in promoting humor because vulgar jokes are not compatible with the ethics of Lions Clubs International.

Advice on Fining

The tail twister may not be fined, except by unanimous vote of all members present. All money collected by the tail twister should be turned over immediately to the club treasurer for deposit in the club account. How may the tail twister go about fining members during club meetings?

- Move about the meeting room.
- Stand behind the member being fined.
- Make all eyes follow you. Motion is variety. It is lively. Standing still and talking is monotonous.
- It is important never to embarrass anyone. Irregular attenders need a warm welcome, not attention to their oversights. It is best to fine for something other than attendance.
- Mention, and welcome, visitors, but fine only Lions.
- If district officers are present, you may fine them if you wish, but never heavily. Check with them first. They will cooperate by giving a reason to fine them.

An observant tail twister can usually find enough reason for assessing fines without fining for imaginary offenses. Therefore, it is important for the tail twister to determine, for example, who has recently become engaged, bought a new car, become a parent, received a promotion at work, or other noteworthy achievement.

Ideas for Fining

Reasons, or excuses, for levying good-natured fines are endless. Following are just a few examples of how a tail twister can raise these special funds for the club or just promote fun and camaraderie at meetings.

1. The tail twister can enliven roll calls or “round table introductions” by insisting that the members have a slogan descriptive of their business or profession, fining those who have none, or those whose slogans are too long or exaggerated. Disturbances can be minimized by fining those who are too noisy or inattentive during the introductions or roll call or while announcements are being made.
2. All members might be fined if one of them has cause to celebrate. The one celebrating would not have to pay a fine.
3. Have a joke-telling contest and give a prize for the best joke. The tail twister may also call on one or more Lions to give a spontaneous joke on-the-spot. Fines can be levied according to the response of those in attendance.
4. Special presentations to members can brighten the meeting. For example, give a hairbrush to a bald-headed member, a set of curlers to a curly-headed member, a gardening tool to a gardener...
5. If the tail twister knows the middle names of the members, they can be called upon by those names. Most will be slow to respond, and can be duly fined.
6. The tail twister may decide upon a “uniform of the day” for the next meeting. Bow ties may be required, or unmatched socks, rope instead of a belt, etc. Lions not attired properly are liable to a fine.
7. The tail twister gives a slip of paper to the president. On it is written a word. The first Lion to use that word in addressing the meeting will be fined.
8. During meetings, a Lion may be called upon to stand and formally introduce another Lion named by the tail twister. Any mistake will earn a fine.
9. Fine members who arrive late---or too early---for a meeting.
10. Fine for the use of such words as mister, miss, or mrs. instead of “Lion.”
11. For quick, impromptu fining, pose riddles or ask tricky questions. Go right down the tables or move around with the questions. Fine for wrong answers.
12. Finally, use your imagination in handing out fines and, in so doing, enliven the meetings.

Advice on Stunts

Stunts are important at every club meeting and, to be most effective, the tail twister should have a different stunt or gimmick at every meeting, otherwise, there may be a lessening of enthusiasm among the members. With stunts, tail twisters have recognized a fundamental element of human nature---that work done in the guise of fun is many times more enjoyable. In fact, some of the most meaningful things Lions have done were accomplished in the spirit of fun and good times. But tail twisters need to use discretion and consider the safety and feelings of others when employing these diversions.

Some Additional Suggestions for Stunts

The following stunts are only examples to show tail twisters that their imaginations are their best resources. Test your own imagination.

1. Passing the buck. Inspired by the tail twister, the president begins by calling on the program chairman to conduct the program. The chairman then claims to have been a bit busy and has

arranged for another member to take over. This Lion rises and claims illness prevented organization of a program, but that another member was assigned to take over. That Lion gives yet another excuse for not arranging the program, but has passed the baton to someone else.

This continues until it is apparent that nobody has actually organized the program. The chairman calls a halt and then announces that a program really has been arranged.

2. Thread on the coat. The tail twister will wear this thread. When club members and guests arrive, they notice this thread protruding through a seam on the back or shoulder of the suit or jacket. Many will instinctively try to remove it, but the thread can't be picked off or even snapped off. As it is pulled, it only grows longer and longer as if the whole garment is unraveling. The tail twister, of course, has a spool of thread in an inside pocket of the suit or jacket, having threaded the end through the seam, then removed the needle and left an inch or so of the thread hanging. As new guests arrive, the tail twister cuts the long, dangling thread back so that only a short, inviting strand remains. The earlier guests will watch with amusement as each newcomer yields to the temptation and tries to remove the thread.
3. The tail twister should wear something distinctive such as a large tail twister's badge. He or she may even wish to blow a whistle or add something like horns to the "fine bank."
4. Fines may be paid in any number of ways. Some tail twisters direct that each member pays the fine of the member to the right (or left). This will generate more fines since members will do more things wrong if they don't have to pay the fines themselves. A word of caution: Set a limit on the fines so it doesn't get out of hand. This amusing manner of fining can be conducted during meetings at specific intervals.
5. When you have a door prize, members can have the option to either pay the regular fines or pay double with the chance to win the prize.
6. There is also a way for the tail twister to raise money for a worthwhile cause and have members learn more about one another. When a Lion begins providing a self-introduction when the tail twister comes around, he or she must continue talking until the tail twister says to stop. The monologue may be about the member's personal or business life, hobbies, interests, or anything else, but the introduction must continue. If the Lion runs out of words, the tail twister levels the fine. If the member, however, does an exceptional job, the tail twister may pay the fine or present that Lion with a mock prize as the best talker in the club.