DUTIES OF A TAIL-TWISTER

1. **INSTIL ENTHUSIASM & GOOD FELLOWSHIP AT MEETINGS.** You are probably aware that one of the main reasons we lose members is long boring meetings. It is, of course, up to the president and speaker chair to make sure the meetings are productive and interesting. However, the tail twister is also responsible to make sure every meeting is interesting and fun. Below are several suggested activities for adding enthusiasm and good fellowship at meetings. I am sure you will come up with even more activities for your club. We also lose members because of lack of involvement and lack of recognition and again, we will see that the tail-twister can provide solutions to these situations.

   a. **Have a mystery greeter.** After the meeting starts – have the mystery greeter announce who did not shake his/her hand. Anyone named is fined. For a variation on the mystery greeter – appoint two of them. It is fun when they each name the other lion for not shaking their hand.
   b. **Make sure your lions do not always sit together.** There are several ways to overcome this problem:
      - simply fine members who always sit together,
      - use a deck of cards and have lions select a card as they come into the room. Have signs on the tables and all the “aces” sit together at this table, all the “twos” here, etc.
      - another way is to have numbered cards at each place and have lions draw a number on the way in.
   c. **Answering a cell phone, texting, or talking during a meeting is poor manners – yet there are lots of lions who do it.** You can fine them. Don’t make a big deal about being rude – just fine them for interrupting the meeting.
   d. **Recall the definition of harmony – to fit together – to make sure all lions, especially new lions, feel part of the club.** The tail-twister has a great opportunity to get a new lion or quiet person involved. Once in a while, “deputize” that lion for the evening and have him/her assist you with the running of an activity, the collection of fines, etc.

2. **PROMOTE HARMONY.** Other than in the musical sense, “harmony” is defined as “agreement, concord, to fit together”. The job of the tail-twister is to make sure all lions feel they are part of the club. Some suggestions….
   a. **Have a mystery greeter.** After the meeting starts – have the mystery greeter announce who did not shake his/her hand. Anyone named is fined. For a variation on the mystery greeter – appoint two of them. It is fun when they each name the other lion for not shaking their hand.
   b. **Make sure your lions do not always sit together.** There are several ways to overcome this problem:
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      - another way is to have numbered cards at each place and have lions draw a number on the way in.
   c. **Answering a cell phone, texting, or talking during a meeting is poor manners – yet there are lots of lions who do it.** You can fine them. Don’t make a big deal about being rude – just fine them for interrupting the meeting.
   d. **Sometimes there are legitimate reasons for late arrivals – your job as tail-twister is to make light of it – perhaps suggest who are we going to talk about now??**. However, even a small fine might make them think twice before they do it again.
   e. **Recall the definition of harmony – to fit together – to make sure all lions, especially new lions, feel part of the club.** The tail-twister has a great opportunity to get a new lion or quiet person involved. Once in a while, “deputize” that lion for the evening and have him/her assist you with the running of an activity, the collection of fines, etc.

3. **REWARD EXTRA EFFORT.** The tail-twister has the unique opportunity to reward extra effort by club members. For example, our club was doing a community BBQ and a lady came along and asked how much the hot dogs were. She was obviously not well off – and opened her purse and started counting out the change – a dime, a quarter, …she was not sure if she had enough. One of our lions reached into her purse, took out the $4, put it in the till, and told the lady to put her money away as the hot dog and drink was her treat.

   As tail-twister, at our next meeting, I gave that lion a fine-exemption card for the next 6 months - a reward for extra effort!

   Fine exemption cards are easy to print off on your computer.

   A variation on the fine exemption card is a pass-it-on card. This card allows the lion getting the fine to pass the fine on to any other lion in the room (tail-twister included!).

   Also, keep an eye on the local papers for any lion recognized in the paper. You have the opportunity to share this information with your fellow lions.

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Gravenhurst Lions Club
FINE EXEMPTION CARD
THIS CARD WILL EXEMPT THIS LION FROM ANY FINE IMPOSED BY THE TAIL TWISTER AT A GRAVENHURST LIONS CLUB MEETING. CARD MUST BE SURRENDERED TO THE TAIL TWISTER TO OBTAIN EXEMPTION.
Expires (Date) , 2014
4. IMPOSE AND COLLECT FINES. At some of the clubs I have been to, the tail-twister simply walks around and collects money - in some cases, without even giving a reason for a fine. The job of the tail-twister is **not to collect money** - it is to install enthusiasm and good fellowship, promote harmony and reward special effort. It is a bonus if some funds are added to the administration account at the end of the meeting – but contrary to popular belief, that is not the main purpose of a tail-twister.

If your Club has a maximum fine amount – know what it is. However, you can also leave it up to the lion to put in what they feel the infraction is worth. If questioned how much they should pay – just reply “from 5 cents to a dollar, whatever you feel that infraction is worth.”

5. POSSIBLY BE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS. It is up to your club if the tail-twister, along with the lion tamer, are members of the Board Of Directors for the club. This is optional according to LCI. The position of tail twister may be an appointed or elected position. He/she may do the job for one year – or several years – again, it is up to the club.

**PLAN AHEAD.**

Like a good club president who plans the agenda before the meeting, an effective tail-twister must also plan activities before the meetings. The list of things you can do is only limited by your imagination. Some of the items you may wish to obtain before the meetings are: Calendar, Lists of Birthdays/Anniversaries/Date of Joining, Personal Info sheet, Quizzes, Playing Cards, Dice, Projector & screen, Game Board, Small Bottles with lids and Paper & Pens. You will also require a supply of prizes.

We will discuss each of these items in more detail as we discuss the activities below.

**ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS**

**CALENDAR.** Make up a calendar for the year showing every club meeting date.

- On this calendar note the various holidays/special days during the year (Valentines, April Fools Day, St Patrick's Day, Halloween, etc.) Use a theme for that evening based on the particular event. For example, on St Patricks Day, everyone must address each other in an Irish manner, such as O’President, O’John, O’Mary, etc. - but if they wear green, they are exempt from fines. At Valentines – fine them if they did not wear red. At Easter – purchase and put out small eggs at each place setting – then fine any member who eats them before the meeting is over!

- Obtain the dates for the District Officer visits and add these to the calendar.

- List all the birthdays and anniversaries of your club membership on the calendar. You do not necessarily have to fine the member who is having a birthday or an anniversary. Why not take a different approach – and give them a dollar store gift – give them a fine exemption card for the next meeting, have someone next to them pay their fine. Another twist on the birthday is to ask the lion and save being fined to name one famous person (other than him or herself) who has a birthday on the same day. The list of birthdays of famous people can be found on the internet.

- Your club secretary can obtain from MyLCI a list of the date of joining for club members. If a lion is celebrating a special anniversary (5 yrs, 20 yrs, etc.), celebrate this fact.

- Tail-twister activities can run from a few minutes to 20 minutes in length. Plan two activities for the evening – one long and one short – and check with the president to see how much time you will have and select the appropriate activity.

**QUIZZES**

- Make up a **personal info sheet** at the beginning of the year and have each lion complete it. Questions such as … Where did you go to school? What is your favourite hobby? What is the most exciting thing that ever happened to you? What is the most embarrassing thing that ever happened to you? If given a second chance, what career path would you take? What was your nick name in school? Why did you join lions? etc., then make up a quiz based on this information. For example… “Who graduated from school and taught kindergarten for 4 years?” “Who is our deputy mayor?”

- The quiz questions can be about local things. For example “What is the date on our town hall building? court house, etc.” “If driving north on highway (x) and you drive through (town name), what is the next town you would come to?” “Who is our deputy mayor?”
ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS – QUIZZES - Cont’d

• Questions on lionism are interesting and also are a good way to get orientation done at the club level. Questions such as “When did LCIF form?” “What is our club’s charter date?” “When did our district form?” “Where is this years international convention?” “Who is our zone chairperson?” “What club does he/she belong to?”… The Lion magazine is a good place to find current information.

• There are hundreds of web sites with general brain teasers, questions, lists of “most common”, and so on. These are fun and informative.

• Trivial Pursuit cards are a good quiz source.

PLAYING CARDS.

• Have the lions “buy” a card – then from a second deck, draw the “winners”. The winners get a Dollar Store/yard sale prize.

• Lions pay 10x the face card value that they draw (e.g. if a 6 is drawn they owe 60 cents.). If a jack is drawn the next male on the right pays and if a queen is drawn the next female on the right pays. If a king is drawn – the president pays. If a joker is drawn, the tail-twister pays. (you might want to remove all but one of the jokers!).

• Sell 2 cards to each lion – and have a prize for the highest and a prize for the lowest value of the two cards.

DICE

• As with the previous game using cards – have each lion roll 4 dice (after they, of course, pay for the privilege) and write down their total score. At the end the lion with the lowest score and the lion with the highest score both win. Ties re-roll.

• Lions are given three dice and pay for the chance to get 2 or 3 of a kind on one shake. If they do, they win a prize.

PROJECTOR AND SCREEN.

• Get baby, school or wedding pictures from as many lions as possible. Scan them, number them, and shown them on a screen. The lions each pay a dollar and get a list with numbers on it. They have to write who they think are in the pictures beside the appropriate number.

• Take head shots of your lions and then just show the eyes – again they pay and get a sheet with numbers and they write down the names if they can recognize the “eyes” by the appropriate number.

• Obtain pictures of some of the lions camps, projects, club houses, etc in your area and again have a contest to see who can correctly name the most locations. Fun and informative.

“TOSS” GAMES. For example – a coin toss into a hat, bean bag toss, make a paper airplane and throw it into a basket, Nerf ball and basketball hoop, etc. Prize can be their entry fee back or a dollar store prize.

RACE GAME BOARD. Make up a board with squares and numbers on it as shown. A sheet of bristol board, the back sheet of a flip chart pad, or a piece of a large cardboard box will do. Obtain 6 small objects (small stuffed or plastic toys from the dollar store) as race pieces. Using a post-it-note have each lion pay a dollar and pick a number from 1 to 6. Write the number on a post it note and place in front of the lion. Have 4 lions each roll a dice and call out the number they get. Move the corresponding object on the board the correct number of squares based on the numbers that come up on the dice. For example, if two 3s and one 5 and one 6 are rolled, then move the 3 object two squares and the 5 and 6 object one square each. When an object gets to the end, that “number” is the winner. Any lion with that number gets a prize.
GUESS THE JAR. Have 10 or so small clear glass jars with lids and numbers on them.

- fill each jar with a dry white material found around the house (salt, flour, baking soda, baking powder, granulated sugar, icing sugar, dishwashing powder, laundry soap, ice melter, etc.) and pass them around. The lions have to guess what is in the jar, without taking off the lid. Sell them the score sheet and rent them the pen so they can write down the jar number and their guess. The winner is the one with the most correct answers. Fine anyone who names the item out loud as they are playing.

- a variation is to put cotton balls in each jar and add a few drops of various household liquids (WD-40, turpentine, rum, shoe polish, paint, whiskey, beer, vinegar, witch hazel, dish soap, vanilla, etc…) this time they can remove the lid, smell the contents and write down the jar content name by the appropriate number on the sheet.

- fill a jar with candies, peanuts, can tabs, etc. Count them as you are putting them in – and then have a contest for lions to guess how many are in the jar. Charge them a dollar to enter the contest. The lion that guesses closest without going over, wins the jar and its contents.

SILVERWARE. Remove the silverware from the table – and “sell” it back to the lions as the meal is served.

WORD OR UNIFORM OF THE MONTH. Have a word of the month listed in the bulletin or on the club website. Anyone who uses the word during a meeting that month is fined. A variation is to have a uniform of the day for a particular meeting (e.g. must wear blue, have brown pants, mismatched socks, etc.) And anyone not conforming is fined.

NO FIRST NAMES NIGHT. Set the rule at the beginning of the evening that no first names can be used. Anyone using a first name is fined.

LEFT, RIGHT AND OVER. Have a small, wrapped, unbreakable gift. Type up a story about a club activity. As you read the story, when the word “left” is used, the gift is passed to the left, when the word “right” is used, the gift is passed right and when “over” is mentioned, the gift is passed over to the next table. At the end of the story, the person holding the gift gets to keep it. Fine when the member misses a cue.

PRIZE SUGGESTIONS. Prizes are an important part of the tail-twisters program. Hide the prizes in paper bags and number the bags. The “winners” then select a bag number.

- You can tell them you obtained corporate sponsors and some bags contain really valuable items such as steaks (wooden stakes), a bottle of rum (a miniature bottle), a lap top computer (a calculator from the dollar store), a new car (miniature), an electrical generator (a battery), unprocessed wine (grape juice), a washer & drier (sponge and dish towel), etc.

- You can buy prizes from a Dollar Store or at garage sales and keep within a reasonable budget.

- Fine exemption or pass-it-on cards can be easily printed on a computer and make great prizes.

- Keep an eye open for any jacket, notebook, sweater, pen, etc. left at a meeting and present the lion with the item at the next meeting.

- Items that make good prizes are also available from the LCI catalogue.

Keep the prizes in a shopping bag or briefcase and carry them with you to each meeting – you will never know when you will need them.

AVOID. The position of tail-twister is not new and is almost as old as Lionism. For years the tail-twister would fine if you did not have a lions pin on, if your name tag was crooked, if you didn’t know the middle name of the lion next to you, if you did not address someone as “lion so and so”, etc. Some of these are OK – but they can be repetitive if used at every meeting. We have the opportunity to instil enthusiasm and fellowship at our meetings in the various activities mentioned above and with the numerous ideas I am sure you can come up with. However, I caution you, some of the tail-twister activities done in the past – must not be done now!

Avoid …

- any activity that would be considered dangerous. For example: holding someone upside down and shaking the money out of their pockets, hold a stunt such as standing on one leg, standing on a chair, etc.

- making personal comments about a person. Never make fun of a person’s accent, appearance, etc.

- tie cutting (unless it is pre-arranged). Ties are expensive!

- any situation which might embarrass someone – such as asking them to spell difficult words, wear a bib, eat baby food, wear a dunce cap, sit in a corner, etc..
Avoid…Cont’d.

• any religious, ethnic or political comments or activities
• telling jokes which are in poor taste. If you wouldn’t tell it to your grandmother, don’t tell it at the meeting.
• walking around with a fine box and just collect money.
• any arguments – if someone does not want to pay (or cannot afford to pay) then just walk away and go to the next person.

I have seen all of the above done at meetings – and do not feel there is a place for any of them in today’s lions club.

How would you feel if you went to a lions meeting, and it was the same speaker as the last meeting? The same applies to the tail-twister activities. Even if an activity was wildly successful - do not repeat it during that lions year.

As mentioned before, set up your calendar and have a different activity for each meeting.

CAN THE TAIL-TWISTER BE FINED?

Only by unanimous vote of all lions present. That, of course, includes the tail-twister.

WHEN IS BEST TIME TO DO THE ACTIVITY?

Check with the president before the meeting. It may be before the meal or after.

HOW LONG SHOULD THE ACTIVITY TAKE?

2 to 10 minutes. Check with the president before the meeting. As mentioned before, have two activities planned - a short one and a longer one.

CAN GUESTS BE FINED?

Non-lions – NO! Lions – maybe - suggest you have a motion to make them honourary club members for the night - then then can be fined.

SHOULD A TAIL-TWISTER INTERRUPT DURING A SPEECH?

No, if it is a non-lion - they will just think you are rude.

Use discretion at all other times.