



LIONS TAIL-TWISTER

BEST JOB IN LIONS

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WHAT IS A TAIL TWISTER

- **Official Lions International Officer Position**
- **Instill enthusiasm and good fellowship at meetings**
- **Best and most fun job in Lions**
- **Keeps meetings interesting and fun**
- **Unique to each club**



Tail Twister Duties

- Promotes harmony, good fellowship, and enthusiasm in the meetings
 - Through appropriate stunts
 - Games
 - Judicious imposition of fines on club members
- No fine shall exceed an amount fixed by the board of directors of the club, and no member shall be fined more than twice at any meeting
- Tail Twister may not be fined except by the unanimous vote of all members present
- All monies collected turned over to the treasurer for Admin fund
- Qualifications for the job: Someone who is outgoing with a good sense of humor, who's not afraid to get up in front of people, and sometimes make a fool out of yourself



History of the Tail Twister

- Concept predates Lions clubs by two centuries; started in England
- Lions perfected the practice of club hijinks
- Had its origins in the pep committees formed at the chartering of the downtown Detroit club in 1920
 - Committees then shifted down to a “single, energetic personality,” “One fellow who had been born on a farm said that what used to be done; when a cow refused to go through the gate, someone would grab her by the tail and twist. We all laughed, but one of the boys said, ‘Why isn’t that a good name?’”
 - International board, issued an edict against use of the low-comedy term and the word “Spizzerinkter was used with Tail Twister
- Lions preferred Tail Twister and somewhere along the line, Spizzerinkter was dropped



Basic Guidelines

- Keep club meetings lively and fun for all
- Maintain the good-natured informality
- Come up with a bags of tricks
- Primary goal is not to raise money
- Never intentionally embarrass a fellow Lion or guest
- Prevent meetings from becoming boring
- Builds camaraderie -- puts all members on same level no matter age, gender, or job
- Can actually make or break a meeting

THE TAIL TWISTER IS THE ONE WHO IS REMEMBERED

Do's

- Plan ahead for your meeting
- Limit Twisting time to 10 mins
- Extract humor & laughter with jokes, puns, witticisms, mimicry, acting, singing, etc.
- Move about the room, motion is lively
- BE-enthusiastic-smile-laugh
- Mention & welcome visitors
- Have a different Tail Twist activity for each meeting
- Inspire & promote fun in others
- Speak loudly & clearly
- Be creative and original in your planning
- Have a creative “bank” to collect money; don’t just put in cup or pocket
- Keep fines reasonable (typically 25 cents to one dollar)
- Be creative, professional, polite, have FUN
- Have a “no change” policy
- Be the center of attention, command respect – you are the “class clown”
- Use position to keep meetings interesting, on-track, and maintain order
- Know your crowd-use diplomacy



DON'Ts

- Don't insult anyone
- Don't use vulgar jokes or language
- Don't make anything personal
- Don't fine guests
- Don't just tell a joke
- Don't interrupt the "Speaker, President, or ongoing program"
- Don't take yourself too seriously
- Don't always pick on the same people
- Don't be crude,
- Don't make anyone feel "uncomfortable"
- Don't make anyone feel "unwelcome"

A GOOD TAIL TWISTER KNOWS when to stop & not push his/her luck too far!



FINING



- LCI says: Fining members is a key element of a successful Tail Twister
- Fine for fun; **not to make money**
- Fine every member at least once every second meeting
 - Poor taste to have a member continually overlooked in fining because that Lion may feel that he/she is not really part of the club
- Fining involves everyone and assists the president in general management of the meeting
- Use discretion, and diplomacy when it comes to fining
- Know your own club and what principal would apply best to your situation
 - You could have everyone pay an “admission fee” to play the game, watch the skit, etc. You collect the funds without the negative connotation.
 - Another version of fining is to call it “donation”. Go about the room with your Tail Twisting time, you collect donations from people instead of fines.
 - Some clubs like the history and tradition of fines and expect to get “fined”
 - Mix it up and rotate them just to keep your club members on their toes

“Standards” for Fining

- **Members who:** arrive late, or too early, do not have on a vest, name tag, Lions pin, etc. Fail to use “Lion” before every name when talking. Talk too long giving a report, etc.
- **2. Hair**—too long, too short, wrong color, too curly, too bald, etc.
- **3. Uniform of the Day** at your next meeting: mis-matched socks, rope instead of a belt, specific color hat, shirt, etc. Donation from all for playing, winner doesn’t pay.
- **4. Wear your “wildest”:** one month hat, next month T-shirt & jeans, next month sweater, ugly sweater contest, backwards clothes day, etc. Donation from all for playing.
- **5. Cause to celebrate:** If one or two have cause, get up and tell about it- new grandkid, anniversary, etc.; fine everyone who didn’t have a cause.
- **6. During meetings,** a Lion may be called upon by the Tail Twister to stand and formally introduce another Lion (picked by the Tail Twister). Any mistake in the introduction, fined!
- **7. 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.
- **8. Magic Word:** Give a slip of paper to the club president. On it is written a word. The first Lion to use that word during the meeting will be fined.
- **9. Tail Twister** directs that each member pay the fine of the member to the right (or left). Usually this will generate more fines or activity since the person does not have to pay their own fine. (may need to set limits)
- **10. Have the meal** served with no flatware on the table. Lions pay for their silverware if they want it to eat, or no drink cup, etc.
- **11. President:** for starting the meeting late, early, failing to laugh at a member's joke, closing the meeting without the proper motion.
- **12. Secretary:** for not taking good notes, for falling behind, etc.
- **13. Treasurer:** for counting money during the meeting, for not giving a report.
- **14. Members:** for poor posture, too erect, too quiet, too boisterous, too alert, daydreaming.



CALENDAR

- Plan ahead. Get out calendar and highlight club meeting dates. Indicate which club meetings have a special program, i.e.: charter anniversary night, Christmas Party, installation of new officers, etc.
- Look at possibilities tying your Tail Twisting activity to a calendar event
 - * The New Year
 - * Valentine's Day
 - * President's Day
 - * St. Patrick's Day
 - * Spring
 - * April Fool's Day
 - * Easter
 - * Spring Break
 - * Mother's Day
 - * Father's Day
 - * And any others you can think of.
 - * Canada Day
 - * Fourth of July
 - * Summer
 - * Back to School
 - * Labor Day
 - * Thanksgiving
 - * Halloween
 - * Veteran's Day
 - * Christmas
 - * Memorial Day

Good Thoughts



- Speak Loudly and Slowly
 - Members need to be able to hear and to understand
- Sell raffle tickets to earn some money to buy prizes; excess money goes to admin fund
- Prizes:
 - Go to dollar stores or second-hand shops
 - Buy bottle of spirits/lottery tickets
 - Buy a holiday themed gift
 - Watch for sales
 - Keep a supply of prizes in a plastic tub ensuring you have “interesting” prizes for contests, games, or auction

Games



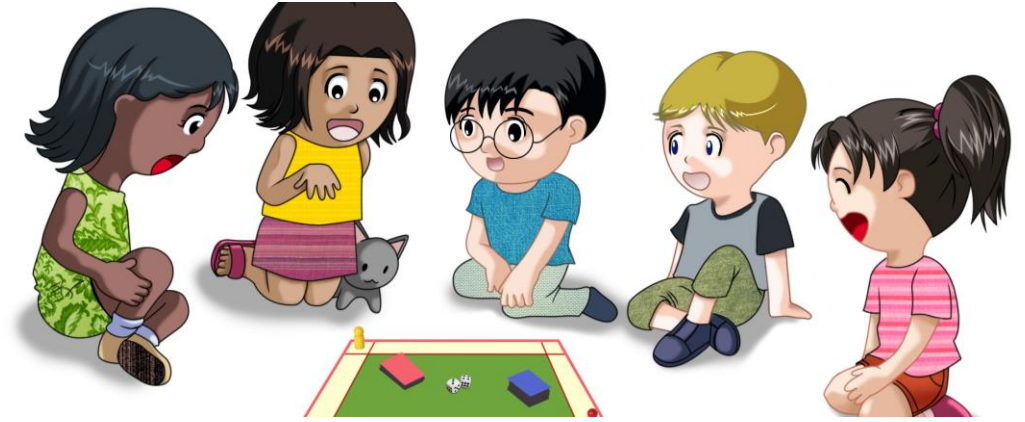
- 1. Tail Twister brings in a cake and places it at the head table and challenges the members to guess the number placed beneath it. Each Lion pays to guess and the closest guess wins the cake. The real drama unfolds when winning Lion tries to cut into the cake. The Tail Twister had a block of wood inside some Styrofoam panels in the shape of a cake and covered it with chocolate icing.
- 2. A stuffed Lion or appropriate item is raffled by the Tail Twister at the first meeting of each month. The highest bidder is awarded the Lion and thereby is fine free for that month. However, they must carry it to every club meeting that month. Failure to bring it results in a fine and if they lose the Lion, they are fined until they recover it.
- 3. Spelling Bee: The Tail Twister invites four or five school children about 11 or 12 years old for a spelling bee with club members. (Alas, Lions seldom win).
- 4. Twenty Questions: Tail Twister sells them paper to write on for a buck, can rent a pen for a quarter. The one with the most questions correct wins a prize.
- 5. Play with games like Trivial Pursuit or Brain Teaser. Collect an admission fee from all before the game begins. Prize for the winner is nice.
- 6. Famous People: Charge members \$1 admission and put names of famous people on pieces of paper or sticky labels. Stick one on the forehead of each person in the room and tell them they have to play 20 questions or ask yes or no questions with other members to figure out whom they are. One question per person, then they have to move on to someone else. This gets everyone one up and talking to each other. Can award a prize to the first one or two who guess their secret identity.
- 7. Easter Egg decorating contest: Tail Twister brings in pre-colored eggs and a supply of craft items to meeting. (colored paper, scissors, glue, sparkles, felt, pens, etc.) Each person “buys” an egg for a buck and was told, the Easter Bunny was running behind, and needed our help to decorate more eggs. He has given me some incentive prizes to encourage creativity. Bring five prizes -- each something to do with Easter, like large chocolate Easter bunnies or chocolate eggs, etc.

Games (Cont)



- 8. Needle in the haystack: Bring a LARGE bowl filled with rice, and a box of two dozen paper clips. At the beginning of the meeting, sell each person a ticket, and draw three numbers. The three “winners” each come up to play the game. Drop the paper clips into the rice and mix it all up well. Blindfold each contestant. The object is for them to sift through the rice and find as many paper clips as possible, without throwing out any rice. Give them 30-60 seconds; any longer and it gets boring.
- 9. Famous Couples: Come up with about 20 sets of famous couples (more if you have a larger membership), preferably with different last names. Separate all the names, and have each person draw a name out of a hat. The object is for each “couple” to find each other. Then, announce that the couples must sit together. This is a good way to break up cliques. “Hint”- keep the couples’ names together until you do a count of all the people in attendance. Then cut the papers to separate the names, so you don’t end up with odd numbers.
- 10. Tabulate the Tabs: Fill a one-liter pop bottle full of pop can tabs (our club collects them for an organization). Stick a label on the bottle that says, “Tabulate the Tabs” and pass it around for everyone to guess at how many were in there. This is a great game, because the amount of tabs is very deceiving. The hardest thing for you is to count them all first. There were over 1,100 tabs in the pop bottle. Charge \$1 per guess and give a prize to the person who guesses closest without going over. You can use any interesting shaped container for this as long as it is clear. You can use candy to guess and give it away as the prize.
- 11. Left, Right and Over: Write a one-page (single spaced) story that continually used the words “left”, “right”, and “over”. (works well with a story that involves giving someone directions) and read the story out loud. Before you start, hand one of the members a wrapped gift. As you read the story, every time you say the word LEFT, the person holding the gift has to pass it to their left. Every time you say the word RIGHT, they pass it to their right, and every time you say the word OVER, they pass it to someone over at the next table or across them in line. This is hilarious, as the gift was being tossed back and forth, and when it’s long tables, someone is usually running down to the other end to pass the gift. (make sure it’s not breakable). At the end of the story, whoever is holding the gift gets to keep it. Don’t read the story too fast, though, and you can emphasize the key words. You can put several gifts in at different locations then there are multiple winners.
- 12. New Year’s Resolutions: Have every member submit their New Year’s resolution as they enter the meeting. Charge a dollar entry fee for the game. The game could then be to match the member to the resolution (hand out paper before they are read) or create a betting game where the members have to decide if the person whose resolution is being read has kept or broken their resolution since Jan 1st .

Games (Cont)



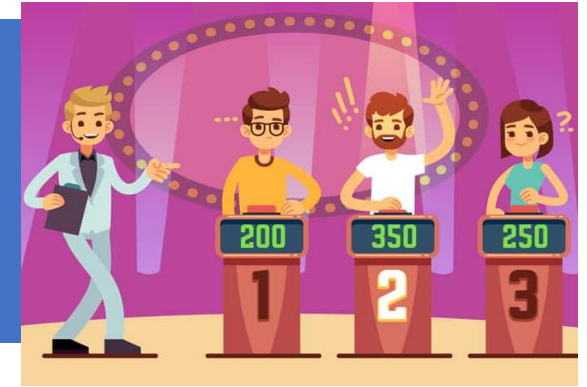
- 13. Word Scramble: Create a word scramble and charge each member a buck for the game sheet. You can create words from a recent Lion's activity or from an article in The Lion Magazine. Prize to the member with the most correct answers.
- 14. Scavenger Hunt: Create a list of items that could be found in the meeting place or in a member's possession. The person that finds the most is charged extra for being so snoopy.
- 15. Membership Test: We all need to review the history of the Lions. Create a test with multiple-choice answer. You can make the choices serious or silly. Charge a buck for the test. Prize to the top-scoring member.
- 16. Mixer Activity. To encourage members to not always sit with the same people create a matching game. The member must sit with the person whose game piece matches theirs. Game pieces could be old greeting cards cut in half or the first and second half of famous quotes. The game pieces would need to be distributed shortly after most people arrive.
- 17. Best Poker Hand: This works best at meetings where members are sitting at different tables. The members seated around a table are asked to pay a dollar for five cards. The cards are dealt to the members. The person who has the highest hand gets their dollar back or a gag prize.

Games (cont)



- 18. Go Fishing: Put an assistant in a large box with a hole cut in the top and have members go fishing. Catches are items applicable to the fisher, if possible. A fish for a fisherman, bra for a lady member, toy car for a car salesman. And finally (last) the assistant is caught, DRESSED SILLY when the President or visiting DG, PDG goes fishing.
- 19. SmellOvision: Charge all \$1 donation for playing. Tail Twister gets 5 small bottles, fill them with cotton & puts some of the following in them: whiskey, Clorox, ammonia, vanilla, kerosene, 12 perfume, sour milk, vinegar, pine oil, smelling salts, rubbing alcohol, peppermint, witch hazel, etc. The bottles are numbered and passed around to the members who write down the bottle number and their best guess. Prize for who gets the most correct.
- 20. Spelling for Dough: Charge a \$1 donation for playing, or \$1 for a sheet of paper. Then each member writes their name at the top of a sheet. Read the following list and have the members spell it out on their paper. Recommend, Accommodate, Vilify, Innuendo, Inoculate, Desiccate, Piccalilli, Supersede, Repellent, Embarrass, Harass, Diminutive, Separate, Picnicking, Irascible, Rhythm, Chinquapin, Rarefy. They are not easy. After the list is read, correct as you give the correct spelling. Each word correctly spelled is worth 10 points. One with highest score wins one-half of entry fee while the rest goes in the kitty.
- 21. SILENCE: After eating, have members be entirely silent for five minutes. They can use signs, make notes, or express themselves anyway silently. No talking. Blow whistle to start and stop the period. Fine those who break the silence.

Games (cont)



- 22. Who Am I: Names of people, real, living, dead, or fictional are printed in advance on small slips of paper. These are pinned to the backs of members as they enter the room and They Are to Find Out Who They Are! This is a sure way to get people mixing.
- 23. With a deck of cards, play “high card”. Tail Twister only draws once, make sure you draw a Queen. Then go around to members with the deck and let them draw to try and beat you. If they do, no fine, if they don’t, pay up!
- 24. Shaking Dice: With an assistant and dice cups and using three dice in each cup. Members get 1 or 2 shakes to try & get 3 of a kind in one shake. If they do, they do not have to pay a fine, otherwise pay up!
- 25. Make a place setting out of construction paper (leaf, heart, clover, Easter egg, etc.) and write a note inside. Let each lion pick one or have them at the place settings around the room. Inside write the amount of the fine for them for the day. Give some no fines to keep it fun.
- 26. With the Quotable Quotes game, write one half of the quote on one sheet of paper and the 2nd half on another sheet of paper. Have members draw the quotes from a hat. The two halves must fine each other. Just a fun game, if the two lions can name the author of their quotes, they do not have to pay the fine.
- 27. Pass out a small piece of paper, have each lion write down something unique about him or herself that most people don’t know. Collect all, read them out loud and have club members guess who wrote it. At the end, pass the hat; all pay a donation for playing.
- 28. Write a word on a large piece of paper. Have members get into pairs. Have one pair at a time come to front and show word to one of them, then show word to members. The lion now has 15 seconds to give clues to other lion to get them to say the word. The team that gets the lion to say the word the quickest does not have to pay a fine. (No help from the membership)

Games (cont)



- 29. Pass out different colored pieces of paper to members at the beginning of the meeting. Members must sit with others having the same color, at least 4 to 6 lions per color. At Tail Twisting time, assign each color an activity to act out by giving them a piece of paper with the activity on it. Don't say it out loud so others can hear. Give them 2-3 minutes to plan how to do the activity. Then have each color act out their activity and other members have to guess what it is. The actors can make sound effect noises, but not speak! When all are done, membership votes on best performance, winners do not have to pay fine, (or get a gag prize), all others do. The following are just some examples of activities you can assign, or think up your own, i.e.: riding on a merry-go-round, a clothes washer, water skiing, sky diving, firemen putting out a fire, driving bumper cars at county fair, driving in a demolition derby, showing a cow/bull at county fair, contestants in a beauty pageant, planting a garden, milking a cow, etc.
- 30. Helen Keller Word Find Game: Charge \$1 admission for the game and then pass out the word find document. Give members six minutes to find as many words as they can. Count to see who has the most correct words, they get a prize!



“Stunts” Ideas

- 1. Membership Survey: In order to help the newsletter editor to do a regular member profiles or get to know a lion, put together a fun survey for the members to fill out at a meeting. There can be questions to do with Lionism, and personal “getting to know” questions. Pass it around, and encourage everyone that they can have fun with the answers if they want (i.e., Why did you decide to join Lions? ‘Because Marie made me!’ is a perfectly acceptable answer, and it makes the writing of the profile a bit more fun. Favorite color? Food? Afterwards, collect the surveys, and charge everyone who did NOT fill it in completely. This survey can also be extremely useful when you have to purchase a gift for a member, or an award or something, because you can include questions like ‘What are your hobbies or interests?’ If, for example, they say something like golf, playing cards, and gardening, you’ve now got some great gift ideas. Also, you can use the information in that question as a resource for guest speakers. Maybe one of the members loves crafts, so plan to have them share their experiences as one of our programs. Another loves golf, have them explain basics of the game and why they like it. It could be sky diving, flying, etc.
- 2. Ask your membership, What happens to a guinea pig’s eyes when he’s picked up by the tail? Many answers include; the eyes bulge, they roll, etc. Every member who gave an answer or incorrect answer was fined. Guinea pig’s have NO tail!

“Stunts” Ideas (Cont)

- 3. Ask your membership, What do you think a Turkey Dinner should cost. You will receive many guesses. The correct answer is about 25 cents, a handful of crushed corn.
- 4. During your meeting, confide that you are behind in your budget and will accept all offerings at the close of the meeting. Ask the members to let their conscience guide them. When the meeting is adjourned, the Tail Twister hurries to the exit, places his bucket in front of him and gets down on his knees, hoping to touch the consciences of his fellow Lions.
- 5. The Tail Twister puts a drawing of an object, item of note, etc., in the club newsletter. Lions failing to identify it at the next meeting are appropriately fined.
- 6. Ask your membership, How many 9's are there between 1 and 100? Only allow them so much time to think about it. Correct answer is 20.
- 7. Don't lose your marbles: Give each member a marble at one meeting and they have to bring it to the next meeting. Those who forget are fined.



“Stunts” Ideas (Cont)

- 8. Silent Greeter: This encourages all members to greet one another at each meeting. Assign a Silent Greeter and everyone who didn't shake his/her hand gets fined.
- 9. Pass out newspapers and have members make a “paper hat” and wear it. Now that they have their thinking hats on, come up with new or profound ideas. Anyone who doesn't gets fined.
- 10. Straw Paper long jump. Collect a donation from all for admission fee. Get drinking straws in paper wrappers and pass them out to each member. Have them tear off one end, blow in the other and try to make their wrapper to fly the furthest. Winner should get a gag prize.
- 11. Anniversary Night: Have all members stand up and announce to all how many years they have been married; fine them for each year married. You will have to be sensitive to the single, widowed or divorced members in attendance and come up with a separate fine for them.
- 12. In March: Everyone is Irish. Direct everyone to address each other with an Irish sounding name during the course of the meeting, such as O' Ralph, Mc-Alice, etc. Anyone caught not doing so is fined 25 cents for each occurrence. You can also have a dress up night where they wear green clothes.
- 13. Prom Night: Ask every member to bring in a picture of themselves from their high school prom. Attach the photo to a glass jar. Ask the members to choose their favorites by dropping the coins or bills into the respective jars. The winner gets half or all the jar's contents and the club gets the rest.





“Stunts” Ideas (Cont)

- 14. Table Setting Ideas: Use the table settings to create tail twisting fines. Using 3 or 4 different seasonal stickers on the placemats and have a different fine amount for each. This could also be done with colored napkins or placemats. Use seasonal table favors at each place setting with a hidden message telling what their fine is, i.e.: plastic Easter eggs, hearts.
- 15. Blame a member for something he/she didn't do; if they object, fine them for NOT doing it. It works if done in good taste.
- 16. Happy Dollar: Allow some time for Lions to contribute a dollar and brag about themselves, their kids, grandkids and so on. It's 30 seconds of advertising for \$1. Be sure to fine them if they go on too long.
- 17. Auctions: have auctions to help raise funds for the club. Don't take too long. Something quick and fun.

“Stunts” Ideas (Cont)



- 18. Salute the Flag: Most clubs use the Pledge of Allegiance as part of their program. The Tail Twister asks each member who wrote it and when. Francis Bellamy wrote it in August 1892, in Rome, New York for a public school celebration. Fine those who fail.
- 19. Historic or Lions Events: The same idea as above, using other events. By using Lions information, you can educate the club as well. The Lions Orientation Guide is a good source of information, as is The Lion magazine.
- 20. News of the Day: Club President appoints a different member each week to stand and ask another member two questions pertaining to the news of the day. If he/she answers both questions, the member asking pays the fine. If he/she can't answer, then they pay the fine.
- 21. Tit for Tat: Arrange with a neighboring club to exchange meetings. The other club comes to your meeting and their entire staff of officers takes over and runs the meeting in their own way. The other club does everything such as bringing their own speaker, stunt man, song leader, etc. When your club visits them, your officers take over in a similar manner. This make for two wonderful meetings as each club tries to outdo the other!
- 22. Fluxed: When a member's birthday falls during the week, serve them a special meal at the meeting or provide them special recognition. Then fine them for taking up too much time at the meeting.

“Stunts” Ideas (Cont)

- 23. WELCOME FRIENDS: When the guests are being introduced, be sure to do it in this manner: “And now, we have a guest from Pequot Lakes, MN, Howard Jones.” All members shout, “Hi Howard!” Be sure to mention their names last in the introduction. Fine members who are too loud too soft, or too annoying.
- 24. Good Old Days: Call on Past President to tell the most important or most amusing thing that happened while they were in office. Lots of fun and good for the club.
- 25. Honor the Veterans: Place members who have been Lion for 10-15-20+ years at the head table. Have them give a short talk, sing a song, or tell a story. This is appreciated, as they feel they are looked up to, as they should be.
- 26. SUGGESTION: occasionally, if a member is clever enough to out-smart-you, and in doing so, provides laughter and entertainment for the other members of the club, pay him out of the Tail Twister pot, or you pay in instead of that member.
- 27. If you weigh more/less than on your driver’s license, pay a donation. If someone claims it is right on or correct, must show their drivers license as proof. What color is Bald on a driver’s license?
- 28. If a member’s picture was in the local paper and they did not mention that they were a Lion in the article, collect a donation.





“Stunts” Ideas (Cont)

- 29. If a member goes on a trip and does not send a post card to the club.. Donate!
- 30. Cut out news articles from the paper. At the club meeting, read the article out loud and insert members names instead of those listed in the article.
- 31. Auction: a “monthly” Pass It On card. A card that allows the holder of the card to pass a fine on to anyone he chooses in the club.
- 32. Special Presentations to members: This always brightens the meeting, a hairbrush to a bald headed member, gardening tool to a gardener, etc.
- 33. Special Recognition: If any member has: their picture in the paper, gets married, good golf score, new car, anniversary, promotion at job, business trip, birth in family, tales from fishing trips, new home, or an important announcement. The Tail Twister should always recognize these things to the entire membership. Get donations accordingly to the event.
- 34. Introductions: As they are seated at the dinner table, each person must introduce the one sitting on their left side in one minute. This gives them three minutes to find out all about the person and then introduce them to the group when called upon.
- 35. Mixed Company: As each person enters the meeting room, they are given a number at random. Before the meeting starts, numbers are drawn, and you sit with the pair numbers as drawn for the evening. Example: 1&2 sit together, 3&4 sit together, etc.



“Stunts” Ideas (Cont)

- 36. Have all members bring in a childhood photo to the next meeting, usually under the age of ten. Before the meeting begins, display them all on a table and have the members guess who is in each photo and write it on a piece of paper and turn in to the Tail Twister. At Tail Twist time, count to see who got the most correct answers. They do not have to pay fine (could give them a prize); all others are fined.
- 37. Match game: After Xmas or Valentines Day, pass around a sheet and have ½ the club write down what their partner gave them. Then have the other half of the club try to match the gift with the Lion that wrote it down.
- 38. “Getting to know You” Jeopardy: topics you could use include; middle name, top 2 bucket list, nickname in grade school, If I could have another profession, etc. Make up your own topics, very fun and get to know each other better!
- 39. Lying Lions: The tail twister contacts one Lion before the meeting and asks them to get up tell a story about themselves, it can be real or completely made up! The members then have to give a ‘thumbs-up or thumbs-down” if the story is true or false! Losers pay.
- 40. Before the meeting, make holders for the silverware and inside them put a note and give them a fine or a no fine.





Tail Twisting Skits & Songs



- 1. Home Town Band: Get 4-6 Kazoos, regular or the kind shaped like instruments and get members to play them. Add toy washboards and any other instruments you can find. Have them play a song. Charge all admission for the concert, band members free for playing.
- 2. Kangaroo Court: Appoint a Judge, Prosecutor, Defense Lawyer, Perpetrator, and Witnesses. Make up an Outrageous Crime the Perpetrator has “allegedly” committed and everyone has to play out their roles to come to a verdict, guilty or not guilty! Donation from all for the show except the “cast” members performing.
- 3. Passing the Buck: The President begins by calling on the Program Chair to conduct the program. The Program Chair 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 a program but has passed the baton to someone else. This continues until it is apparent that nobody has actually organized the program. Two different endings; The Secretary can then point out that there is NOW no time left for a program OR, the Program Chair can then have the “real” program for the meeting speak!

Tail Twisting Skits & Songs (Cont)

- 4. Divide the membership into groups of 4-6 people; they pick their own chairman. Send each group to a corner of the room and assign each group a “theme” for which they pick a song to sing, i.e.: patriotic, country, kids songs, folk, etc. Provide a few minutes to practice their song. Each group sings their song in front of the members. Pass out ballots and members vote for the ‘best’ group. Groups can vote for themselves and most votes wins, everyone else pays a “concert fee”!
- 5. The Tail Twister brings an assortment of hats, like a cowboy hat, army helmet, keystone cop, Aviator, and others. Members are called upon to put on a hat and explain their identity and why they were famous.
- 6. Have Singing at your Christmas Party; club officers are good for it, the whole membership, the Officer Team, etc.
- 7. Veteran Day Celebration: Divide the members into four groups; each group is assigned to sing the “theme” song for either the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marines! Download the words to them from the Internet before the meeting, otherwise they may only know part of the song.
- 8. Have a group sing “I’m a Little Teapot” or some other song that you can act out. It is worth alot of laughs when you see their acting skills.



Summary



- Tail Twisting is only limited to the fantastic imagination of the Tail Twister
- Have ready assistants to help pull off activities
 - Makes things go faster
 - Keeps you within your time constraints
 - Help prep new Twisters for a future job in your club
- Ideas mentioned are just that; ideas to get you started
- Your creativity is your best tool
- Ask other Tail Twisters what they do
- Adapt ideas to fit your club
- Come up with new ideas
- Have fun as the Tail Twister and your club will be having fun too!
- Don't sweat the small stuff
- Don't take yourself too seriously
- Laugh at yourself too!

**Tail Twister is the Best Position in Lions to have
FUN!!!!**

Resources

- Some websites to try:
 - www.meetingwizard.org has lots of icebreaker ideas
 - www.thesource4ym.com lots of games and icebreakers
 - www.uselessknowledge.com great for trivia
 - www.ivillage.com sign up for the daily joke
 - www.encarta.msn.com/quizzes great for fun quizzes
 - www.quoteopia.com great for famous quotes
 - <https://www.laughteroncall.com/how-it-works/laughter-for-biz/> is Laughter for Biz



The Story of The Spizzerinkter

The concept of Tail Twisting predates Lions clubs by two centuries. Private clubs in England in the early 1700s good-naturedly fined members for telling tall tales or for using another member's tobacco. But Lions perfected the practice of club hijinks. Tail Twisting had its origins in the pep committees formed at the chartering of the downtown Detroit club in 1920. The committees then shifted down to a "single, energetic personality," according to *The World's Biggest Doers: The Story of the Lions*. "We were trying to find some way to liven up Lion meetings," recalled Melvin Jones, the founder of Lions clubs in 1917. "One fellow who had been born on a farm said that what we needed to do was what used to be done; when a cow refused to go through the gate, someone would grab her by the tail and twist. We all laughed, but one of the boys said, 'Why, isn't that a good name?' "We already had decided on 'Lion Tamer' for the sergeant-at-arms, so it seemed logical to confer the title 'Tail Twister' on the chairman of the pep committee." But the international board, "in a huff of offended dignity, issued an edict against use of the low-comedy term," according to the Lions history book. The question was batted about at board meetings for a few years until International President Ray Riley in 1929 "got up at a session in Washington one day and told them they were taking themselves too seriously." Riley added that clubs would have tail twisters "whether the board likes it or not." The role was established but the name remained in flux. Even by 1941, the LION Magazine could write: "Of all the novel and rich experiences which await the new Lion, none strikes him so forcibly as his introduction to that "'Demon of the Dime,' that 'Debunker of Dignity,' known as the 'Spizzerinkter' or 'Tail Twister.' The Tail Twister, as we prefer to call him, is about the only absolute dictator we know who enjoys the affection of those whom he oppresses." Other Lions apparently preferred Tail Twister, too, and somewhere along the line, Spizzerinkter—fortunately— was dropped.

And it appears some Lions use this office as a kind of assistant Tail Twister.

August 2021



Touchstone Story #91 Lions Want to Have Fun

Photo Caption: Tail Twisters have added elements of fun and surprise to Lions club meetings since the 1920s.

Having fun while doing good has been a Lions specialty from the beginning.

In the early 1920s, many U.S. clubs had pep committees charged with enlivening routine club meetings. Lions soon entrusted the merrymaking function to a single energetic and enthusiastic officer, known as the Tail Twister.

Students of Tail-Twisting lore will find rich veins of anecdote and remembrance among longtime Lions and also in Lions publications.

How did the name Tail Twister come about? *The World's Biggest Doers*, a 1949 history of the Lions, described this origin story, as recounted by Lions founder Melvin Jones:

“One Sunday afternoon three or four of us were discussing this matter of putting pep into the meetings. One fellow who had been born on a farm said we needed to do what used to be done on the farm. When a cow refused to go through the gate, someone would grab her by the tail and twist. We all laughed, but one of the boys said, ‘Why isn’t that a good name—tail twister?’”

The fact that lions—*real* lions—also have tails gave the name another amusing twist.

Now optional for all Lions clubs, the role of Tail Twister had been an established office under charter bylaws for decades. But as a 1941 article in *LION Magazine* made clear: “Of all the officers in the club, he [the Tail Twister] has no rigid code, no well-defined plan of action. He must be a Lion of originality.”



Indeed, Tail Twisters have been remarkably creative in promoting fun and fellowship and boosting club treasuries by “twisting” small fines from members for minor breaches of club rules, such as not wearing a nametag or talking during a guest speaker’s presentation.

The fines system is both autocratic and democratic. No member can appeal a Tail Twister’s levy, and no member is above paying it.

“President Westfall Fined on Southern Trip,” ran a banner headline over a full-page story in the April 1927 issue of *LION Magazine*. While visiting the Columbia Lions Club in South Carolina, USA, International President William Westfall forgot his Lions pin when changing “from his train clothes to his speaking clothes.” An alert Tail Twister named Goldschmidt spotted Westfall’s bare lapels and fined him 10 cents, the going rate for such infractions in the 1920s.

Contests, quizzes, brainteasers, jokes, lighthearted songs and poems are time-tested tools of the tail-twisting trade. Today’s practitioners can find and share fresh material on several club websites and on a Tail Twister page on Facebook.

Concepts of humor do not always transfer across different cultures and times, and that has led to a gradual decline in the tail-twisting tradition as Lions have expanded around the world. But every day in countless other ways—from pancake breakfasts to picnics with needy kids to big parades at convention time—Lions still know how to have fun.



TAIL-TWISTING HANDOUT

Course #127 Bachelor's Program



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.

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....

- 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.
- 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.

That is where they sit for that night.

Remember, that we all have special friends in our club, and do want to sit with them – on the other hand, it is important to sit with and get to know other lions in the club. Try to strike a balance with sitting with old friends or sitting in a new spot. I have found that once every 3rd or 4th meeting it is OK to mix up the seating.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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

DUTIES OF A TAIL-TWISTER – Cont'd

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, what ever 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 was a baker before they retired?” “Who wishes they could have been a pro golfer?”
- 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.

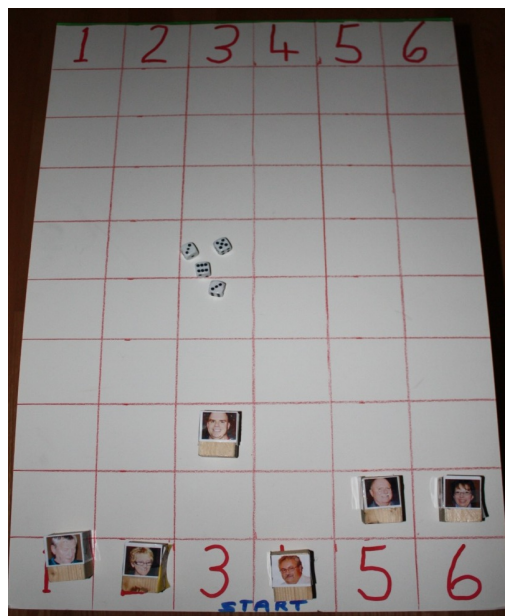
RACE GAME BOARD. Make up a board with squares and numbers on it as shown. A sheet of bristol board, the back sheet of a flip chart pad, or a piece of a large cardboard box will do. Obtain 6 small objects (small stuffed or plastic toys from the dollar store) as race pieces. Using a post-it-note have each 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.



ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS, Cont'd

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 honorary 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.