



Tactics Tricks
and Just Plain Fun
Developed by Successful

TAILTWISTERS



How Do They Do It?

How do some Taittwisters manage to keep club meetings lively and fun for all? How do they maintain the good natured informality that inspires comradeship among club members? What is their secret in keeping meetings cheerful? And where do they come up with their bags of tricks, their rib-poking methods of getting laughs and money from fellow-Lions?

Quite a few Taittwisters have become living legends in their districts for their expertise at bagging dimes and quarters during club meetings, and doing so with a laugh. Some have gone beyond such time-honored excuses for leveling fines as penalizing Lions for wearing neckties or not wearing neckties, arriving early or arriving late, dropping a fork during dinner or having hair too long or too short or for having none at all. They've really patented original schemes for Lionistically picking the pockets of the membership.

Their primary goal is not to raise money, but to inject fun and laughter into club meetings to help prevent them from becoming dull. Practically every club with continually well-attended meetings has an active Taittwister who keeps members alert and looking over their shoulders to see what he's up to.

Taittwisters, though, are an unselfish lot and they willingly share their ideas with other Taittwisters. Following are examples of unique ways to spark laughter and collect fines which successful Taittwisters have proudly sub-

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mitted to International Headquarters. So, if you're stuck for ideas on how to make club meetings livelier—read on.

For openers, you could emulate the wise Taitwister of the Mt. Olympus, Indiana Lions Club who, collection bucket in hand, asked his fellow-members what happens to a guinea pig's eyes when he's picked up by the tail. Many amateur zoologists in the club had a ready answer — "they bulge," "they close," "they cross," "they roll." The Taitwister smiled knowingly. Every member who gave an answer, any answer, was fined 10¢. Guinea pigs don't have tails.

What have other Taitwisters done to enliven meetings and fill the club coffers?—

- The Taitwister of the Dilley, Texas club thought his fellow-Lions weren't getting the proper exercise. So he stationed a two-wheeled scooter at the entrance to the club meeting room. He ordered every Lion to enter the room riding the scooter. Those who balked were fined.

- Was the membership eating too well? The Taitwister of the North Oldham, Kentucky Lions Club thought so. His new recipe for dieters? He packed a tape measure at club meetings and any Lion whose girth exceeded 40" was fined. He even gave the Lions a choice on how to pay the fine—either 5¢ per inch over 40" or the Taitwister would put away the tape if the member paid a



straight 25¢. The enterprising Tailtwister had an even better income on Ladies Night. Not that so many of the wives exceeded 40", but how many would want this vital statistic to be made public? Consequently, the sound of their quarters in his collection bucket was music to the Tailtwister's ears.

When he wasn't on the offensive with his tape measure, this Tailtwister busied himself borrowing pens from the members and then selling them back to the owners at 10¢ each.

- The Tailtwister of the Cumberland, Maryland club wanted his fellow-members to get to know each other better. During meetings a Lion would be called upon to stand and formally introduce another Lion so designated by the Tailtwister. Any mistake in the introduction meant a fine.

Once, the Cumberland Tailtwister asked each Lion individually, "What do you think a turkey supper should cost?" He duly recorded each answer and announced that every Lion was fined because no one even came close. How much *does* a turkey supper cost? The Tailtwister produced a handful of crushed corn and informed them the price was about one cent.

- An innocent-looking contest was staged by the Lisbon, Ohio Club's Tailtwister. He placed a cake at the head table and challenged the members to guess the number he had placed beneath it. Each Lion was charged for his

guess and the closest guess won the cake. The Tailtwister made \$5.00 that night, but the real drama unfolded when the winning Lion tried to cut into the cake. The Tailtwister had a block of wood inside some styrofoam panels in the shape of a cake. To make it look authentic, his wife covered it with chocolate icing.

- In Allentown, Pennsylvania the Tailtwister of the Allentown Lions club can be heard mispronouncing names of club members during meetings. He is really smarter than that, but when the Lion whose name he garbled shouted "Who?" the Tailtwister fines him for being too loud.

During meetings, this Tailtwister occasionally confides he is behind in the budget and will accept all offerings at the close of the meeting. The members are asked to let their consciences guide them. When the meeting is adjourned the Tailtwister 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.

- A stuffed lion is raffled by the Tailtwister of the Mint Canyon, California club at the first meeting of each month. The highest bidder is awarded the lion and thereby is fine-free for that month. However, he must carry it to every club meeting that month. Failure to bring results in a fine, and if he loses the lion he's fined until he recovers it.

- The Tailtwister of the Selma, Al



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bama Lions Club built a "dog house" for late arriving members. Actually, it was just a front supported by easel-type legs and with two holes, one large and one small. Late arrivals could either crawl, jungle-style, through the large opening and be fined 10¢ or walk around the contraption and be fined 20¢. The tantalizing small hole was free, but it was too small for any member to get through.

One year, the club had 100% perfect attendance for 12 months. In order to maintain that record, the Tailtwister worked with the Chief of Police, a Lion, to have a couple squad cars stationed in front of the club meeting hall. If a member didn't show, a squad was dispatched, the member handcuffed and brought to the meeting. He was made to don a striped prisoner's suit after which his picture was taken by a photographer from the local newspaper. Attendance remained high.

- The Tailtwister of the Frederick, Maryland club succeeded in a ploy that many Tailtwisters have triumphantly used; only the specific tactics differ. At a joint meeting with members of other service clubs present, the Tailtwister had assisted a marimba band which performed at the gathering. He asked a favor in return. Thus it was that during the meeting the Tailtwister went to the head table and addressed the group on his many duties and what was done with the money collected. He then asked all

present who wished to donate to his fund to stand. The crowd, however, was on to him and he would have had few volunteers, except this announcement was the signal for the marimba band to strike up the National Anthem.

- If the members of the Butler, Pennsylvania club sport some strange attire at club meetings they have a good reason; avoiding fines. The Taitwister occasionally decides upon a "uniform of the day." He may inform the members that the required dress for the following meeting should include a Halloween mask, or a bow tie, or unmatched socks, or Bermuda shorts (he decided on this in February), or a piece of rope instead of a belt, or anything else that may come to mind.

The "magic word" game is also popular with this Taitwister. He writes a word on a slip of paper and puts it in his pocket. The first Lion who uses the word while addressing the meeting is fined. The words are seasonal—football, Thanksgiving or snow, or common ones such as water, work or coffee, so the Taitwister is certain to collect a fine.

- The Taitwister of the East Whittier, California Lions Club even keeps the members on their toes between meetings. He places a drawing of some object in each issue of the club bulletin. Lions failing to identify it at the next meeting are appropriately fined.

- A visitor to the Pittsburgh (Downtown), Pennsylvania club a while ago

would have witnessed a club member eating lunch with one hand because the other was handcuffed to a deputy sheriff. It seems the Taitwister didn't like his necktie at the previous meeting, fined him and staged a "trial" for the next meeting, complete with a local judge and witnesses for and against. At that meeting, he was a "prisoner" of the deputy. Naturally, the Taitwister won the case.

- Detailed planning goes into the schemes of the Spokane (North), Washington club Taitwister. His "Win A Dinner Partner" is one of the most popular. It's on Ladies Night and the object is for each wife to bid on and win a new dinner partner for that evening. The Taitwister explains how to conduct the auction:

1. A few weeks before the meeting hand out a questionnaire to each Lion. The following information should be requested: name, place of employment, position, previous employment, branch of service, last school attended, address, Lions club offices held, hobbies, wife name, wife's occupation, wife's hobbies, and a one or two-word self-description.

2. Write a short biographical sketch of each Lion based on the questionnaire and your knowledge of him. These must not be straight-forward, easy-to-identify sketches. Rather, they should be designed to draw curiosity with only broad hints as to the Lion's true identity. For



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example: "This Lion apparently works on the edge of a river, once had agrarian interests, and describes himself as a 'lover' " Actually, the Lion described is a banker with the "edge of the River" being the bank, had a previous occupation as a farmer, and the 'lover' image comes from his self-description.

3. Auction off each Lion by biographical sketch only. A maximum bid for each is established and the winner gets only a tag with a reference number so no names are divulged until all Lions have been won. Of course, the Lion pays on his wife's winning bid.

4. Read each sketch according to the reference number, thus informing who each lady has won. Remember, the sketches should be funny, but should also make sense when the explanations are given.

5. Ask the ladies to sit with their new partners (hopefully, a wife would not have won her own husband) for the duration of the meal.

The "Group Singing Contest" is another of this Tailtwister's favorite techniques. Again, it is for Lions and their wives.

1. Divide the entire group into about four smaller groups with an enthusiastic Lion as chairman of each. Include wives in groups with their husbands.

2. Send each group to a corner of the room and give them a list of about twenty familiar songs from which to choose. Give them about five minutes to

practice after the selection has been made.

3. Each group sings their song in front of the entire meeting.

4. Distribute a ballot to everyone so they may vote on the groups in order of preference. (They may even vote for themselves, because these votes will probably offset each other.)

5. The group with the most votes wins the right to sing another song. The members of the other groups are fined a small amount per couple, the larger fines going to the group with the fewest votes.

- The Bella Vista (Corrientes), Argentina Tailtwister even fines himself. He has a number of brain teasers, and at each meeting selects a Lion to answer one of the questions. The Lion has a given time span to answer correctly, usually three to ten seconds. If he has no answer or is incorrect, he pays a fine. If he's right, the Tailtwister pays. What type of questions are these? The following is an example: How many 9's are there between 1 and 100? In the allotted time, the pressured Lion will probably say 11. Wrong. There are 20. He will no doubt fail to take into account numbers 90-98. Obviously, the Tailtwister seldom pays.

- The Tailtwister of the Elfinwald, Pennsylvania Lions club has written his own little manual on tricks and fining. He's devised financial penalties for every club officer and has outlined page

after page of reasons for descending upon members with his collector bucket. The President can be fined for starting the meeting late, failing to laugh at a member's joke, closing the meeting without the proper motion from the floor or for acting in any "autocratic" manner. The Secretary can be fined for failing to take notes on proper club stationery and the Treasurer can be nailed for counting money during the meeting or for not giving a report, even if he wasn't asked to. The members can be fined for poor posture or for one too erect, for being too boisterous or too withdrawn or for being too alert or for day-dreaming. Articles of clothing and general personal appearances are on his list and all subject to fines. As he states on page 1 of his manual, "None shall escape my wrath."

These are some of the specific methods Tailtwisters can employ for fining members and keeping meetings lively. Their gimmicks are endless.

Eating utensils can be hidden and "rented" to members for the meal, Lions can be asked to stand and informed that if they wish to sit again they must pay and "smoking permits" can be issued. A past district governor from California told of one club Tailtwister who rented a number of hats, replicas of those worn by the likes of Napoleon, Sir Walter Raleigh, a Keystone Kop, a World War aviator and others. Members were called upon to put on a hat and explain



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their identity and why they were famous. A good performance lessened the fine.

Adopt some of these ideas or think up your own. But remember, the Tailtwister must never intentionally embarrass a fellow-Lion or guest or interrupt a speaker. The money collected is of secondary importance. The principal reason for the Tailtwister's antics is to generate fun and, in so doing, prevent meetings from becoming boring. A club with an active Tailtwister has few Lion "clockwatchers."

To be most effective, the Tailtwister should have a different stunt every meeting. A popular Tailtwister probably does more to improve attendance than any other Lion.

The goals of Lionism are, of course, serious. Community betterment and aid to the sick, the handicapped, the elderly and the destitute are the noble objectives of Lions International. However, good times and fellowship are important, too. They're important to the members who enjoy each other's company and who welcome some hearty laughs at meetings. When these meetings combine the serious business of Lionism with Tailtwister-inspired fun, the resulting spirit of comradeship will maintain full attendance and significantly raise the level of enthusiasm. This means an active, highly-motivated club, one better able to meet the challenge of planning and conducting successful service programs.

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