



# Tail Twister & Lion Tamer

Duties and Responsibilities

2016-2017



NEW MOUNTAINS TO CLIMB



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# General Information

The following information was compiled from the LCI Standard Constitution and By-Laws:

**Section 7. LION TAMER (Optional).** The Lion Tamer shall have charge of and be responsible for the property and paraphernalia of the Club, including flags, banners, gong, gavel, song books, and button board. He/she shall put each in its proper place before each meeting and return the same to the proper storage area after each meeting. He/she shall act as Sergeant-at-Arms at meetings, see that those present are properly seated, and distribute bulletins, favors, and literature as required at Club and Board meetings. He/she shall give special attention to assure that each new member sits with a different group at each meeting so that he/she can become better acquainted.

The above excerpt from the By-Laws indicates that the Lion Tamer is an optional office for every Club, but then who has the responsibility to keep and maintain the club property? A good Lion Tamer assures that new members get a name tag, award patches are attached to the banner, and keeps a sharp eye on the bell and gavel so a Lion guest does not removed it.

**Section 8. TAIL TWISTER (Optional).** He/she shall promote harmony, good fellowship, life, and enthusiasm in the meetings through appropriate stunts and games and the judicious imposition of fines on Club members. There shall be no ruling from his/her decision in imposing a fine, provided, however, that no fine shall exceed an amount fixed by the Board of Directors of this Club, and no member shall be fined more than twice at any one meeting. The Tail Twister (optional) may not be fined except by the unanimous vote of all members present. All monies collected by the Tail Twister (optional) shall be immediately turned over to the Treasurer and a receipt be given.

The above excerpt from the By-Laws indicates that the Tail Twister is an optional office for every Club, yet experience tells us that a good or great Tail Twister is an asset to every meeting, because they may also serve as song leader, greeter, and ice breaker.

# Spizzerinkter to Tail Twister

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 high-jinks. 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.

# Tail Twisters in Good Company

After Former President Jimmy Carter resigned as a submarine officer from the U.S. Navy, he returned to his home in Plains, Georgia and embarked on a career that would impact many.

Yes, he became a Tail Twister!

“The first thing I did was join the Plains Lions Club,” he noted at the Lions International Convention in Chicago in 2007. “With dedication and hard work I very soon reached the pinnacle of influence and intrigue and served as Tail Twister for three years. Which was a good preparation for the kind of inner relationships that made me successful, at least on a part-time basis, in politics.”



# Do's and Don'ts of a Successful Tail Twister

## **Do**

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

A good Tail Twister knows when to stop and not push his/her luck too far.

Remember, Tail Twisting is probably the hardest job in Lionism. It takes someone who is uninhibited and willing to spend time researching timely issues, planning humorous activities, and how to make the members relax before, during, or after a stress-filled day. The Tail Twister is the salvation to a good club meeting, he/she lets the members forget their problems and have a fun meeting with fellow Lions. When the meeting is over, it IS the Tail Twister they will remember.

## **Don't**

- 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 fine them
- Don't interrupt the “Speaker, President, or ongoing program”
- Don't take yourself too seriously
- Don't underestimate what your members will do
- Don't always pick on the same people
- Don't be crude, be imaginative
- Don't make anyone feel “uncomfortable”
- Don't make anyone feel “unwelcome”