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I thought I would share this with you. A chapter in Alberta accidentally sent their chapter's upcoming events calendar to my husband. I was fascinated by an event they were planning and how well organized they were so decided to share the information with my friend, Queen Bonnie and then realized that this should be shared with ALL members via the newsletter.

My first comment is that at this time of year many women have embarked on diets. We overindulge at Christmas and soon its spring and then bathing suit season so this is when most diets are begun. The issue is, so many chapter events are based around FOOD. Well, it's not too exciting to commit to an event where everyone else can enjoy a wonderful meal and possibly luxurious desserts and there you are chomping away on a carrot. Not fun so you decide to stay home and not be tempted. Well, that shouldn't be what it's all about. Your sister Jewels should be supporting you and your efforts to get in shape and be healthy so let's explore alternative ideas for chapter events.

First I would like to remind you that we have a list of over 80 ideas for chapters to plan, on the "Jewel Box" website. Go to the tab at the top of site "How To & Fun Stuff" and hover your mouse over the tab and then go to the sub-title "FUN CHAPTER ACTIVITIES" and explore the ideas.

Here are some things to consider for your chapter's next year:

1. How about a Bingo or Bunko party?
2. Gutsy or daring? ...Try a PJ Breakfast and yes, all go to a local pancake house or somewhere in your PJ costumes for breakfast! Several of you have done this as I've seen your photos posted on "The Jewel Box".
3. What about a spa party, and do each other's nail polish and share ideas for make-up or have someone from Mary Kay or something come and treat you all to some spa treatments?
4. Play mini-golf or go to a park for an old-fashioned picnic.
5. Take a tour of the local fire-station or police station, a museum or the zoo.
6. Get together and go in a group on your local Garden Tour or Christmas House Tour then head out to lunch together and talk about what you enjoyed on the tour.
7. Have an Easter bonnet decorating party or a card-making party.
8. Movie nights at home or the local theater are always fun but not so great for creating the atmosphere to socialize so how about lunch and a matinee or movies and popcorn in your PJ's at someone's home?
9. Play dress-up. Bring your boas and hats and fancy jewels and play dress-up like you did as children and take photos of each other all glammed up? Always fun and good for a laugh!
10. Do a thrift shop crawl. Car-pool and have a planned route and see who finds what. Meet up after at someone's home and have a show and tell sharing with the others your "best find of the day" then surprise them with a prize for the most outrageous find, or tackiest find, or the "find of the day" (everyone votes on the winners) Maybe the prize is a free year's membership in the chapter or CJS paid for from the chapter's "kitty"

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11. Don't forget the idea of a cookie/recipe exchange in November or December
12. Host your annual meeting/planning event in October when memberships are renewed, fees paid, and plans for the upcoming year are made. Maybe have a draw and the winner gets a free membership for the year? Combine it with a pot-luck.

This list above is more than enough activities for you for a full year! Here's one extra for you: "Speed Friendshipping event." This one fascinates me. I assume you all move from chair to chair and face each other and ask the other to share with them things about their life that others may not know (kind of like speed-dating)

The problem is that when you meet at a restaurant you really only get to talk to the person on each side of you and aren't able to socialize with everyone. It's not a great environment for getting to know the others in your chapter. That's why pot-lucks are so wonderful and popular.

So here's a bonus suggestion: What about an "everybody's birthday party?" Have a small cake or cupcakes and celebrate everyone's birthday at once. One chapter celebrates each month by having members bring a birthday card for everyone who is having a birthday that month.

Print out the list above and you're set with pre-planned activities for the year. Just remember that each member of the chapter needs to step up and host and share in the responsibilities. Please don't expect your Queen to "do it all" as we've had a couple of chapters where the Queen felt it was time to step down but because she "did it all" others saw it as a huge responsibility and no one would step up to take over.

My suggestion would be that the October event be the organizational meeting whereby everyone pays their upcoming fees and events are planned for the year with everyone making suggestions and members voting on what they would like to do and ladies then stepping up and taking responsibility for the planning/organization of the event.

In as much as I am not a "crafty" type person and don't normally enjoy doing them, when someone in our chapter planned a card making event in the party room of her condo, I found it was fun to all have time to converse with each other. Find a scrapbooker who will come and bring the equipment you need and be there to help you out.

With all of the activities I've mentioned above, it doesn't matter if you live in a big city or a small town. You can do it. It just takes some team effort.

Attached is a sheet for you to use at your next planning meeting. Pass it around and here's a suggestion: For each person who signs up (without being asked to do so) put their name in a hat and then pull a winner and give her a little prize or maybe a free membership? Incentives often help.

Remember – it's all about having fun and when one person shoulders ALL THE RESPONSIBILITIES it's no longer fun for her. Please do your share.