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The other day instead of a dinner party, we hosted an "Appies & Dessert Pot-Luck" and we had many comments about what fun it was as people had to opportunity to "mingle" and not just talk to the person on each side of them as they might at a sit-down dinner. Besides, I didn't have to do much other than tidy the house and provide some wine! Entertaining doesn't have to be difficult and people don't care if your house is large or small, a mess or clean. They come to socialize. Please don't be afraid to invite friends into your home. Just make them feel welcome when they do come. On that note...

I thought I would share this with you. The C.R.O.W.N.S chapter fascinated me by how well organized they are a year in advance and by an event they were planning so I decided to share the information with all of you (hope they don't mind!) at the end of this article.

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! 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.

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

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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"

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 - compliments of the Alberta chapter mentioned above:

"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) *Isn't that a great idea? Especially if you have some new members!*

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.

Here are 2 bonus suggestions:

"Everybody's Birthday Party?" Have a small cake or cupcakes and celebrate everyone's birthday at once. Another chapter celebrates each month by having members bring a birthday card for everyone who is having a birthday that month.

Line Dancing Lessons - get ready for the Calgary Convention!

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 so overwhelmed by "doing it all without help" she stepped down and no one else would take on the position of Queen as they thought it was too much work. It shouldn't have to be! Remember, it's supposed to be fun!

Our 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. I am not a "crafty" type person and don't normally enjoy doing crafts yet 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 and I had a beautiful card to send to a friend! Find a scrapbooker who will come and bring the equipment you need and be there to help you out. Maybe there's one in your chapter? 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

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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.