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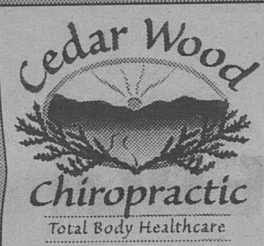
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# Views: Tales from a Lesbian Non-CU Bridal Shower

I will be the first to admit that when it comes to parties, I am not a fan of organized games. Upon arriving late to a recent gathering, I found a room full of people screaming "Tupperware!" and being handed coupons by a lady in a caftan. Not like other potlucks I've been to. I had fair warning — I knew this particular bridal shower was going to be a showcase of injection-molded plastic. But I was not prepared for the enthusiasm of the guests for said household accoutrements. Let me back up a little and explain the rather peculiar situation that resulted in my first ever attendance at a Tupperware-bridal shower-potluck.

Civil unions have had a huge impact on the perception of queer people by the population at large. Certainly not all of the press has been positive, and I haven't been keeping track of Ruth Dwyer since she became a reporter, but I think there's a growing number of folks who feel it's OK for us to have some rights too. We all know that freedom to marry is the ultimate goal, but as we hang in the political balance, just the concept that someone who'll probably never read this or any other article in a queer newspaper would throw a bridal shower for a couple of lesbians is a victory of no small proportions.

## I knew this particular bridal shower was going to be a showcase of injection-molded plastic.

Two of my close friends decided a few months ago that they would buy commitment rings for each other, and even though there is no clear ceremony in sight, several co-workers of one of my pals decided that both she and her girlfriend needed a bridal shower. Now, we all agree that this is very hip of these straight friends, since they could've pretended this wasn't happening or been really disturbed or just plain freaked out. My friend is grateful to have such a supportive work environment, and it's because of her peers' manic enthusiasm that this party even happened. But I don't believe any of us expected the experience we were in for.

Tupperware brings back memories of school lunches packed in olive green and mustard yellow containers. It's one of those things that are in your life, but you really have no idea how to relate to. So, I'm invited to a Tupperware party and I can't even imagine buying any, much less playing games related to salad spinners and nacho platters.

For days before the actual event, I'm curious about the guest list. It's a combination of middle school special ed instructors and a healthy cross-section of the northern Vermont queer community. My

friend says it's the first time, in fact, that her work and social circles will meet. I wonder how they will react to us, what we'll talk about, what the potluck food will be like. Maybe it's a good thing there are plastic bowls to unite us. The anthropologist in me is looking forward to an insider's view of a tried American ritual. I might have fun but I imagine I'll be looking at my watch quite a bit.

The potluck part is easy. I bring tofu and spinach ravioli, since I know there'll be at least a few vegans there. I purposely leave my checkbook at home so I won't be suckered into buying some stacking pasta bins. Since I arrive late, I miss the instructions on the game being played when I step into the living room. Apparently it involves yelling "Tupperware!" back at the saleslady

dles and guess the odor. One can only be described as "Grandma's Bathroom."

2. Guests are invited to step up to the Tupperware table and demonstrate the uses of various products. Some of us try not to choose the turkey baster.

3. My partner shows up about two hours into the party, wearing the dress he saves for special occasions. No one seems to think this is too weird except maybe the Tupperware lady and her husband. They probably had no idea what they were in for.

4. There's a good humored confrontation between one of the hostesses and a guest. It seems that the hostess has been letting her dogs run on my friend's farm and this resulted in the loss of a chicken life. The two women have never met outside the context of one yelling at the other to keep her dogs on a leash.

5. The bridal pair opens some gifts and among them is a black lace teddy with red puffy hearts over the nipples and some sort of wire contraption holding them in place. It's a present from one of the co-workers. Later, two different women (including me) and one man will put it on, with the matching panties. Everyone is laughing.

This brings us to the Toilet

when she mentions the word. The first (or loudest) person gets fake money to be used in an auction later.

I set my bowl of pasta down and follow the sound of the blender to the kitchen where the two party-throwers are making frozen strawberry drinks. Things don't look so bad from here. A friend who shows up soon after me joins me at the fringe and promptly inquires about the availability of booze — a little inhibition-loosening would be welcome right now. We agree we're not up for organized activities at the moment and watch the proceedings curiously over the rims of our plastic cups.

A few hours and many alcoholic slushee beverages later, he and I have been elected to be judges in the infamous Toilet Paper Bride game. On principle, this is a game I am seriously opposed to. Beside the fact that it's a waste of toilet paper, it also reinforces the gender stereotypes of heterosexual weddings. But I've left my feminist theory far behind at this point and anyway, how often do you have two brides to dress up? Let me fill you in briefly on some of what took place prior to this coup-de-grace event:

1. There's a game where you have to smell some scented can-

Paper Brides. My slushee-sipping friend and I decide structural integrity and naughtiness are our two main criteria in judging the creations. The guests divide into two teams, and I observe that the division marks no social boundary, but rather is simply random groupings of people. It's so fantastic to see this party in action. Everyone is participating, having fun, and celebrating my friends' amazing relationship.

By the time the brides parade around, my watch says 11 p.m. and I've been here much longer than I ever anticipated. I think we all expected something uncomfortable and strained, with little conversation and less commonality. Even without the aid of that social lubricant known as booze, I think the party would've been a raging success. I'm sure that those of us who know more about queer culture and civil unions and commitment ceremonies would probably never have dreamed up a Tupperware bridal shower for two women who aren't getting married. But it's a damn good thing someone did, and maybe we can all take a clue from it and celebrate nesting measuring cups a little more. ▼

Tania Kupczak fondles her Tupperware in Jericho.