

Avon Calling and Tupperware Parties

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A few months after moving into our new house in a brand new subdivision, I noticed new neighbors had moved into the cul-de-sac behind us. We soon met the black family which included parents and three daughters. Joyce's husband and mine traveled extensively and we became friends and often shared meals with her three girls and my two boys.

Joyce's husband had applied for an executive position that would require less travel and was hired with a major caveat. ALL executives at Avon had to have spent time as Avon Ladies making calls on housewives. Since he was a six-foot tall, handsome, svelte black man, he had some hilarious stories to tell about husbands coming home to find him sitting in their living room with an explanation from the wife that "This is my new Avon lady!" Fortunately, his tenure as an Avon "lady" was completed and he was welcomed to the executive staff. At a Halloween party, he came dressed in a long formal dress with a slit up the side, a wig, heels and very professionally applied makeup.

Two months pregnant with my second child, a husband serving in Viet Nam, a need for adult conversation and parents willing to babysit for their grandson when I was holding parties, I ventured forth with my two huge pieces of luggage filled with the wonderful plastic, self-sealing items made by Tupperware.

Some of the ladies I encountered were quite interesting. While demonstrating a two-quart beverage container, I stated, "This will hold a half gallon and is perfect for re-constituting a large can of frozen orange juice." One guest started flapping her hands and indignantly said, "How you can say it will hold a half gallon, when you just said it holds two quarts?" An explanation that two quarts is the same as a half-gallon still did not convince her I had not made an erroneous claim.

There was a ham keeper that was large enough to hold a canned ham as well a good sized bone-in ham. At one party a woman was most indignant when I making that demonstration. Her response was, "Well, mine melted when I baked my ham in it and I should get my money back because it ruined my Easter ham!" I actually do not remember once I closed my mouth that had dropped open how I replied to that statement.

As I grew less mobile with my pregnancy, receiving my weekly Tupperware order turned into a match game with my toddler son. I would put a sample of each item in a circle around the living room and he would start unloading the boxes and matching the items. I would then sit and tell him what I needed to fill each order. Although some might consider this child labor, it became a fun game for both of us as well as teaching him about matching items and then having the empty boxes to use for boy-sized forts.