

I hold off on a reply other than the old and weak standby phrase, "I'll see what I can do for you". At least by e-mail, the potential client won't hear the quiver of disbelief in my tone.

#### The decision to pause.

Next morning at the staff meeting, it comes out of my mouth, An e-mail request came in yesterday for a party next week. Anyone see how we can fit it in? Looking around at the faces, I see the response.

No. They are telling me no.

But, then, I am tempted. I am not committed to any parties. I could be hauled into service - the old battle ship could be made to float up the Delaware River and slip into an office park in Princeton. This is possible.

#### In Retrospect. Why do it?

Why is it that I should have been tempted?

I think that it might have been the fact that the request came by e-mail. If I had spoken on the phone, I'm sure that I would have said "no" and have said it without hesitation. But the e-mail procedure and presentation gave me time to consider the challenge of helping someone in need.



Marc Sonstein supervises the bar at Mellon Bank opening.

So I call the contact. She sounds pleasant and, even, accommodating on the phone. She tells me, "The budget was cut midyear and we can't afford to go out to the hotel that we'd booked - but someone dropped the ball in planning some kind of party. Can you help?"

I take the plunge, saying, Yes, we'll try. I'm on the hook now.

There being no time like the present, I set out right away to do a site visit. The client turns out to be a delight - warm, and engaging - while the office space, itself, has potential - potential, when we reconfigure it and add in decor, to surprise and delight the company's staff. There's an open space kitchen right in the middle of the office with funky retro 50's tables and chairs and a shiny espresso machine with upturned cups lined up like miniature porcelain hats.

The staff in the office turn out to be showing no signs of future "party pain" - the misery that will result from a party in their office "cubicles" as against the one that had been planned in a hotel.

Meanwhile, the client is showing that she has real authority to make decisions. It shows in her smile. So it's all going to be fine. We'll work as a team to plan the night.

Together we put a plan in motion: build in active cooking stations so that the office will be filled with good aromas and the energy of chefs at work. The stations will give a jump start to the energy level of the party.

The site visit over, I head back to the office, write up the proposal while listening to the chops of the knife work of a focussed crew on the last two weeks of another holiday season. The date arrives, the truck is loaded, and five hours later the guests are sparkling. We all have a fine evening.

Four hours into the party, there I am taking the trash down to the truck while the party is going strong.

to chat with us - call 215 244 9700 | fax 215 638 8547 | e-mail info@shackamaxoncatering.com | web www.shackamaxoncatering.com

## Thanksgiving at your door or re-heat

### Thanksgiving Harvest Dinner

Roast Rosemary Turkey - for four or more Chef Dane will be preparing a whole turkey for you. Cranberry, apple, raisin, and apricot stuffing  
Fresh cranberry orange zest relish  
A traditional, rich, dark gravy with a hint of merlot  
Mashed Potatoes - with caramelized onion  
Butternut squash turnovers  
Roasted Parsnips and Yams with a hint of lemon  
Cranberry Cornbread  
Pumpkin Pecan Chiffon Pie- with pumpkin whipped cream  
\$23 per person

Roasted Turkey & Seasonal, Aromatic Stuffing, Traditional Gravy, Fresh Cranberry Orange Zest Relish: 22 to 24 LB Bird. \$65  
Delivery: \$20  
Carving and layout: \$15

## Christmas at your door or re-heat

### Christmas Family Dinner - with a hint of Lancaster County

Saffron Turkey - traditional Amish "spice" - rubbed under the skin and infusing the bird with a perfume. For four or more Chef Dane will be preparing a whole turkey for you.  
Chestnut and walnut stuffing  
Fresh cranberry orange zest relish  
A traditional, rich, dark gravy with a hint of merlot  
Roasted julienne of winter vegetables  
Sautéed small leaf spinach with lemon and garlic and julienne of portobello  
Potatoes "Dauphinoise" - thinly sliced red bliss potatoes baked in cream with herbs and onions and finished under flame  
Pear Buttermilk Biscuits  
German Apple-Walnut Strudel- with cranberry whipped cream  
\$23 per person

### Feast of The Seven Fishes

Traditional Bacala  
Fried Smelts  
Whiting  
Shrimp Marinara  
Calamari Francesa  
Flounder Florentine  
Mussels in Garlic White Wine Broth  
Linguini with Virgin Oil  
Caesar Salad  
Almond Pear Tart and Biscotti  
\$25 per person with a minimum of 8

SHACKAMAXON CATERING FOR ALL SEASONS

## Holiday Menu Suggestions

### Inside:

- Thanksgiving Dinner at Your Door
- Feast of the Seven Fishes - at Your Door
- Christmas Dinner at Your Door
- Suggestions for Holiday Open Houses - at Home or Office
- Site Suggestions - that we can book for you even NOW
- Easy Decor for the office

## Controlling Your Thought: Using e-mail to Ponder and Pause over The Wisdom of Another Holiday Party on the Schedule

It is the 12th of December that the e-mail arrives into the general sales box for our company, Shackamaxon Catering. The sender is unknown and unheralded by an exploratory call. There it is - an innocent request for a party up in Princeton during the next week, which is also the busiest of the season. I'm tempted. - tempted to type the reply, Sorry, but we're completely booked.

### SURE . . .

It's December 15 and you want a party next week!

Yes, I do know that we are in the service business but today is already December 12 and this unheard of and unknown e-mailer is wanting a party within the next week of this holiday season. Being caterers, our operations manager has not been planning to keep the trucks locked up in a snug garage with nothing to do and nowhere to go, nor has the Executive Chef, Dane, been planning to keep the "Walk-in" bare of hors d'oeuvres and Yule Logs and Croquebouches.

This is not a time when the staff wants to take on the project of an unknown client with an unknown set of problems in an unknown office park. Nor is this the time to find more staff when, as it is, all the supervisors are working double parties.

It is tempting to take on the challenge. The kitchen staff could fit it in. They can always fit it in because they can schedule a second crew but where will I find the staff to actually make the job happen on site?

I'll see what I can do . . .  
...(continued over)



Julia Cardero presenting autumn hors d'oeuvres at the Mellon Bank grand opening.

Croquebouche Celebration Dessert - from the French and Italian Traditions for the Holiday Season

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# menu ideas holiday

Service in offices, every effort will be made to keep any flame or candles to the minimum needed to comply safely with your building's needs.

Michael, Ken, Paul, Julie and Harry are available to craft a menu and service that will fulfill your holiday party needs and do so on your budget.

tel 215 244 9700  
e-mail info@shackamaxoncatering.com  
or have a look at the Web Site

## Menu Idea to Celebrate Many Holiday Tastes



A useful foundation on which to build your own office party. Displayed with the art and skill of fourteen years' experience of assisting our clients fulfill their needs.

- Grilled Shrimp** - in the shell for you to peel - a great way to break the ice at any party - with a specialty walnut pesto sauce as well as the traditional cocktail sauce.
- Italian Antipasti Display** - with grilled vegetables, marinated lemon herb cannellini beans, roasted peppers, marinated artichoke, hearts, shaved parmesan, fresh mozzarella, ripe olives, grilled Italian breads, hard Genoa's salami, prosciutto.
- Carving Station:** Honey Mustard Ham - with miniature corn bread and cranberry muffins accompanied by honey Dijon raisin sauce and garnished with winter apples and cranberries.
- Baron of Roast Beef** - at room temperature with zesty sauces to accompany: sun dried tomato and sour cream horseradish with tarragon -- all accompanied by hand crafted breads.
- Lobster Ravioli** - with fresh tomato-saffron sauce accenting
- Winter Cheese Board** - with celebration Gloucester Coachman, Cheddar with Port Wine, and a fine Mushroom Brie- with crackers and large snappy flatbreads.

### Then please select 2 Hors d'Oeuvres

- Wild Mushroom Strudel.
- Miniature Holiday Meatballs in Winter Cranberry Sauce
- Smoked Salmon on Black Bread with sour cream and dill sauce and accent of honey mustard.
- Miniature Latke Potato Cake with Smoked Salmon - accented by honey Dijon dill sauce
- Traditional Italian Egg Fritata on herbed puff pastry with pesto and tapenade
- Smoked Duck Sausage with pear and cranberries on brochette with apple concassé dipping sauce
- Miniature Risotto Cakes with Butternut Squash
- Miniature Spanakopita
- Bruschetta with a variety of toppings including fresh tomato and basil, pesto, and tapenade.

### Unique Holiday Dessert Display

"Croquembouche" - a tower of pastry shells filled with custard crème which are displayed on a plate with white linens and fresh flowers, this is then topped off with a spun sugar halo, grounded with chocolate truffles for more nibbles and then accented with miniature bourbon mincemeat tarts holiday tarts, holiday cookies and pizzelles.

... \$24 per person and, of course, we're here to mix, match and fit your menu and service needs.



### An Open House Idea with Sparkling Differences...

"Caviar" Tasting in Martini Glasses including an eclectic tasting of fish egg caviars and, then, exotic creations from three different mushrooms, from minced grilled chicken, from finely chopped filet of beef with tasting sauces

**Carving Station of Filet of Beef** - with sun dried tomato and mushroom sauce with cabernet and grilled French bread rounds to accompany  
**Lobster Ravioli** - with fresh tomato accent sauce and a hint of saffron  
**Warm Salad** - of roasted, crispy potato slivers with julienne of winter vegetables and Belgian endive and goat cheese

### A Variety of Hors d'Oeuvres

Ripe Mushroom Brie - from Bavaria  
Tastings of Cranberry Purée and Madeira Punch - in espresso demitasse cup  
Scallops - wrapped in bacon with a sweet date sliver to accent  
Miniature Latke Potato Cake - with smoked salmon - accented by honey Dijon dill sauce  
Miniature Risotto Butternut Squash Cakes

### Sweets

"Croquembouche" - a tower of pastry shells filled with custard crème which are displayed on a plate with white linens and fresh flowers, this is then topped off with a spun sugar halo, grounded with chocolate truffles for more nibbles and then accented with miniature bourbon mincemeat tarts holiday tarts, holiday cookies and pizzelles. ... \$35 per person and, of course, we're here to mix, match and fit your menu and service needs



Head Waiter, Don Baxter, with the staff before the start of a reception.

banquet and formal dinner menu suggestions are at [www.shackamaxoncatering.com](http://www.shackamaxoncatering.com)



Fine black plastic small plates and crystal plastic forks with cocktail napkins are included within this sample pricing.

- China, Glass and Stainless Ware are an additional \$3.25
- Porcelain, Crystal and Rococo Silverware are an additional \$6.00
- Full Bar Service - sodas, mixers, juices, waters, fruits and equipment: \$3.85 per person
- Wines and Beer Bar Service - sodas, juices, waters, fruits and equipment: \$1.85 per person

- Service and Bar Tending Staff: all service personnel are charged at a 5 hour minimum @ \$20 to \$26 per hour depending on qualifications.
- Alcohol Service: additional Liquor Liability Insurance available at \$1 per guest. This does not in any way replace the client's need for Host Liquor Liability Insurance.

A few specialty decor options to help transform an office  
Cape Cod Country Comfort | Victorian England | Trans-Atlantic Cruise Luster from the 1930s | Country Hoe-Down in the Barn

# sites

for holiday events that might be better for everyone if they are away from the office and the home



yes, we can do your backyard with a tent - and even heat it to 68 degrees



and it doesn't really have to be as big as this one that we did for the Japan America Society.

Berman Art Gallery, Ursinus College, Collegewille



Collegewille

Highlands Mansion



Blue Bell

Springton Manor, Glenmore



Waynesborough, Berwyn



West Chester



Snug Hollow Barn

Boat House Row Clubs



U of Arts Atrium



Appleford Mansion



Baldwin School



The Willows



The Grange



Bartram's Carriage House



Anbury-Cope House



Hill-Physick House



Penns Arts Center

MORESTOWN

Fleisher Art Memorial

St. Shury Mansion & Ballroom

tried, but... Cary had it booked



## plus 72 more