



## What's A Caterer To Do?

### What's a Caterer to Do...Part 25

Merry Christmas! How cool that part 25 of the series, “What’s a Caterer to Do” falls on December 25th. Not by plan, for sure. I thought this was going to be a short story, certainly not longer than 10 parts at the most. Well, go figure, as we approach 2021, the series is alive and well. Not that it’s a good thing. I’m still waiting for someone to provide me with the answer to the rhetoric question, what’s a caterer to do. Now I know that there is no question mark at the end of the title, suggesting that this series is simply a reflection, a pondering, a speculation of what to do during this crazy time of isolation, separation and solitude. Again, if you can’t gather, there is no need for catering, or caterers.

People speak of “their life’s work”. What does that really mean? If you have been doing the same job or in the same career for 37 years does that mean it’s your life’s work? A wise man quotes “that if you enjoy what you do for a living you never work a day in your life.” Truly catering is enjoyable and many times barely feels like work, except for the hard physical labor, the mental rigor, fending off the competition, the pain of preparing a party and taking it from point A, our Irondequoit commissary, to point B, the event venue. Truly, catering is not for the faint of heart or the weak of body. We’ve chatted before that catering becomes a lifestyle, one that dominates your life, and determines your calendar. Caterers work when other people vacation, celebrate, enjoy sunshine and take life easy. Now, don’t get me wrong. We knew this getting into it. But, is there life beyond catering? Is there life beyond being a caterer? Our occupation helps define us. It begins conversations. Everyone identifies with food. Everyone goes to parties.

Everyone watches the food network. Everyone wants to talk about it. Many years ago I begged my husband that if I ever talked about going back into the ala carte restaurant business he must STOP me. Now that’s a truly tough business. At least in catering, you know how many people to order and prepare for, you know well in advance what time you must arrive for set-up, what time the food and festivities commence, and what time the event wraps up. This sure makes it a heck of a lot easier to plan and schedule than an ala carte restaurant. We are able to operate at a good margin most of the time, and utilize our resources and staff wisely. Lately, we’ve felt a bit like an ala carte operation. We appreciate the business, any business, but truly ala carte is not our forte. We struggle, we over plan, we stress, we obsess. I compare it to a florist making 25 bud vases instead of a big, beautiful, impressive centerpiece! Or a trucking company having an 18-wheeler deliver 1 box to 100 places rather than dropping a few pallets with a 100 boxes at one destination! Or a theater showing a movie 100 times to one

person at a time, rather than one movie for 100 people all at the same time. You catch my drift. In other words, we have been forced out of our element by the “you-know-what”- 19.

Here’s a fun fact. Tomorrow’s my birthday. Not an especially big birthday, but significant nevertheless. It seems that on our birthday we reminisce, we evaluate where we were, where we are and where we are going. Do we feel good about what we’re doing, whom we’re doing it with and whom we are doing it for? Kind of like New Year’s. We see the new year sprawled before us with endless possibilities and we may think this is the year for change. Personal change, spiritual change, emotional change, professional change. So many resolutions to be made, so few that actually materialize.

I’m sure that you’ve had a long day, a little egg nog, probably more food than necessary and you may be thinking of a little slumber. I know that I am...although I do have one more Hallmark movie in my immediate future. So I shall close by saying, “Merry Christmas to all and to all a Good Night”.

Xoxo Sandra

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[www.TastefulConnections.com](http://www.TastefulConnections.com)  
585 467 4400

