

## **Reserved?**

By Ruh as told to Chris Mandeville

You may be wondering what all those pesky “Reserved” signs are doing on the PPWC banquet tables. You might be saying to yourself, “Who are those seats reserved for? And how do I get one?”

Well, as PPW’s Ambassador of Goodwill and honorary Banquet Security Patrol, it falls to me to answer these questions.

First and foremost, seats are always reserved for the table host. Yes, we try to herd the guests of honor (i.e. those faculty members you want to talk to) into the banquet hall early to take their seats, but sometimes that’s just not possible. Like when one of them has a booksigning, is grabbing a quick beverage at the bar, or is out chasing squirrels.

Oh, wait. That’s me.

Anyway, you get the idea. Believe it or not, on occasion a table host arrives at his/her table and all the seats are full. To avoid his/her embarrassment, the disappointment of the attendees at the table, and the inconveniencing of the Marriott staff, we’ve devised this nifty technique of placing a “Reserved” sign at the table host’s place.

Second and secondmost, we try to accommodate the requests of our faculty when possible. This means that if an agent wants to sit next to a client or a significant other, we reserve a seat for that person when possible. Also, when the faculty member is the Keynote Speaker for the meal, we will sometimes reserve their whole table, ensuring that the guest is able to eat quickly without trying to chat with attendees. Trust me, it’s never pretty to see a Keynote trying to talk with their mouth full, or having the Keynote’s stomach growling into the microphone while they’re delivering their speech.

Thirdly—and this is where your ears should perk up—some seats are reserved for ATTENDEES who earn this privilege through volunteering. For example, if we send a willing attendee on an errand (like to the airport or a copy place) that person will return to a reserved seat at a table of their choice. Likewise, volunteers who moderate at least two sessions get a handy “Reserved” sign at a meal. And sometimes we have volunteers who are working hard to make your conference experience amazing, which makes it impossible for them to stand in line waiting for the banquet doors to open so they can make a mad dash for the table of their choice. Those folks sometimes get “Reserved” signs, too. Really, it’s for the safety of us all. And my tail. Dashing isn’t good, except when chasing squirrels.

Fourthly (is that a word?), at the Awards Banquet on Saturday night, you’ll see lots of “Reserved” signs. This is because winners of the Pikes Peak Writers Fiction Contest must be seated near the front in order to make the award-giving go more smoothly. And those winners usually have significant others, friends, family, and cheerleaders who want to sit with them. You know that if/when you win the contest, you’ll want to be surrounded by your significant others, friends, family, and cheerleaders, so please don’t begrudge them their “Reserved” signs.

By now you might be thinking that it’s going to be impossible to sit with the faculty member of your choice because there are so many “Reserved” signs out there and none of them are for you. But don’t worry—our conference staff is very good about

making sure not to fill up a whole table with reserved signs, unless it's for the contest winners' or Keynote's tables. And if you're still not convinced you'll be able to sit where you want, how about earning a "Reserved" sign for yourself? Like I mentioned, you can win the Pikes Peak Writers Fiction Contest, or be selected as a Faculty member. If that's not on your agenda for this year, you can check with our lovely Volunteer Coordinator, Sharon Williams ([volunteers@pikespeakwriters.com](mailto:volunteers@pikespeakwriters.com)), to see if there are any volunteer jobs available that would qualify you for your own "Reserved" sign.

I know it's especially annoying when the dreaded "Reserved" sign has rendered offlimits the very seat you want to occupy. But please remember it's there for a good reason. If you don't remember, and you just happen to move it, hide it, eat it or use it as a paper airplane, I'm afraid I'll have to put on my Security hat and have a word with you. Nobody wants that. Least of all me. I look silly in hats.

See you in the PPWC Banquet Hall! (Oh— and please leave your squirrels at the door. I promise I'll look after them.)

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