

# THE ONE RULE

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There are no required sessions. You aren't obligated to do anything. Our only rule is to write. Everything else on the schedule is optional. (I mean... you should eat and rest.) Participate in what seems helpful. Work at the pace that's best for you. Above all, write.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

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### COVID & HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

The Collins Retreat Center follows current state-wide guidance regarding COVID precautions. Presently, that means masking is optional. Those who prefer to wear masks are encouraged to and we expect everyone to respect that choice. Air filtration and hand sanitizer are being made available in our gathering spaces.

**Feeling Sick?** We want you and those around you to be healthy. If you develop symptoms of COVID or any other transmissible illness before arriving, please stay home. If you develop symptoms while you are here, we will work with you to make arrangements to isolate or help you get home. If you stay home or have to leave due to illness, we will gladly forward your registration fees to a future event, less any appropriate proration for meals and lodging used.

### PROTECTING THE ATMOSPHERE

We hold this event at a venue like this precisely because we want a peaceful space where our creative work can happen without distraction. Please do your part to maintain that atmosphere. Be thoughtful about activities that will distract others, like personal phone calls, music, movies, and other media. **Don't take phone calls in the chapel or other spaces where people are writing.** For short calls, please step outside. For longer calls or work-related calls, please take them in your room. Please keep your phone and other devices set to silent during your time here.

## OUR HOME BASE

We are the only group onsite and all common areas are available for our use. However, our home base will be **The Chapel**, located up the boardwalk from the sleeping rooms. You'll choose a spot that will be yours for the weekend. All our group gatherings will be here. Most importantly, snacks and beverages are available all day long in **the Chapel Cafe**.

## MEALS

Meals are served in the **Main Lodge** on the main level, past the lobby. You don't have to come to any meal, but these are the only times meals are available. Please don't enter the kitchen.

You'll hear a bell rung when the staff is ready for you to take a seat. The menu will be presented at the times listed, along with the specifics for all required dietary needs. If you requested dietary accommodations, please be on time at meals so you don't miss this introduction. We want you to get the information you need to eat safely.

<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>8:00 AM</b>
<b>Lunch</b>	<b>12:30 PM</b>
<b>Dinner</b>	<b>6:00 PM</b>

## SNACKS, BEVERAGES & PERSONAL FOOD PREPARATION

All meals are provided and will be served in the **Main Lodge**. Coffee and tea are available at all times in the Main Lodge. Snacks, water, coffee, and tea will also be provided in **the Chapel Cafe**. The Chapel Cafe also has a sink, mini-fridge, and microwave available for our group use.

If you have other personal food or snack needs, you will find a full-sized refrigerator/freezer for guests in the **Hospitality Nook** in the Main Lodge, just off the lobby. Your items should be covered, sealed, and labeled with your name and date. *Note: You must bring everything necessary to serve and consume what you bring since no cookware or service ware is provided.*

## MISSING SOAP? NEED BLANKETS & PILLOWS?

Did you forget shampoo? Your room comes with hand soap, but not body wash, shampoo, or conditioner. If you forgot yours, some basic hygiene supplies are available in the **Hospitality Nook** in the Main Lodge. There you'll also find additional towels as well as alarm clocks and hair dryers you can borrow. Please keep the blankets and pillows in your rooms. Additional throw blankets will be available in the Chapel. If you need additional blankets or pillows, ask at the front desk.

## WIFI ACCESS

Internet is available onsite. The WIFI is strongest in the Main Lodge and the Chapel. The signal is weak in the sleeping areas.

<b>Network ID</b>	<b>ALCRC_Guest</b>
<b>Password</b>	<b>Fir.Tree</b>

## CHECK OUT

On Sunday morning, please check out of your room and return your key to **the red basket** at the front desk as soon as you're done using the room for the morning and **no later than 10 AM**. Our weekend together ends after lunch. If you didn't drive, you can keep your luggage in **The Chapel** with us until you leave.

# SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES

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While you're here you may want to take advantage of some of the optional supporting activities we provide:

## CIRCLE SESSIONS

Six times during the weekend, you'll have the opportunity to gather with a smaller group of writers facilitated by one of our coaches. Wait, Why?! Aren't writers introverts? Don't writers prefer to avoid such things? Have no fear. These are not ice-breaking, forced-participation, break-out groups. Neither are they deep-dive-therapy groups. Like everything we do, these groups are optional.

We plan these Circle Sessions to create a space where you can be seen, heard, and encouraged in your writing work for the day. Checking in with these groups provides gentle accountability to keep moving. It's also a non-threatening space where you'll get to connect to some other writers. You'll be surprised at how much you have in common as writers, even if the rest of your life is completely different.

The group you're part of will be the same each time, so you'll be able to get to know some of the other writers better and have more context to better support each other.

So, optional, but encouraged!

- **Circle Session Orientation** happens on Thursday night at 7:30 PM. Meet your Circle and learn how these groups work and what to expect.
- **Morning Starts** (After breakfast, 8:45 AM, Friday, Saturday & Sunday) are an opportunity to set your intention for the work you want to attend to that day.
- **Evening Check-In** (After dinner, 6:45 PM, Friday and Saturday) is a chance to reflect on how the day went and what you can learn from it.

## ONE-ON-ONE COACHING

Sometimes you need a brain outside your head to find your way through a problem. Three coaches are available to meet with you. All are experienced writers in different contexts over many years. Each brings a unique perspective and areas of strength. Need a quick point of feedback? Prefer a longer sit-down conversation to work through a particular problem in your project or writing life? That's why the coaches are here.

**How to get a session:** Request a session with one of the coaches via the sign-up white board in the Chapel. When you sign up, list your preferred coach (if any) and the area of focus for the conversation. The coach will approach you to follow up. They may be immediately available for a short conversation, or they may schedule a block of time with you. *One note, just to be clear, since this question has come up before: There is no additional charge for this. The availability of coaching during our weekend together is included.*

**How to use a session:** Our coaching sessions are best for targeted feedback and problem-solving. The goal of this weekend is to provide you with encouragement and gentle accountability to help you move forward in your writing. The coaches are great at helping you move past pitfalls and hurdles that are keeping you spinning your wheels. While there are some exceptions, these sessions will be under thirty minutes, because it is our intention to give you an actionable next step that you can immediately take. If you're looking for an in-depth session for something broad, like re-working your whole plot, planning a social media strategy, or creating book proposal, that is best for a separate consultation that you arrange with the coach for a time outside our weekend.

### **This week our coaches include:**

**Michael Martin** - *Michael has been a professional writer and editor for more than twenty-five years. He has worked in a wide range of industries crafting technical, marketing, and internal communications, as well as developing and delivering training content. In addition to his many years of professional writing and editing, he has published fiction (short stories) and nonfiction (essays), with a focus on fantastic/speculative fiction. He also has extensive experience in leading and*

*facilitating feedback and editing sessions for writers of all types. Michael really loves helping writers work through thorny writing challenges, as well as editing and coaching on making narratives more exciting and immersive. He can also help at the detailed level of line editing and proofing for grammar, spelling, and sentence structure.*

**M. Carolyn Miller** - *A professional writer for nearly forty years, Carolyn has published personal and professional development books, articles, blogs and business/simulation narratives for pay, as well as essays and short fiction for passion. She knows how to ask probing questions to help you get to the heart of what you want to communicate, and then strategize how to organize and “translate” that content. In addition, as a game and narrative instructional designer, she can offer suggestions for how to make your content more interactive and engaging, online and on the page.*

**Leanne Sype** - *Leanne has been a professional writer and editor for more than two decades. As a writer she has worked with a range of clients crafting business communication, marketing copy, and training curricula. Leanne spends the majority of her professional time editing (both developmental and technical), and has edited memoirs, sci-fiction, romance, and fantasy novels, Christian living works, and self-help/how-to books. She also loves being an emotional support editor when writers feel like their WIP will never be done or good enough. As a coach, Leanne is particularly equipped to help you hone your overall messaging and organization; flesh out chapters/sections, character development, and topic ideas; and troubleshoot your stuck-points. She can also assist with technical issues like mechanics, grammar, word choice, and citation.*

**Marc Schelske** - *Writing is how Marc figures out what he thinks, so writing is a big part of his life. He’s written for public speaking for thirty years, articles and blogs for fifteen, and has four published non-fiction books. He’s a systems thinker who is also growing comfortable in the world of intuition and emotion, curious about how the inner life of a writer impacts their writing. Marc is a voracious reader, with a special love for High and YA Fantasy. As a coach, he is particularly equipped to help you with organization, narrative sequence, developmental editing, aligning your words with the needs of your audience, and improving your writing workflow. As a big nerd, he can also speak to writing tech, tools, social media, and various publishing strategies.*

## EVENING READINGS

Friday & Saturday evening we have an optional Reading. This is not a feedback or critique session, but an opportunity for you to read your work in a supportive and encouraging environment. If you'd like to read, **sign up in the Chapel**. This is also where the readings will be on Friday & Saturday nights at 7:30 PM.

## OTHER BRAIN BREAKS

Your creative work happens best when you give your brain breaks. Be gentle with yourself. Consider some of these brain breaks:

- **Take naps.**
- **Journal.** Don't journal about your project. Journal about your experience, what you're noticing about your emotional state, or even what you're learning about yourself. Or read the inspirational quotes at the top of the journal pages in this guide. Find one that moves you and journal about why that is.
- **Use the treadmills** to get some fresh blood to the brain. These are located in the McConnell Room, downstairs in the Main Lodge.
- **Play a game of Ping Pong** with another writer who needs a break. Same place as the treadmills.
- **Hike** along the 2 miles of forest trails here at the retreat center. Trails may be wet, so wear appropriate shoes and clothes.
- **Walk the labyrinth** "Peace Path" in the Herb Garden.
- **Browse the books** in the library. Main Lodge, 2nd floor.
- **Take a drive.** If you're desperate for a change of scenery, the town of Sandy is a 10-minute drive. Two great coffee shops that have great coffee and snacks, as well as being good places to write are **The AntFarm Cafe & Bakery** (7 AM - 3 PM) and **Mountain Moka** (6 AM - 6 PM). **Joes Donuts** is also a classic, with one of the best Apple Fritters you've ever had, but there's no tables. (5 AM- 5 PM)

## TOOLBOX TRAINING SESSIONS

Several times during the weekend, we'll offer brief optional teaching sessions. These trainings are on practical matters that are relevant for anyone who works with words, regardless of genre.

### Thursday, 6:45 PM - Facing Writers Retreat Anxiety

*Leanne Sype.* "Three things that cause Writers Retreat Anxiety... and How to Calm Down." This practical advice is part of the Thursday evening "Getting Started" session in **The Chapel**.

### Friday, 5:15 PM - Focus with the Pomodoro

*Marc Schelske.* A simple practice to help manage your focus while working on a project. The Pomodoro is so helpful we teach it every single year. Whether you're new to using it or a veteran who wants to be reminded, this simple practice will help you make the most of the weekend. **Chapel Cafe.**

### Saturday, 1:30 PM - Only One Hat

*Marc Schelske.* Writing is made up of many roles. Most writers switch between various roles many times each session, but this habit is getting in your way. Marc explains why and what you can do instead. **Chapel Cafe.**

### Saturday, 5:15 PM - Learning from Writers Block

*Marc Schelske.* Writers Block is not an inability to summon words. It's something deeper, and worth paying attention to. Marc explains what's going on with the experience we call "Writers Block" and how it might be offering you important guidance. **Chapel Cafe.**

### Sunday, 11:45 AM - Finding Effective Feedback Groups

*Michael Martin.* Guidance on why not all feedback is good feedback and how to find a feedback group that really helps. This will be part of our Sunday morning session "Thinking About What's Next" in **The Chapel**.