



# Notes From the Center

## May 2011

**Alton L. Collins Retreat Center**  
**Creating Sacred Space for Mind, Body and Soul**

### A letter from the director:

As I walked our trails recently I noticed that even though it has not felt like spring here in Oregon, there are plants that have refused to let the conditions deter them from rising up. The normal course of spring growth has been delayed but it will not be denied its time. In fact, the trails are beginning to feel a little crowded as the waterleaf has begun to encroach upon them, nearly obscuring the trail from one's vision.

I believe that in our lives there are conditions that cause our growth to be delayed. Some of these conditions are beyond our control, just as the weather that has been cool, wet and lacking in sunshine is beyond the control of the plants. And yet the plant "knows" that its time is coming and it must wait until the combination of conditions allow it to release energy, causing a great explosion of growth.

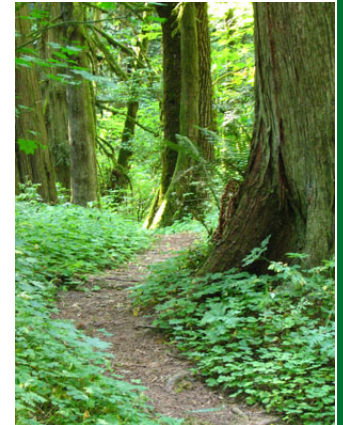
Part of what makes us human is that we often have the simple choice of deciding whether or not we will choose to change and grow. At times we are complicit in our lack of growth, often because we fear what it might require of us or because we would prefer not to deal with it. Whatever our reasons are for stunting our growth, there will come a time when we must choose to throw off that which inhibits growth and embrace who we are becoming.

May the days ahead for you be filled with sunshine and warmth that you may bloom and grow in such a way that it is beautiful to behold and a miracle of life lived to its fullest. May you inspire others to dare to venture into the sunshine and warmth that they too may become those who live in the fullness of life. And may you remember how it is that this sacred place that we call the Collins Retreat Center enabled you to grow into who you are today.

Peace,

Todd Bartlett

Director, Alton L. Collins Retreat Center



**You can find this newsletter, along with more details about the Retreat Center, at our website: [CollinsRetreatCenter.org](http://CollinsRetreatCenter.org)**

### What's the latest in the garden?

What is a gardener to do in this cold wet weather? We did get a few cool weather crops in: spinach and snow peas. Other plants are waiting warm, dry weather to be planted. We have some amazing rhubarb that we planted this past fall. We hope these plants will produce well enough to be added to some desserts from our kitchen.



Our herb garden, which is part of our Peace Path, is continuing to take shape. We have identified some additional herbs that we would like to plant in the garden this year that will add a sensory experience of aromas to your walk on the path. Currently in our herb garden you will find: Purple Sage, Cilantro, Parsley, Oregano, Thyme, Day Lilies (the flowers will provide an edible garnish for a salad), and Chives.

## Gift Shop Sale in May!

We are discontinuing our line of children's toys and puzzles in our gift shop. That means a great sale opportunity for anyone who visits us during the month of May. All our children's items from 10,000 Villages are discounted 25% this month. These toys are high quality, hand-made by artisans around the world who work with 10,000 Villages for fair compensation. We encourage you to come to one of our programs, or just give us a call to arrange a time to stop by for a visit.



## Upcoming programs:

Many of you have attended retreats here at the Collins Retreat Center sponsored by your church, non-profit or other organization. We would like to invite you to return to the Center for one of the increasing number of programs that we are sponsoring here. Take a look below at what's coming up, and visit our events webpage to see all our 2011 programs ([CollinsRetreatCenter.org/retreats.html](http://CollinsRetreatCenter.org/retreats.html))

May

Clergy Book Discussion Series--May 12

Liturgical Arts Renewal@Collins (LARC)--May 24

Great Hymns of the Faith I--May 26

June

Clergy Book Discussion Series--June 22

July

Taize' Prayer Retreat--July 31-August 3

## Recipe: Chef Guillermo's Strawberry Balsamic Vinaigrette

serves 6

### Ingredients:

2 c. Strawberries, Fresh (large diced)

¼ c. Sugar, Granulated

1/8 c. Balsamic Vinegar

1 ea. Garlic, Clove (minced)

½ ea. Shallot (minced)

½ tsp. Dijon Mustard

To taste: Red Pepper Flakes

To taste: Salt, Pepper

½ c. Extra-Virgin Olive Oil



### Assembly:

Combine the sliced strawberries and the sugar and let sit for 15 minutes. In a food processor combine: ¼ cup of the strawberries (reserve the rest of the berries for garnish), the juice from the sugared berries, the garlic, shallots, mustard, red pepper flakes, and the salt & pepper. Pulse several times then run the processor while slowly adding the oil.

Toss vinaigrette with 4 cups of spinach, garnish with English cucumbers, toasted hazelnuts, sugared strawberries, and parmesan crisps.

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