



Solstice

Our Gaia reaches that part of her orbit where her south pole is nearer the sun than anywhere else in the yearly round. Minnesota is cold and dark. And then, like the tides, the balance shifts.

This last year, underneath the gusty play of waves on the surface of my life, the tide of the Gaia Troubadour in me has flowed and ebbed. And in the darkness of the ebbing, under the waves, under even the tides, I dimly sense a deep stream of meaning, flowing quietly, invisibly, supporting everything.

Where does the Gulf Stream, that warm "river in the sea" end up? It enters the North Atlantic off Labrador, cools, sinks to the bottom and flows away in cold dark rivers, one of which is called the Labrador Current. This flows, miles deep, along the ocean floor back under the warm currents to the cold-water-upwelling, rich with plankton, where the Gulf Stream is originally formed.

When I try to write of my life, looking back to the last solstice, and to the preceding autumn that followed the second Gaia Voices newsletter, I find exciting waves on the surface, a jumble of events moving this way and that. Further, I see a tide, first rising, then ebbing, ebbing. (This much ebbing has been hard to take.) And under that (is it just my need, my despair?), I see -- feel -- a deep movement of return, which gives me hope.

"Gaia" is a semi-scientific way of naming "mother earth." It's a way of talking about the entire planet as a single living organism.

This newsletter is available at the Meeting House of Twin Cities Friends Meeting and in the backroom of the Hungry Mind. I'll always have copies of current and recent issues with me. I mail it to a few friends whom I don't see often. I want to know your Gaia-related thoughts. Approach me face to face. Alternatively, there's 612-228-1550, 1081 Laurel Ave., St. Paul MN 55104 or rfuller@igc.apc.org.

WAVES

I am not yet clear on distinguishing between Richard the environmentalist and the Gaia Troubadour. Is the third-floor insulation project Gaia Troubadour work? Probably not. What about getting the Hungry Mind Bookstore on the World Wide Web on the Internet? I am very excited that we are part of a developing world nerve-network whose messages are mainly outside the control of the established corporate and government powers, at least for now.

Part of my Gaia-vision is "hard times ahead," and I see my work with my Quaker Meeting as helping to sustain a community which may be able to withstand the effects of the present and future cultural and environmental corrosion. I've just ended my

TIDES

In September and October of 1994 I felt like my dreams for the Gaia Troubadour were coming true. The Gaia Group I wanted was forming. I had written an inspirational second issue of this newsletter. And I wasn't 'just talking,' I was doing, an inspired member of an inspired group of environmentalists, ready to act to stop our civilization's plunge to a toxic death. But I didn't have the staying power. A copy of *Prison Life Magazine*, which 'coincidentally' fell into my hands, forced me to ask if I was really prepared for the consequences of my acts. "No, not for this cause, at least not at this time," was the answer.

That was a tough discovery. Actually, **I didn't lose much face**. People have been very kind not to question me too closely about the gap between words and deeds. The pain has mainly been inner. Mainly I was numb, disoriented.

And that's about it for the Gaia Troubadour, or so it seemed for the next several months. Recently I think I've detected a deep current, reported in "Streams," below, which

STREAMS

"There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, if taken at its flood..."

I did not catch a rising tide of opposition to dry-cask-nuclear-storage. And quite apart from the flow and ebb of public outcry, my own personal tide of Gaia Troubadour enthusiasm seems to have gone out.

I have wrestled a lot with this. "Newsletter #2 felt so right!" "And yet I was not prepared to follow through." "Was this cowardice?" "A case of ego-inflation?" **"A failure to understand that a Troubadour is a poet, not a soldier?"**

And yet, the flow of my life has gone on. In the spring, as I noticed that my upheaval with Betsy was being compounded

service on Ministry and Counsel (five years!) and have started a two-year term on Nominating Committee.

In the first *Gaia Voices* newsletter I mentioned that in a few months I wanted to form a prayer/discussion group. Almost immediately a Friend approached me and we began meeting.

The second *G.V.* newsletter began a hugely exciting time for me. Taking a passionate stand against the storage of nuclear waste on the Mississippi flood plain, I felt pleased to be in action, to be answering the question "So what, Troubadour, if the earth is a single living organism?" Betsy was arrested at the power plant and had a thrilling trial. I was arrested at a demonstration, and began preparing for an arrest by federal marshals, for blockading the casks. I met with people in Winona, downstream of the nuke, and

leads me to continue relating the story of the tides of my life, even though there's no appearance in them of the Gaia Troubadour.

In January things began to get surprisingly **difficult between me and Betsy**. This was mainly my doing. Things that had not bothered me much for the last seven years became big problems. Betsy was the one who urged us into counseling, and after a couple of months we found a therapist in our HMO system who was quite helpful in getting us through a period of "re-negotiating our relationship." I can recommend this process to any long-term relationship, but it was pretty rough in spots and there were a couple of times when we thought we weren't going to make it.

In February my household, **"The Big House on the Little Prairie,"** got serious about replacing Lea, who left the previous November. After much discussion we settled on a woman named Pat. We spent a month getting ready for her to move in, with Betsy and me vacating our bedroom for her, and putting a new wood floor in the room that was to be her office.

by an upheaval I was provoking in my living community, I began to sense that these deep upwellings were somehow related to the December of disorientation which had been triggered by my loss of nerve. In moments when I was not struggling with the messes I had gotten myself into, I asked myself, "How am I to understand this?"

And now, at last, I think I understand well enough to dare putting it in print. I might be wrong, you know, but this is the pattern I think I see:

The problem was there, already big as life, in my birthday performance. The personality we know as "Richard" had to step aside and "let the Gaia Troubadour come out." Richard, the man I have been, the *persona* I have created to get this soul

(flip to continue)