

Tennescene: Radical Actions & Summer Tours Deep in the Bible Belt

Fifth Estate Collective
Upside Down Culture Collective

2003

This summer, the Rule of Thirds recently dubbed by the Nashville Scene as a “subversive art space”—played host to numerous politically proactive collectives. June saw the educational and entertaining Upside Down Culture Collective hailing from our other outpost: Detroit. They shared a mix of radical art history, puppetry, music, and readings, in promotion for their newly released book *All the Days After*, a collection of art and poetry ranging from creatively pissed off to outright heart wrenching, in response to the events on and after September 11th. These guys are warm, funny, and intelligent: turning a culture upside down in a city near you or at

www.UPSIDEDOWNCULTURE.ORG

CrimethInc. keeps Barnstorming

On the tail end of their summer Barnstorming Tour, we were also paid a visit by eight very energetic members of the CrimethInc. Ex-workers Collective. They pretty much covered all bases as a DIY theatre troupe with impromptu, silhouette puppetry, acoustic music, juggling, and first hand accounts from the G8 protests in Canada.

Autonomadic Bookmobile

Also at Rule of Thirds, Nashville had the opportunity to witness the amazing, the death defying, the anything but “stupefying” Autonomadic Medicine Show and Bookmobile (featured in the winter of 2002 issue of FE). They deserve every bit of praise they receive and few bookstores rival their subversive selection. The night before, the Medicine Show did a great set at Pumpkin Hollow—anarchist commune and FE headquarters—where they were joined by the spoken word sermons of the Rev. Bonobo plus the musical stylings of Matty Popchart (sweet “camp-firepunk”), Kiwi (revolutionary dance), and Defiance, Ohio (anarchist acoustic pop punk). Check the traveling bookstore and sideshow out at www.autonomeia.org/bookmobile

Food Not Bombs

Nashville’s local chapter of Food Not Bombs, celebrating its one year anniversary, has received some well-deserved attention, when it was interviewed by WPLN (Nashville’s NPR). While the interview focused more on its methods rather than its mission, some powerful points were made about radical counter cultures, working outside of the system. To listen online go to www.wpln.org/news/features.html

Independent media center

Tennessee’s brand new IMC (independent media center), based in Nashville, has been doing a wonderful job covering such events as the Allied Media Conference, the Kensington Welfare Rights’ “Poor Peoples March”, and the recent actions at the Qakridge Y12 plant, and proudly links to KFAR, Knoxville’s long-standing pirate radio station.

Eastern Forest Defense

Against the backdrop of an orchestrated Bush Administration campaign to deliver the spoils of the nation’s wild places into the hands of the corporate robber barons, the Eastern Forest Justice League gathered in the hills of

Southeast Ohio this summer. The camp brought together activists from Florida to Quebec on a farm outside Athens to train in the trees and build a movement for direct action forest defense in eastern North America. After the camp, folks joined anti-mountaintop removal rallies, in Pittsburgh, PA, Charleston, WV, and Lexington, KY. There, the affinity groups dropped banners that read “Stop Mountaintop Removal,” and “King Coal is Killing Kentucky”. Mountaintop removal is an increasingly common style of strip mining in central and southern Appalachia, whereby the entire top of a mountain is clearcut and blasted apart, debris is dumped into adjacent valleys, burying the streams and all associated habitats. Large holding pools for the toxic slurry are built, often directly uphill from neighboring towns. Remediation of an exhausted mine usually consists of leveling the remainder of the hill with the filled valley and seeding it all with grass leaving a poor quality meadow or, in at least one case, a golf course. Mountaintop removal has buried over 1500 miles of streams in Kentucky and West Virginia.

Excerpted from a longer article by Perrin de Jong, Katuah Earth First! Cumberland Faction
compiled by john j. & luna c.

Against the Invading Wal-Martians

The Tennessee Valley Faction of Katuah Earth First! is fighting a principled and uncompromising battle against Wal-Mart in Chattanooga, TN. WalMart’s history of building massive new buildings, only to abandon the old, has carried the idea to its obscene extreme: disposable real estate! And, this Wal-Mart is being built adjacent to important bird habitat and wetlands.

KEF! has acted in solidarity with neighborhood groups, Native Americans, naturalists, history buffs and citizens concerned about the tainted record of Walmart’s labor practices. At every step of the way KEF! has been radical, without attempting to dominate its coalition partners, waiting until its partners were satisfied that they were being ignored before resorting to direct actions. (These actions have included banner drops and locking to equipment.)

Update by Prole Cat, In the year of our store, 2003

New anarchist group in Chattanooga

We are pleased to announce the formation of a new anarchist group, Class Conflict of Chattanooga (CCC). “We oppose oppression in all its forms, and have come together specifically to support the struggles of low-wage workers who are ignored by the unions and politicians. At the moment, we are a small group with big dreams and some immediate goals and plans. We want to help you kick your bosses ass!”

KEF! Blockades Mountain Top Removal Coal Mine

Over in coal country, different factions of Katuah Earth First! came together to pull off a daring two part direct action in August. In the early morning hours of the 18th, a scrappy crew of 8 put up a blockade at the entrance to the Zeb Mountain coal mine in Campbell County, just north of Knoxville. The Zeb Mountain operation will effect over 2100 acres and remove 3 peaks from the top of the mountain. Endangered Species habitat will be destroyed and local residents impacted by blasting. KEF! succeeded in blocking the entrance and delaying work for over 3 hours. Another KEF! crew climbed over 100 feet to deploy two banners on a giant nearby billboard. Katuah Earth First! demands an unconditional end to destructive coal mining practices and immediate protection for communities, forests, rivers, mountains and rare, threatened, and endangered species. We are gearing up for a long fight to stop mountain top removal in TN. When we stop it here, we will start pushing the companies out of KY, VA and WVA. We hope to inspire folks all over coal country to rise up in open rebellion against the coal companies. It’s time we got the liberation of Southern Appalachia well under way.

All y’all are invited to participate in and support KEF! campaigns. Please send newsletter requests and donations to KEF! P.O. Box 281 Chattanooga, TN 37401

Earlier in the month, KEF! activists from Asheville paid a visit to the Cradle of Forestry center over in NC to protest and disrupt Smokey the Bear's birthday bash.

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<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/362-fall-2003/tennescene-radical-actions-summer-tours-deep-in-t>
Fifth Estate #362, Fall, 2003

[fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net](https://www.fifthestate.org)