

Editorial

Sunfrog (Andy “Sunfrog” Smith)

2004

“If a man walks in the woods for love of them half of each day, he is in danger of being regarded as a loafer; but if he spends his whole day as a speculator, shearing off those woods and making earth bald before her time, he is esteemed an industrious and enterprising citizen. As if a town had no interest in its forests but to cut them down! Most men would feel insulted if it were proposed to employ them in throwing stones over a wall, and then in throwing them back, merely that they might earn their wages. But many are no more worthily employed now.”

—Henry David Thoreau

Contemplating the completion of any issue of this journal combines a potent mixture of relief and exhilaration. Beyond the usual fatigued festivity, there’s a few things this time that are worth an extra pause. First, Number 365 marks the ninth edition completed by the “new collective” headquartered at Pumpkin Hollow Community, a modest rural commune in the hills of Dismal, Tennessee. So, it’s been a full two years of a regular quarterly publication produced by an editorial group based in the South, with solid support from several members of the old core group from Detroit still involved.

Furthermore, we sit just two issues away from our 40th anniversary edition. Right now, we are considering a booklike, double-issue to kick-off 2005. Before then, we will have an autumn edition addressing “Radical Education” (see the call on page 16) and a winter issue focusing on “Economy and Community.” So, the rest of 2004 and the beginning of 2005 hold promising possibilities for any writers, artists, and editors who choose to participate in this project.

Most of all, the content of the current issue presents an important juncture for *Fifth Estate*. With the theme of “Reconsidering Primitivism,” we deal head-on with the question of our reputation as an “anti-civilization” journal. And we do this in good company, surrounded by compelling voices who have a vision for creating a future without depending on the demonic dealings of a global, industrialist, capitalist menace.

For this discussion, we’re pleased to present new work by the amazing Derrick Jensen from his forthcoming book on the future of sustainability and society. Joining Jensen in the features section, we have regular FE contributors David Watson, Don LaCoss, Walker Lane, and Peter Lamborn Wilson, along with new work from Richard Heinberg, Franklin Rosemont, and Witch Hazel. We also reprint some pivotal and defining texts from Watson and Fredy Perlman.

Kicking off the issue, we once again make an editorial statement about our staunch anti-war, anti-government position as the death and destruction in Iraq continue. For most of the last two years, the hideous escapades of American empire have called us to confront again and again the war machine’s maniacal machinations. We also feature reports on gatherings, actions, and the discovery of a deceased Tennessee anarchist named Ross Winn. Then there’s the art of James Koehnline, Richard Mock, and others who generously donate their impressive images time after time.

As you read about the unplugged feral future in these pages, know that some of us spent countless hours in front of the computer to put this issue in your hands. But the central argument remains the same, and so, when the dream is realized, we'll have no need for critical journals, only journeys down the creek of creative, simple living. We believe that publishing is an important political activity unto itself, but we also realize that this project is an extension of other activities we engage in to promote a revolutionary transformation.

Like many of you, we look forward to the convergences and confrontations coming this summer. As the empire staggers and stalls, let's give it our all for revolution.

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