

'Culture jammers' protest holiday shopping

The activists outside a Portland mall celebrated 'Buy Nothing Day,' a 24-hour fast from consumerism

BY TYPH TUCKER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PORTLAND — On the biggest shopping day of the year, a small

group of mostly youthful activists stood outside a local mall Friday urging shoppers to take part in a 24-hour moratorium on consumer spending.

While thousands of Portlanders celebrated the spirit of the season by watching a parade and browsing downtown stores in Oregon's business capital, a dozen and a half self-proclaimed "culture jammers" were celebrating "Buy Nothing Day," hoping to throw a wrench into what they say is society's blind habit of consumerism.

To the tune of "Jingle Bells," they sang, "Buy some more, buy some more, you don't have enough."

"It's a consumer fast. You basically make a pledge with yourself to not buy anything for 24 hours," said 62-year-old Kalle Lasn, editor in chief of the Vancouver, British Columbia-based Adbusters Magazine, who founded Buy Nothing Day in 1992.

The protest made little or no dent

in the shopping frenzy that swept the Portland area and the rest of the nation.

"It's crazy here," said a spokeswoman Kristy Kummer, for the Woodburn Company Stores outlet mall in Woodburn. "Some of our stores have been open since 4:45 (a.m.). It's been very good."

Shoppers crowded into Powell's City of Books, one of the nation's largest independent bookstores, which houses over 1 million books.

"It is packed wall-to-wall with people having a wonderful time," said Meredith Schreiber, manager of Powell's main Portland branch.

The shopping frenzy was reported across the country, with consumers lining up before dawn, despite freezing temperatures in some cities.

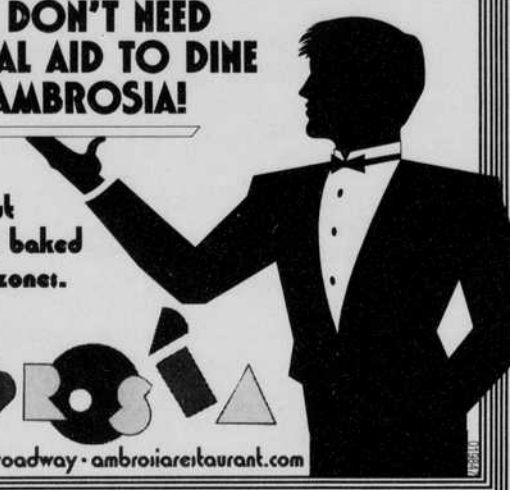
The National Retail Federation estimated that up to 130 million consumers — roughly 44 percent of Americans — would go shopping over Thanksgiving weekend. The spree begins with "Black Friday," the day after Thanksgiving, so named because it often marks the turn from red to black ink, or debt to profit, for many retailers.

At the protest in Portland, as a brass quartet piped out "Joy to the World," picketers marched outside the city's largest mall, holding up signs urging shoppers to take a break.

"We realize that everyone is a consumer but we are giving them some alternatives," said 15-year-old McKenzie Debuk, of Portland.

Inside the mall, buying continued, unfazed by the scene outside.

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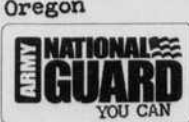
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IN BRIEF

Earthquake hits Japan, at least eight injured

TOKYO — A powerful earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 7.1 struck Japan's northern island of Hokkaido early this morning, swaying buildings, throwing objects off shelves and triggering a small tsunami wave that reached the shore.

The 3:32 a.m. quake injured at least eight people, but there were no immediate reports of damage.

Japan's Meteorological Agency quickly issued a tsunami warning for the eastern shores of Hokkaido's Pacific coastal area. Tsunami are dangerous waves triggered by seismic activity.

But agency official Masahiro Yamamoto later told a televised news conference that the agency had lifted its warning, saying it had detected a 4-inch tsunami and expected only small changes in the ocean's surface.

The quake was centered off Hokkaido's east coast, about 550 miles northwest of Tokyo, 30 miles below the sea surface. Citizens throughout northern Japan felt the rocking, including in Hokkaido's largest city, Sapporo, and Kushiro, on the island's eastern shore.

A 4.6-magnitude aftershock followed about 30 minutes later.

National broadcaster NHK showed footage of desks rumbling in offices and convenience-store goods thrown from shelves by the force of the quake.

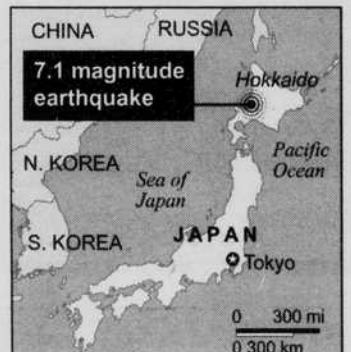
Most of those injured were in the cities of Kushiro, Nemuro and Bekkai-cho. An 80-year-old woman living in Nemuro was thrown to the floor and later had to be treated for broken ribs, and an 85-year-old suffered cuts to his face after he was struck by falling objects, NHK reported. The others injuries weren't serious, NHK said.

Hundreds of homes in Hokkaido temporarily lost power and natural gas services, NHK reported.

— The Associated Press

Earthquake and tsunami hit Japan

A powerful earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 7.1 struck Japan's northern island of Hokkaido early Monday and triggered a tsunami that lashed the shore. There were no immediate reports of damage.



SOURCE: ESRI AP

Stitch: Personalized gifts to delight children

Continued from page 1

kit, arts and crafts kits and Klutz books, a brand of activity books that include craft kits.

Cathcart said she thinks the children will be thrilled to get her gifts because they are personalized.

"They'll get better gifts; people in here are being very generous," she said.

One of those kids, Shinekwa, will be receiving a book of Zen. The book

will be a good present for Shinekwa because she's Buddhist, Cathcart said. At least she was Buddhist over the summer; Cathcart admits she's not sure she still is.

TAKING ACTION

For more information on donating gifts for LGBTQA Co-director Crystal Cathcart's gift drive or to join 'Stitch and Bitch,' contact Cathcart at 346-3360.

Many of the gifts will come from the 'Stitch and Bitch' group, which meets for about two hours, at 8 p.m. on Mondays. Tonight's

meeting will be the third meeting for the group and the last meeting before the gifts are mailed on

Wednesday.

But the meeting won't be the last for the group. Participants have had so much fun, they've decided to keep the group after the holiday season.

Ryan said it will become a drop-in gathering where people can socialize or learn how to knit.

"As for coming here late at night, it's a way to hook up with friends after a long day," Miller said. "It's a way to take a break. That way we don't have to be studying all of the time."

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