

METROPOLITAN

Animal rights group targets furriers

Robert Lothian
Downtown Christmas shoppers may have been surprised Saturday to see picketers moving back and forth in front of stores that sell furs.

"Every Fur Hurts," and "Slow Death is Not a Class Act," said signs carried by members of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

Barbara Spears, spokeswoman for the local chapter of the national animal rights group, said they were protesting the trapping and factory farming that they say is part of the fur industry. Trapping and methods used in large fur farms are cruel and inhumane to minks, foxes, coyotes, weasels, nutria, sables and other animals, said Spears. "We object to using animals for furs," she said. "It represents a lot of pain and suffering."

The group picketed about two hours at three stores. Spears said that she and others in the group have picketed outside fur stores during the Christmas season for four years. Spears sometimes wears a raccoon hat to dramatize the situation.

Employees at one store said the picketing was helping rather than hindering business, and business was great, they said. This store offered mink coats for up to \$12,000.

"Why don't they picket chicken



Animal rights advocate pickets fur store in downtown Portland Saturday. (Photo: Kris Altucher)

farms?," asked the owner. "We ranch-raise minks for coats just like chickens are raised and like cattle are raised for McDonald's." Spears accused the owner of throwing a pail of water on them and she said he accused them of spitting on his windows. "He hates us," she said.

This same owner once obtained a restraining order against the picketing, she said. "We get people driving by and they say, 'Get a job,' and they call us names." But one man brought them coffee during a cold snap. "He said, 'I wasn't a believer when I got up this morning, but now I am'."

The 200-member group harbors a diversity of views, she said. "I would say that about half of our membership are vegetarians and there are some that won't buy leather. I, for one, certainly haven't made that step."

The group was one of several that sponsored the controversial anti-trapping ballot measure of 1980. In April of 1983, during World Week for Lab Animals, they organized a 24-hour vigil outside the Oregon Regional Primate Center, and they plan similar action this year, said Spears.

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Petett moves to consulting

Lanita Duke
GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W.—In 1985 a change in command will occur at the Urban League of Portland as Eddye Petett departs as Chief Executive Officer. Petett set a new career goal and is looking back on her six-year tenure as Executive Officer.

"When I came, I plotted out things I would like to see accomplished. It took a little longer than I thought. And I also wanted to do something different," she said.

Petett received a Kellogg Fellowship that allowed her to travel and study other cultures. With emphasis on practical applications of computers and technology, Petett plans to open a private consulting firm.

She defends the non-confrontational approach the U.S. employs which gives it the appearance of inactivity.

"We work within the institution to insure that Blacks and other minorities are given equal opportunities at jobs. The people who are making decisions are hearing from us," Petett added.

The racial composition of the staff of the incoming Mayor and County Commission is a concern she has been raising her last weeks in the U.L.

"That only happens when people feel that's an acceptable alternative. More people will have to raise this issue — both publicly and privately. Elected officials serve a multi-racial population. They (minorities) need to be represented on staff to give officials a perspective of what's going on within the total city," said Petett. She added that although the White House no longer digests U.L.'s input, "Congress still listens." She decried the liberal illusion Portland, Oregon, has.

"Portland is liberal only with its effects on the environment. There are people interested in making changes, but you have to continuously prod them. The whole issue of equal opportunity is one a lot of people don't feel is relevant anymore. In town a lot of things happen to people because of the color of their skin," she added.

Petett is credited with the recent consolidation of U.L. services, resources and branches. Her advice to the incoming administration is: Jobs ought to be the Number One priority. Not just the position, but preparing for it. Even when all things are equal, opportunities to move into decision-making positions are few. In the past years that was not true in the public sector. Now the opportunities are few in the public and private sectors. The solutions are staying on the job. The excuse that none are qualified is no longer true."

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