

get out!



The Juneteenth rally at Newport City Hall

Some assembly required

Balancing speech and safety in a COVID-19 world

By RACHEL BAIRD & KRISTA MELONE

For the TODAY

A global pandemic continues, but that isn't the only worldwide news these days. People are gathering by the thousands in large cities across the globe and here on the coast rallies and protests are forming in smaller groups.

These aren't protests for re-opening the economy or against wearing masks. These are groups of people gathering to shed light on systemic racism and protest police violence against people of color. Health officials have warned that the gatherings could result in higher COVID-19 cases. In early June, the CDC cautioned that we would see a large spike in positive test results due to protests. They encouraged people to wear masks and

socially distance, as well as getting tested after participating in protests. As we enter week four of ongoing protests in the US, the fear of large spikes has settled slightly. Health organizations have found that in most large cities such as Minneapolis and New York the overall case numbers continue to drop despite large outdoor gatherings. They warn that we are not out of the woods yet and should continue to be vigilant in testing.

Oregon has seen large protests in Salem and Portland, but there are plenty of smaller groups gathering in local coastal towns, as well. In Lincoln City there have been protestors along Highway 101 near the D River Wayside. Rockaway Beach, Nehalem and other small coastal communities have seen groups holding demonstrations in solidarity with Black Lives Matter.

On Friday, June 19, Newport saw a group of about 60 people on the lawn of City Hall for Juneteenth. Lincoln County Commissioner Claire Hall joined

