



Protesters take a knee at a McMinnville rally

the rally and told us that she “support[s] people continuing to exercise their First Amendment right to peaceful protest, no matter what the issue, as long as they follow the masking and distancing guidelines.” A diverse bunch of rallygoers, young and old, wore their masks and kept plenty of space between each group.

Speaking to a few protestors we found that those who had braved a public gathering were there because they felt it was an important enough issue to warrant some increased exposure to the virus. One demonstrator, who asked not to be named stated “I fear this virus as much as every knowledgeable person does. I have been a nurse my entire life; I want to be safe and well. But right now, a greater danger to America exists that is deep and institutionalized. So, I put on my mask and stayed six feet from those who did not ride in my car and went to a rally.”

Although there is no true way to know why it was George Floyd’s death in particular that sparked the global response to racism, it is obvious that it came at a time when people were ready to take to the streets to speak out. From the Central Oregon

Coast to Montreal, Canada; to Christchurch, New Zealand; to Bristol, UK; people are marching their streets for change despite the threat of COVID-19.

These demonstrations, rallies and protests are expected to continue, at least for the near future. This during a time that state and local governments in Oregon are issuing new directives for increased use of facial coverings and most cities in Lincoln County are once again recommending against gatherings of more than 10 people. The CDC has warned that any in-person gathering comes with risks, but on the lower end of risk level are “smaller outdoor and in-person gatherings in which individuals from different households remain spaced at least six feet apart, wear cloth face coverings, do not share objects, and come from the same local area (e.g., community, town, city, or county).”

Some experts see properly social distanced gathering such as Newport’s small rally as safer than family and friends getting together for a Fourth of July picnic or graduation celebration. This is because strangers tend to stay separated. At family gatherings, people tend to hug each other or feel that a mask isn’t necessary or play a quick game of frisbee. So, folks, if you want to show your support, protest racism or share your story at one of the many Black Lives Matter events coming up, Stay Safe; wear a mask, keep your six-foot cushion and stay local.

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In addition to being professional photographers, Krista Melone and Rachel Baird are co-owners of Tah•Lume Curiosities & Gifts, which offers online commerce at www.tahlume.com.

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