

Protesters outside Newport City Hall demand reopening

BY HILLARY DAVIS

A small band of demonstrators gathered outside Newport Beach City Hall Monday morning to protest coronavirus-driven stay-at-home orders.

About 30 people took to the sidewalk for the protest, which lasted less than two hours. Police reported no issues.

The protest was one of several over the last few days, around the region and throughout the country, as people push back against restrictions that have been in place statewide for more than a month to stem the spread of the potentially deadly COVID-19 coronavirus. But the unprecedented, widespread closures of schools, “nonessential” businesses and tourist attractions have taken a deep gouge out of the economy.

Huntington Beach Friday, protesters decried the economic damage and chafed at restrictions on personal liberties. Others challenged the seriousness of the virus and called the efforts at control overkill — counter to California public health officials and other experts. A similar demonstration took place in San Clemente on Sunday.

Newport’s significant hospitality industry is largely shuttered and several coastal amenities are also off-limits or heavily restricted, including boardwalks, piers, beach parking and the famed Wedge surfing area.

As of Monday, Orange County had 1,676 known cases of the coronavirus and 33 related deaths among 31,715 cases and 1,179 deaths statewide.

hillary.davis@latimes.com
Twitter: @dailypilot_hd

THREAT

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listed as an associate on the website of the Alvandi Law Group, which focuses on workers’ compensation and has an office in Irvine, but he hadn’t worked there since September.

“He worked for the firm for less than six months in 2019,” the Alvandi Law Group said in a statement Tuesday. “While we understand that he was arrested for several felony crimes during a demonstration yesterday, he is in no way affiliated with Alvandi Law Group and we do not condone any of these actions.”

Petersen wrote in his LinkedIn profile that he grew up in Solvang, a small town 34 miles north of Santa Barbara, and played rugby as an undergraduate at Westmont College, two things that shaped his outlook on life.

“I’ve come to appreciate more and more where I come from as it has proven an invaluable touchstone in treating people I meet



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

A MESSAGE on a man’s back reads “China lied, people died,” as demonstrators crowd the intersection at Main Street and Walnut Avenue in Huntington Beach on Friday protesting against stay-at-home orders.

wherever I go just as I would if I had grown up knowing them in Solvang,” he wrote. “Folks deserve to be treated with respect, and I’ll be damned if I don’t at least do that.”

Rugby, Petersen said, “taught me what deserved a conflict and what did not.”

Fox did not air a television report that evening because all raw

footage was immediately turned over to Huntington Beach police. The station has not identified the reporter or cameraman, but is expected to air further details during a regular broadcast.

Andrew J. Campa is a staff writer with the Los Angeles Times.

dailypilot@latimes.com
Twitter: @TheDailyPilot

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Estimated amount of unpaid balance, reasonably estimated costs and other charges: **\$596,702.19**

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If the Trustee is unable to convey title for any reason, the successful bidder's sole and exclusive remedy shall be the return of monies paid to the Trustee, and the successful bidder shall have no further recourse.

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APP

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vidual is at that particular place.

If somebody who had been at that location eventually tests positive for COVID-19, then all other users who were registered at that location would be notified on their phone by the application that they may have been exposed to the virus.

The concept was developed for Android, but users don't actually have to download anything to their phone. After taking a photo of a code, the TrackCOVID website will open up on a web browser and register the data.

Tyler Yasaka, the project's lead author, said privacy was a significant consideration for the group as they developed the tool.

One of the primary ways the developers sought to preserve privacy was by having the app register people's whereabouts on an anonymous graph. When people photograph the QR code, they are placed into an area, called a checkpoint, on a graph that isn't tied to any geography.

"It's just a checkpoint — just to show that these people congregated in the same area, but it doesn't say where," Yasaka said. "We are trying to track the virus, not people."

The app doesn't ask for personal information, including email or phone.

"The approach we took is to store and process as little information as possible," Yasaka said. "You don't have to worry about info leaking if it's not there. As far as when you self report —

that's probably the highest area of concern — that information is not even stored on your device. It just tells the server, 'Hey, update these checkpoints as potentially being exposed.'"

"There is no concept of you on the server. It just flags those checkpoints. All the server knows is somebody over here at these checkpoints has been exposed."

The researchers designed the application as an open-source code, which allows for others to improve it.

"Hopefully people can build on top of it and potentially merge technologies," Lehigh said.

On Thursday, the American Civil Liberties Union published a paper on the privacy concerns posed by contact tracing technology.

"We may well see the development of a privacy-preserving, technology-augmented contact tracing system that makes a significant contribution to fighting the COVID-19 pandemic," the article reads.

"But there are risks to fundamental civil liberties posed by poorly designed systems in this space, and a poorly-designed system may be ineffective or even make the pandemic worse. We need a sober consideration of the risks and trade-offs of such a system so that it protects not only the fundamental right to health, but also our rights of privacy and free association."

Local ACLU personnel were not available to discuss the specifics of the UCI app.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation, a digital-rights group, recently reported that "the risks [contact trac-

ing] poses to individual privacy and civil liberties is considerable."

Privacy concerns could pose a significant obstacle for widespread adoption of contact-tracing applications.

Some of the current contact tracing technology being developed, like from MIT, uses Bluetooth to track a person's whereabouts. Yasaka said his team chose to not use Bluetooth because the general public likely would feel uncomfortable with having Bluetooth on all day.

"It is private," Yasaka said, "but that feeling of having it always on can make people nervous."

The UCI team is hoping that social encouragement will cause people to take part in its contact-tracing application.

"Hopefully, it can become a social practice that people encourage you to help in this effort to contain the disease," Yasaka said.

A significant number of the population has to take part in the contact-tracing app for any impact to be made, though what number isn't really known. The Singapore government launched a contact-tracing application late last month. Yasaka said about 12% of the Singapore population is using the app. He believes the percentage generally needs to be closer to 50% for contact tracing to work.

"For any contact tracing solution to work, you really need high participation from everyone in the population" Lehigh said. "For this, you would have everybody essentially scanning these as they enter a public place."

It could be difficult to get the public to buy into digital contract tracing because its efficacy has never truly been proven.

The UCI researchers said the only proof of the potential success of digital contact tracing is a University of Oxford study published March 31, which found that it could be effective with enough people using it and complying with quarantine and isolation measures.

Another hurdle is getting businesses to put the QR codes up, as well as getting politicians on board. Yasaka said the app requires very little monitoring — it largely is a peer-to-peer program — but policy makers and public health and privacy experts should be in charge of the app in conjunction with one another.

"I think this can be a really effective solution if we can get the ball rolling," Yasaka said. "The concern is that it never takes off."

benjamin.brazil@latimes.com
Twitter: @benbrasilpilot

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CONTACT US

David Carrillo Peñaloza
City Editor
(714) 966-4612

Raymond Arroyo
Advertising Director
(714) 966-4608

—

Address
10540 Talbert Ave.,
Suite 300 West,
Fountain Valley, CA 92708

Business Office
(714) 966-4600

Newsroom
(714) 966-4699

Sports
(714) 966-4612

Email
david.carrillo@latimes.com
TCN Classifieds

800-234-4444

TCN Legal Phone
888-881-6181

TCN Legal Email
LAlegal@latimes.com

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