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## LOCAL, STATE & REGION

# Beaverton woman sues neighbor who allegedly left ‘hate-filled’ notes on car

*Neighbor caught on hidden camera leaving message, lawsuit says*

**BY ZANE SPARLING**  
The Oregonian  
A Beaverton woman who says she was tormented for more than two years by anonymous notes has sued a neighbor allegedly caught on camera leaving a hateful screed at her condo. The woman seeks \$245,000 from her 57-year-old neighbor, and says in the lawsuit that the hand-scrawled notes contained “deranged, hate-filled, homophobic and racist” language.

Hunter did not respond to multiple attempts to reach her. The paper messages were bagged and taped to the woman’s car or her partner’s car while parked overnight at their condominium complex, beginning in December 2019, she said. “I always have to look over my shoulder at who is watching us,” said the woman, who isn’t identified in court papers and requested anonymity due to fears of retaliation. “Nobody has any right to cause such emotional distress for a long time.” The woman, 62, said she believes she was targeted because she is Japanese and her partner is Latino. The messages appeared sporadi-

cally in 2020 and 2021, the woman said in a phone interview, before turning up with alarming frequency this year, when 14 of the 21 notes appeared. Five of the messages were left this month, as recently as April 15, she said. The Oregonian reviewed copies of the notes, as well as a spreadsheet created by the woman tracking the alleged harassment. The notes wrongly refer to the woman’s partner as her son and frequently refer to him using homophobic slurs. Another message calls the woman an unintelligent member of her race. “Stop coming back here! I know where your mother lives so I will come shove dog (feces) down both your

throats,” one letter says, adding an expletive. “You will not stop me. You have not even figured out where I am.” The woman said she hired a private detective, who installed a hidden camera inside her partner’s car, capturing footage of a person leaving a note. The detective then identified the note-leaver as the neighbor, according to attorney Michael Fuller, who filed the suit April 22 in Multnomah County Circuit Court on the woman’s behalf. “There’s a level of anti-Asian hate that I see in our community, that I’ve never experienced before,” Fuller said. “I think we need to send a message that this is not acceptable.”

# RETURN OF THE EELS

**BY ERIC BARKER**  
The Lewiston Tribune (Idaho)  
ASOTIN, Wash. — Chuck Axtell rang a bell and Shannon Wheeler tapped a drum as part of an extended blessing and welcoming ceremony for about a dozen Pacific lamprey just upstream from the mouth of Asotin Creek. One by one, members of the Nez Perce Tribe and their guests delicately released the squirming fish into the cold rushing water. Moments earlier, Axtell sang the tribe’s “Circle of Life” song in the Nez Perce language.

“That song is blessing them, that they will complete the circle,” he said. The fish, with some help from humans, are close to doing just that and helping ensure the species retains its fragile grip in the vast Snake River ecosystem. The eel-like fish with a toothy disc mouth, known as heésu, were once common. Nez Perce people came to the creek to catch lamprey, which were an important source of food and medicine.

The creek and the town of Asotin would eventually take their name from a mispronunciation of Hesuutin, a Nez Perce word that means “place of the eels.”

But the scaleless fish are now rare here and everywhere in the Snake River basin. Dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers make it nearly impossible for adult lamprey to reach spawning grounds. “Lamprey are an anadromous fish. They migrate to the ocean and return,” said Samuel N. Penney, chairman of the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee. “At each of the dams, at least 50% are lost.” In 2007, the tribe began collecting lamprey at dams on the Columbia River and trucking them to Snake River tributaries for release. In all, about 6,000 of the fish have been moved upriver and released in places like Asotin Creek,



Austin Johnson

**Nez Perce tribal elder and spiritual leader Charles Axtell speaks words of admiration and encouragement to a Pacific lamprey fish before releasing it into Asotin Creek in Asotin Thursday. Lamprey, an eel-like fish, hold a strong historic and medicinal reverence to the Nez Perce and other Native American tribes in the region, but their numbers have declined significantly over recent decades.**

the south fork of the Salmon River, the south fork of the Clearwater River and tributaries to the Grande Ronde River. “We just let them hitch a ride with us. We get them up past the barriers and then we release them to do their thing,” said Todd Sween, a lamprey biologist with the tribe’s Department of Fisheries Resources Management. Jon Hess, a scientist with the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, of which the Nez Perce Tribe is a member, has used genetic testing to document that the translocated lamprey have successfully spawned and their offspring have migrated to the ocean. “Everywhere we have put them, everywhere we have released adults, we have documented successful reproduction,” Sween said. That is important because unlike salmon and steelhead, lamprey do not have fidelity to the particular streams where they were hatched. Instead, mature adults key in on pheromones released by larval lamprey to find suitable spawning habitat. So while a lamprey from the Snake River basin could return to the river

to spawn, it might also return to another Columbia River tributary or any river on the West Coast. Once a river becomes devoid of juvenile lamprey, little remains to attract adults to spawning areas, no matter how pristine they may be. “That is the primary objective of our work — getting the adults up here, getting the young established so they can give off that pheromone plume,” Sween said. The fish released Thursday, which also included about 100

more that were placed farther upstream, are part of that stopgap program. “We understand this is a Band-Aid approach and there is a long term fix that needs to be done,” Penney said. The Army Corps of Engineers has experimented with ways to improve lamprey passage at dams but the work has just begun and yet to prove successful. Last year, only 31 lamprey were counted passing Lower Granite Dam. The 10-year average is 102. The tribe supports breaching the four lower Snake River dams as a means to saving lamprey and threatened and endangered stocks of salmon and steelhead. The Snake River and its nearly pristine tributaries are viewed by scientists as an important stronghold for salmon and steelhead that could be unleashed through breaching. Sween said that same high-quality habitat could also be key to saving lamprey. As juveniles, lamprey spend years filter feeding in the sand and silt of river beds. They are especially vulnerable to pollution and need clean water to survive. “Here in Nez Perce country,” he said, “we are blessed with just relatively pristine watersheds.”

## LOCAL BRIEFING

**Bend-La Pine Schools to hold event honoring enlisted high school graduates**

Bend-La Pine Schools is planning an event to recognize students who have enlisted to serve in the armed forces following graduation. The district said in a press release that more than a dozen students from multiple schools will attend the event, which will occur at Mountain View High School from 3:45 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. May 9. Representatives from different branches of the armed forces will attend the event, along with students in the Mountain View National ROTC program, who will serve cake and refreshments, the press release said. “We are proud to celebrate alongside these students, who are making a tremendous commitment to serve our country through enlisting in the Armed Forces,” Superintendent Steven Cook said in the press release.

— Bulletin staff report

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