

# Alameda PDX

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POPINA OWNER LULU LEVENSON AT THE BEACH-THEMED BEER AND WINE BAR INSIDE THE STORE.



LEVENSON SHOWS ONE OF HER FAVORITE SUITS THAT SHE DESIGNED.

## Popina Swimwear to Close Alameda Store in July *by Patty Farrell*

As a child, Lulu Levenson dreamed of being a fashion designer and owning her own business. Her dreams took her from her home in Victoria, B.C. to fashion school in Los Angeles, where she worked for several years in the industry.

But it wasn't until she moved to Northeast Portland in the late 1990s that she found the opportunity to start her own business: Popina Swimwear, beloved for its excellent selection and vintage style.

Now, after more than 18 years, Levenson will close her last brick-and-mortar Popina store on July 31. The good news: She and her husband Willie plan to maintain an online Popina store, and she will continue to design her Popina brand, which she says is "a nod to the 1940s and '50s." Willie will continue managing the wholesale side of the business, which has more than 70 national accounts. At the same time, Levenson said she is also open to someone buying the business.

"Ever since Covid hit us, we have slowly reduced our business footprint," Levenson explained. "With a less than seven-day-a-week schedule (the store is currently closed two days a week), we have found out how much we are loving free time again.

"It's been a difficult decision," she added, "but we are really ready to semi-retire and move to being an online retailer as opposed to a brick-and-mortar store. Also, with our lease expiring at the end of July, the timing seemed right for us."

Levenson was originally inspired to design swimwear when she was shopping for a swimsuit for a trip to Mexico, and discovered "there was a real void in the marketplace." She began designing the Popina brand, which she initially sold through other boutiques. But it was in 2006, when her husband Willie stumbled upon an empty storefront on NE 42nd Avenue in the Cully neighborhood, that she decided to take the plunge and open the first Popina swimwear shop.

"When we first opened Popina, we were located next door to a dental office," said Levenson. "Willie happened to see an article in the paper about how women would rather go to the dentist than try on swimwear. My feeling was 'Omigosh, what did I get myself into?' But Willie thought, 'Perfect! Kill two birds with one stone - could this be the perfect marketing idea?'" Levenson laughs, adding that the store did get customers who were waiting for their dental appointments.

Levenson eventually closed the Cully location and opened two larger stores in the Hollywood and Pearl Districts. After the pandemic, she downsized and moved to the current location at 2393 NE Fremont, just a few blocks from her home in Alameda.

At the store, two recent shoppers who were looking for swimsuits for spring break – and enjoying a beer at the beach-themed bar inside Popina – said they were sad to hear it was closing. They had driven from their homes in Oak Grove all the way to NE Fremont.

"This is the best place in Portland to buy swimwear," one shopper said. "Plus, I'll make the drive to support a woman-owned business with a great product."

When asked about being a business owner, Levenson replied, "I've loved the opportunity to have my own business, and be a part of the wonderful, women-owned business community in Portland. I always wanted the chance to be my own boss."

She added that "one of my favorite sayings is that 'when you own your own business, you are always working but it never feels like work.' I think that really encapsulates the advantages as well as the disadvantages. You have so much freedom, but everything falls on your shoulders. I've worked with so many wonderful people who have supported me."

Levenson's inspiration for her products took root with her senior project at Brooks College in Los Angeles. She got an apprenticeship at an LA swimwear shop, then went on to design suits for a bikini shop in Hermosa Beach. While there are plenty of bikinis at Popina, you'll find more fashionable

one-piece suits and tankinis than you'd find at most Southern California beach shops. The store also sells men's and children's swimwear, plus cover-ups, sandals and other accessories.

"I would say the Popina brand is geared toward active moms who want to be well-covered yet fashionable," Levenson said. She designs all the Popina brand suits, which are made in Portland. She said she's produced "hundreds of designs" over the years. She carries other brands in the shop, but will focus on her exclusive brand in the online and wholesale business.

She added, "I've had the chance to realize a dream, and my favorite part is the creative side of designing and manufacturing Popina swimwear."

Levenson is planning a variety of sales before she closes the shop in July. If you don't get there in time, you can always shop the online store at [www.popinaswimwear.com](http://www.popinaswimwear.com).



### SAVE THE DATE: ALAMEDA HISTORY WALKS Sunday, July 7 and Sunday, August 4 (Both walks will cover the same route)

Join Alameda neighborhood historian Doug Decker for a history walk to explore the connections between past and present that shape the neighborhood we know today!

This 90-minute summer evening stroll will cover just over a mile, with multiple stops focusing on pre-development conditions, planning and construction of the neighborhood, the Broadway Streetcar, architectural house styles, and stories of local interest. Most of this walk is on flat terrain, other than a gradual stretch that ascends the Alameda Ridge.

**Reservations Required:** Limited to 20 people per walk. Contact [alamedanewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:alamedanewsletter@gmail.com) to reserve your space.

This FREE event will happen rain or shine! Sponsored by the Alameda Neighborhood Association.

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## CEI Hub Task Force Holds Press Conference

by Marcelle Furrow-Kiebler

On April 16, a group of over 100 neighborhood and community members met at Augustana Lutheran Church for a press conference sponsored by the Critical Energy Infrastructure (CEI) Hub Task Force. The conference was organized to announce delivery of a joint letter to public officials, demanding that local and state officials take immediate action to mitigate the risks presented by the CEI Hub, a six-mile stretch of fuel storage tanks along Highway 30 between Forest Park and the Willamette River.

The letter was signed by dozens of local groups and over 40 neighborhood associations, including the Alameda Neighborhood Association. It was sent to Governor Tina Kotek, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) administrator Leah Feldon, the Portland City Council, Multnomah County Commission, Metro, and all legislators in the Oregon House and Senate, as well as members of the state's federal delegation.

Since the mid-1990s, seismologists and other scientists have become aware that the CEI Hub is in a highly dangerous seismic zone, with great risk of liquefaction. The Hub was built over the Portland Hills fault line, and near enough to the Cascadia Subduction Zone to experience catastrophic damage in the event of an earthquake.

There is additional risk in the area due to the threat of wildfires because of its proximity to Forest Park. The Hub is also built on a flood plain, and a train line runs through it. In the event of a derailment, chemical spillage would present a serious hazard. Many of the fuel tanks in the area were built years ago, and are well below today's safety standards. Multiple studies of the CEI Hub have reported that the area is extremely dangerous. In the words of one of the speakers at the press conference, "We are all just one

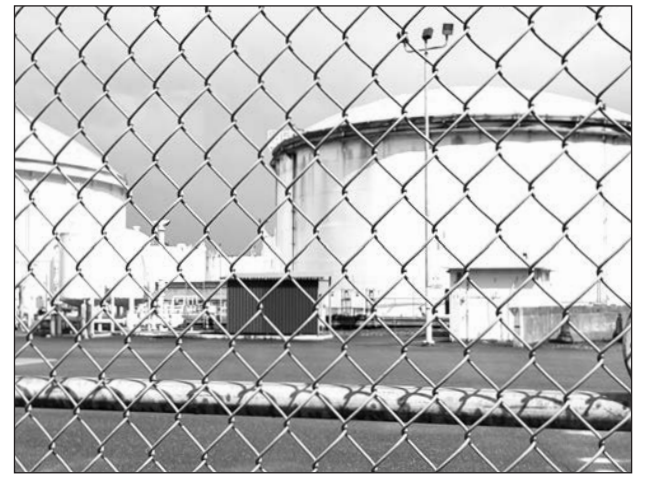
earthquake, one train derailment, one forest fire, one human error away from tragedy." Should one of these disasters occur, every community on the peninsula would be threatened by massive explosions, toxic vapor, and the lack of emergency services.

If toxic vapors spread, every neighborhood in Portland would be impacted. North Portland already experiences the effects of leaking fuel and chemical tanks leaching toxins into the soil, as well as poor air quality caused by industrial activity in the CEI Hub.

Senate Bill 1567, passed in 2022, is a first step toward addressing the dangers created by the CEI Hub. It requires owners or operators of bulk oil and liquid fuel terminals located in Columbia, Multnomah, or Lane County to conduct and submit to the DEQ seismic vulnerability assessments.

The CEI Hub Task Force Letter asks that these assessments be followed by the actions below:

- 1) Through ongoing and widespread media campaigns, local city, county, regional, and state officials must educate and alert the people of the greater Portland area to the dangers of the CEI Hub.
- 2) Local and state government agencies must take immediate action to monitor and remediate the cumulative pollution associated with the operations of the CEI Hub.
- 3) Local and state governments must immediately coordinate to develop a new plan for Oregon's fuel storage. All communities must have opportunities to participate in this process. Environmental justice is at the heart of this demand.
- 4) Local and state governments must require companies who operate within the CEI Hub to assume full financial



STORAGE TANKS FILLED WITH HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SIT ALONG A SIX-MILE STRETCH OF HIGHWAY 30 NEAR NORTH PORTLAND.

responsibility for addressing potential disaster prevention, emergency services, cleanup and restoration.

5) The Oregon legislature must work to craft legislation that requires companies to regularly update local officials and emergency responders as to the types of fossil, bio-energy fuels, petrochemicals and toxins that are stored and transported to and from the CEI Hub.

6) City and state agencies must monitor Zenith Energy's transport and storage of fossil fuels and substantiate with peer-reviewed research the environmental, public health, safety, and economic advantages of their transition away from crude oil to other fuels. (In its Oct. 2022 Land Use Compatibility Statement, the City of Portland made an agreement with Zenith Energy to stop transloading crude oil in five years.)

The Task Force letter concluded by saying, "Our elected and appointed representatives have the responsibility to protect the health and safety of the entire region. Please provide us with a timely response to all of these concerns."

For more information on the CEI Hub, visit <https://www.multco.us/sustainability/cei-hub-seismic-risk-analysis>.

## City to Phase Out Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers

by Michael Hall, Co-Chair of Quiet Clean PDX

Our team at Quiet Clean PDX gives a huge thank you to the Alameda Neighborhood Association for endorsing our seven-year effort to eliminate gas leaf blowers in Portland.

On March 13, 2024, Portland City Council unanimously passed an ordinance phasing out gas-powered leaf blowers citywide. Starting January 1, 2026, gas blowers will be prohibited in Portland for nine months of the year



SUPPORTERS ATTENDED THE MARCH 6 READING OF THE CITY COUNCIL PROPOSED ORDINANCE TO PHASE OUT GAS-POWERED LEAF BLOWERS.

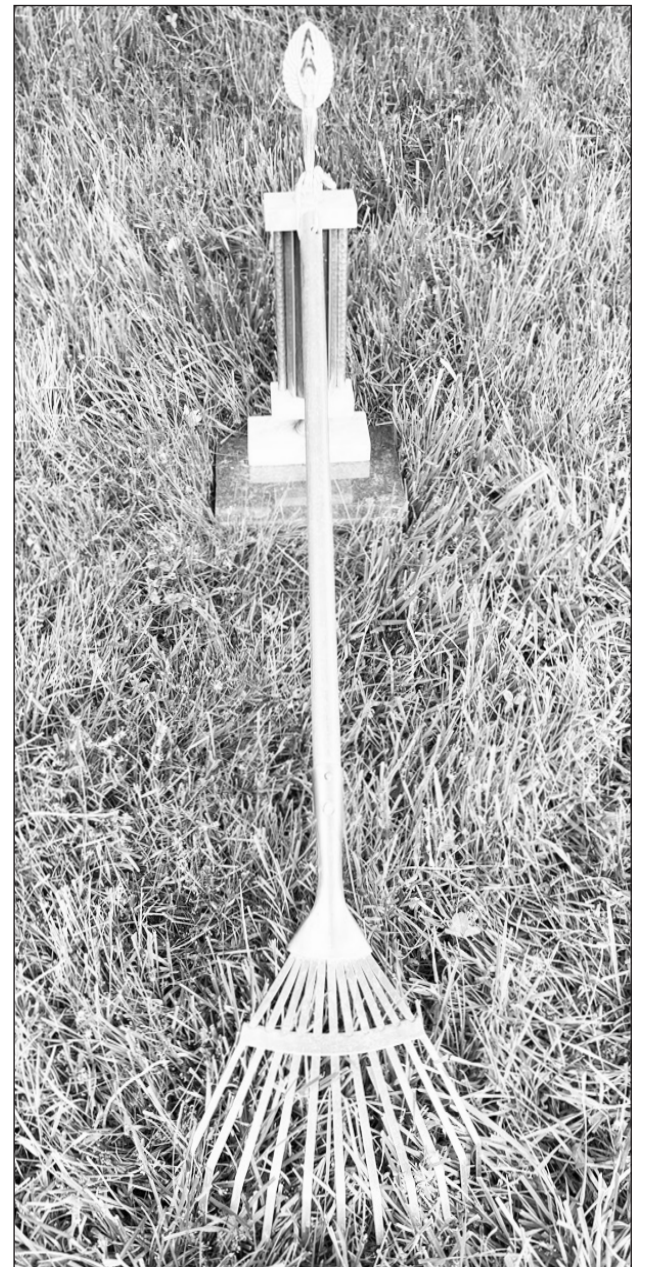
(January-September), and a full year-round ban will begin January 1, 2028.

Portland is the second-largest city to adopt such an ordinance, behind only Washington, D.C. It was overwhelmingly clear that Portlanders wanted it. Of the 786 public comments solicited by the City, 86% supported a prohibition of gas leaf blowers and only 11% opposed it in any way.

Multnomah County has collaborated with Portland on this ordinance, and will handle enforcement, public education, and a potential incentives program. It is transitioning its own leaf blowers to electric and hand tools, as is the City of Portland.

Thanks to support and testimonies from Alameda and other neighborhood associations that supported this effort, we can soon look forward to a quieter, cleaner and healthier Portland!

To learn more visit [quietcleanpdx.org](http://quietcleanpdx.org)



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NET TEAM VOLUNTEERS INCLUDE (L. TO R.) MICHAEL HALL, JERRY PORTER, MARK MEININGER, AND KEITH WILSON.



OVER 60 PEOPLE ATTENDED THE PRESENTATION BY THE AMERICAN RED CROSS AND LOCAL EMERGENCY LEADERS.



ALAMEDA NEIGHBOR ELLEN RAGAN CHECKS OUT EMERGENCY WINDOW SIGNS.

## Alameda Neighbors Gather for Pizza and Preparedness Training by Bec Lawson

When it comes to being prepared for the next unexpected emergency, Benjamin Franklin said it best: “By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.”

On April 24, over 60 Alameda neighbors gathered in the Fremont United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall for pizza and a presentation by the American Red Cross and local emergency leaders on how to prepare for unexpected emergencies.

Sponsored by the Alameda Neighborhood Association (ANA), the free event provided information about some of the most critical items to have on hand, like water, medicine, food, and critical items for babies, children, pets, and elders. Although it’s impossible to predict if the next emergency will call for sheltering in place or quickly mobilizing to another location, planning for likely eventualities can help you and your loved ones survive them.

According to Mark Meininger of the City of Portland’s Neighborhood Emergency Team (NET), perhaps the most significant step you can take is getting to know your neighbors. Even during small emergencies, it’s important for neighbors to check on and help one other. Meininger encouraged everyone to do three things to strengthen their community resilience:

- Host a block party on an annual basis
- Establish a hyper-local, block-level registry, with names, emails, phone numbers, pet info, and any relevant tools and supplies that might be needed.
- Invite the American Red Cross or other organization to present preparedness workshops at their block party, children’s schools, or scout troops.

For anyone interested in more information on block-level organization, ANA Board Member and NET team

member Michael Hall offered to provide guidance on how to get started. His efforts on his own NE 29th Street block have resulted in an informed and well-prepared network of neighbors. He can be reached at michaelhall1946@gmail.com.

In addition to Meininger and Hall, several other volunteers from the NET program were on hand. They included Jerry Porter, Keith Wilson, Dana Jeffries, and Katie Haraguchi.

Sporting their visibility vests, they provided the audience with a sense of connectedness to additional emergency support. Cascadia Ready, a local Alameda preparedness organization, also participated.

To learn more about the City’s NET program or to volunteer, visit <https://www.portland.gov/pbem/neighborhood-emergency-teams>.



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