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## Going Hawaiian with Hula Mai

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Hula Mai dancers will once again bring their show to the Grinstead Amphitheater.

Sonomans are in for a treat as Hula Mai once again brings its annual show to the stage of Grinstead Amphitheater on Friday, June 24 at 6:30 p.m.

"Everyone's invited," said Hula Mai creator, Betty Ann Ka`ihilani Bruno, "It'll be our second show in the amphitheater and our way of giving aloha back to this wonderful community. Hula Mai's dancers are still relatively new dancers – backed by two years of instruction at the most, but I dare anybody to find more enthusiastic dancers. In Hula Mai, everyone dances right from the heart; you can see that on their faces, in their smiles and in their eyes. It's very beautiful and warms everybody."

Since Hula Mai began two years ago as an "occasional" hula workshop at Vintage House, it has evolved into a life style for many of its participants and a "retirement career" for Bruno, its founder, who had no idea what she was starting when she gave her first workshop in May 2009. She says she never expected it to grow into a full-time activity for her, her husband and several of the new best friends she has found in her classes. Hula Mai's more dedicated students call the hula their new passion, but Sonomans don't need to take hula lessons to enjoy Hawaii right here at home.

"Hula Mai, with its music and culture of Hawaii, has changed the lives of several of the dancers," said Ka`ihilani Bruno. "The dancers forge a relationship with the hula that puts them in touch with the Aloha Spirit; I think many of them are surprised to discover that the hula is more than just another form of dance."

Nellie Woodard, a "non-dancer" before Hula Mai, practices every day and says that she can lose herself in the hula. "It has become a way of life for me because it speaks to the essence of life itself."

The June 24 show will include a program of Hawaiian songs and dances that range from sacred ancient chants right through to present day hits with the melodic sounds of ukuleles and the steel guitar.

**Meet Betty**

Betty Ann Ka`ihilani Bruno was born in Hawaii but grew up in California. She majored in political science at Stanford University and did graduate work at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. After two years working for the federal government, she returned to California where she has lived ever since.

Bruno worked for 22 years at KTVU, Channel 2, first as community affairs producer and then as a news reporter. Her journalism awards include three EMMYs, the Joey Award and several recognition awards for videos she produced with husband, Craig Scheiner.

She has always honored her Hawaiian ancestry through the hula and now, retired here in Sonoma, she enjoys being able to share her love and knowledge of Hawaiian dancing with others. She founded Hula Mai at Vintage House in May of 2009 with the idea of holding an occasional workshop in hula. She says she never expected it would grow into a full time retirement career for her and her husband.

Today Hula Mai is more than hula classes: in addition to regular classes, it's an eight-piece band, a road show and a website. For more information and to see pictures of Hula Mai in action, go to [hulamai.org](http://hulamai.org).

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