

*Diablo Dance Theater*  
*The art of Isadora Duncan lives*

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**Santa Cruz Sentinel**

## San Lorenzo Valley women learn to dance from history



Dancers gracefully fleet across the floor of the Highlands Park Senior Center in Ben Lomond on Sunday during an Isadora Duncan dance workshop taught by Lois Ann Flood.  
(Kevin Johnson; Santa Cruz Sentinel)

By Calvin Men, Santa Cruz Sentinel  
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Lois Ann Flood, center, leads a Isadora Duncan dance workshop at the Highlands Park Senior Center Sunday afternoon  
(Kevin Johnson, — Santa Cruz Sentinel)

**BEN LOMOND** >> Women in San Lorenzo Valley got a taste of history and a chance to stretch out their bodies at a dance workshop hosted by the Valley Women’s Club on Sunday afternoon.

The focus was on the style of Isadora Duncan, a historical dance figure who is the “mother of modern dance,” said Lois Ann Flood, a dancer and choreographer who led the workshop.

Presented by the Women’s Issues Committee of the Club, the workshop at the Highlands Park Senior Center in Ben Lomond was designed to instill confidence in women who attended and give them a lesson on an iconic historical figure.

“It’s an empowering thing,” Alley said. “Also, to respectfully carry on the tradition of something so graceful and grand. Duncan had ideas that women never thought of. You didn’t move your full body and breasts around back then.”

Robbie McGuire and her daughter Jessica came as a duo after reading about the workshop online. The two, from Ben Lomond, quickly donned sheer, colored tunics over their clothes that were part of the workshop.

“This just sounds like fun,” McGuire said, gesturing to the tunic. “It’s fun already.”

Lisa Hammer was convinced by her niece, Ruby Hammer, to come to the workshop along with Ruby’s mother and grandmother.

“I know absolutely nothing,” Hammer said about the dance style.

But her niece jumped in to reassure her aunt: “Me, neither. I don’t even know what we’re doing. I just know we’re dancing.”

During Duncan’s era, she aspired to create a dance form that was outside the rigidity of ballet, the popular dance at the time.

“She took off the ballet slippers and tutus and said, ‘free the body, free the woman’,” Flood said.

In a video Flood showed to the 22 attendees, they saw a snippet of Duncan dancing in a crowd. Duncan appeared to waft around, moving her arms like water — seamlessly dancing across the laptop screen.

“She had this thing about appreciating the femininity and the strength of being a woman,” Alley said. “Her motions and movement were based on the motion of the waves and the natural rhythm of your own body.”

After the history lesson, Flood led the group through a series of dance exercises, beginning with drills designed to loosen their steps and give them an idea of the style. Flood worked to watch dancers, correcting movements to help them appear softer. She paused to exercises at one point to tell the attendees to demonstrate an arm movement. As opposed to thrusting their arms out to the side with force, she showed them that their arms should bob like flower petals.

“I want you to hear the music, feel the music and breathe,” she said.

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