

Jo Weldon: (Applause) I feel like we've had so many climactic moments this weekend, but the Legends Q & A is one of the most amazing parts of the weekend. As you can see we have many, many legends here. Many Legends. (Applause) I'm immersed in the britches and a huge amount of outreach and communication. It's an enormous amount of work, just contacting people and bringing them in and helping spread the word. So thank you to all of the people who've worked so hard to bring all the legends to the Burlesque Hall of Fame Weekender. Thank you a lot. (Applause) You're much more interested in hearing from the legends than from me so I'm just going to say a few things really briefly about this program. First of all, I became interested in interviews with the legends by the interviews that I saw on the Velvet Hammer website; I think that was 12 or 15 years ago and I also was interested in the interviews that Rick Delaup was doing. Fortunately several people at the Burlesque Hall of Fame have been responsible for, among other things, the Oral History Project which Dr. Lynn Sally, also known as. "Dr. Lukki," (Applause) has been putting together with Elsa Sjunneson. So they are doing the long versions of these stories you're about to get just a teaser, just a taste of. And so I also want you to know I just received an email and you're going to be really glad that I got this. And yay iPhone; here I go handling stuff. All right. So if you missed the Legends Panel last year, you can read and download a complete transcript at [burlesquebeat.com](http://burlesquebeat.com). Wow. (Applause). If you wonder why this is important, last year's panel featured legend Joan Arline and was moderated by Dr. Julie Vogt both of whom we sadly lost in the last year. The transcript at Burlesque Beat has a moving introduction by Julie's widower, Todd Vogt. This year's Legend Panel will also be recorded and transcribed for prosperity. Woo! (Applause). I like the idea of it being recorded for prosperity, don't you? (Laughter) So there are a lot of amazing programs going on here. The Oral History Project is continuing. They've done many, many interviews this weekend. We have many legends here with us for the time and it's an incredible project and I think that we all agree that history is really why we're here, as much as we love all the other elements of the weekend, this is the big draw. (Applause) All right. I'm a little more hands free now. So I'm going to take the microphone down the line and just have each of the legends just tell us briefly your name and where you worked and the first year you came to the Burlesque Hall of Fame.

Tammi True: Tammi True. (Applause) I'm from Dallas Texas and I worked at Carousel Club. And I started dancing, well I started playing with it in 1959 (Laughter) and I actually started dancing in 1961 on a real regular basis.  
(Applause)

Jo Weldon: And what was the first year you came to the Burlesque Hall of Fame Weekender?

Tammi True: Last year.  
(Applause)

Jo Weldon: Welcome.

Gypsy Louise: Hi. My name is Gypsy Louise. (Applause) I started dancing in '68. I started as a topless dancer and I love the girls dancing and I wanted to do it and I started at Palomino Club here fully stripping in '69. I met all these young ladies. I took a little bit from everybody. So if you see me do something, it's yours. (Laughter) The first time I came to Burlesque Hall of Fame, I remember it was about five years ago and I loved it, fell in love with it and this is the first time I have performed in 30 years and I'm just having this wonderful time.  
Thank you.  
(Applause)

Jo Weldon: Thank you.

Kim Summers: Hi. I'm Kim Summers and I started dancing in 1959 as a chorus girl and I went from chorus girl to late nude dancer and then into burlesque and I was a dancer for 30 years. The first time I came here was about five or six years or ago. I can't remember now. (Applause)

Jo Weldon: Awesome. Thank you for being here. Okay. Let's move down the Panel.

(Applause)

Kim Summers: She's talking to you.

Jo Weldon: You know sometimes people put these long things in front of your face.

(Laughter)

Delilah Jones: I'm Delilah Jones. I started dancing in 1959. I worked at the same club as Tempest Storm and Candy Barr.

Jo Weldon: Right.

Delilah Jones: And I worked with Lili St. Cyr and Sally Rand in Hollywood at the Body Shop. All my little buddies from the Body Shop here? (Laughter) And I travelled from Canada to Mexico and, gee, they were over, but I've been dancing since '59.

Jo Weldon: And when was the first time you came to the Burlesque Hall of Fame?

Delilah Jones: I think it was five or six years ago where they were downtown, I remember that. And I loved it. It was like five or six years ago when I came.

Jo Weldon: Thank you for being here.

(Applause)

Haji: My name is Haji (Applause) but I never was asked the question when I started. I started, I was thinking I started somewhere maybe in 1957 but I have a lot of my lovely friends here. Kitten Natividad; if it wasn't for her, I wouldn't be here today and I have Paula to thank for bringing me here and a young gentleman that's not here, I'm

disappointed. His name is Scott Ewalt. (Applause) Thank you. If it wasn't for him I really wouldn't be here, or Paula. Thank you very much everybody and it's a pleasure being here.

(Applause)

Jo Weldon: Thank you.

Kitten Natividad: I am Kitten Natividad. (Applause) I started dancing in 1969 and I just love go-go and I started doing nude go-go dancing. And then I earned the title Miss Nude Universe twice and then I went into burlesque. And I had an incredible, incredible designer who showed me how to do acts and costuming and I started coming to Exotic World, I don't know; a long, long time ago (Laughter) and I love it here and thank you very much.

(Applause)

Tiffany Carter Hello I'm Tiffany Carter. (Applause) I started in the late sixties also as a go-go dancer and I wanted to start dancing when I was child. So it was my first job I got until my husband found out (Laughter) and I turned to burlesque after that. And I was Miss Nude Universe in 1975 (Applause) and I have a picture here of Kitten in front of me, when she was before me.

(Applause)

Jo Weldon: Let me see that.

Tiffany Carter: Okay. Real quick.

Jo Weldon: Oh, the muff.

Tiffany Carter: My first actual striptease job was at the Pink Pussycat in Hollywood, California then I started touring after that and I hope to see you all at the show tonight because I'll be in it.

(Applause)

Jo Weldon: Thank you.

April March: Hello, I'm April March. (Applause) I'm originally from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. I was a copy girl for the "Daily Oklahoma". I quit and I answered an ad for the Derby Club in Oklahoma City that had stripteasers performing there. I went to work as a cigarette girl and I kept watching the beautiful ladies and thinking to myself, geez I've danced all my life, I think I could do that. (Laughter) So anyway I wound up in Dallas, Texas starting in show business at the Theater Lounge for Barney Weinstein who gave me the name April March, which I've kept forever. I came here to Exotic World, well Burlesque Hall of Fame now. I think, I can't remember whether it's five years ago or six years ago.

Tigger: Five years ago; 2007.

April March: Five years ago? Oh, okay, the same as you Tigger. Okay. (Laughter) All right. So I'm enjoying being here. So thank goodness I get invited every year so far and I'm having a documentary filmed on me while I'm here in the city (Applause) and I'm writing a book again. (Laughter). It's being rewritten. So that's it. Watch for the book to come out.

(Applause)

Jo Weldon: Thank you.

Alexandra the Great '48: Hello. I'm Alexandra the Great '48. (Applause) Actually I started in the business before I was almost seventeen. I started as a show girl and worked my way through. I wanted to be in burlesque but in those days you really had to have a sponsor. It was difficult to get into the theater without some type of a sponsor. And I remembered I had met Rose La Rose many years ago when I was really young and she grabbed my face and she said, "You're so sweet. If you ever want to get in the business come see me." And it just so happened I knew where she was living and the theater that she had at Town Hall. So I performed in a club I knew she would be in and the rest is history. She guided my career until she died.

(Applause)

Jo Weldon: How long have you been coming to the Burlesque Hall of Fame?

Alexandra the Great '48: I think this is my second time. I was here four years ago.  
(Applause)

Jo Weldon: Thank you for being here.  
(Applause)

April March: I forgot to say that I got into the business in 1952 and out of it in '78. (Applause)

Jo Weldon: Awesome! Wow, that's awesome!  
(Applause)

Camille 2000: (Laughter) I'm Camille 2000. (Applause) I'd first like to thank everyone last night. You all were winners. (Applause) I started in the business in the late sixties also. I performed for 20 years. The first theater I ever worked was for Leroy Griffith at Gayety Burlesque, Miami and that was also the last theater that I ever worked. And I had come to Exotic World first, I guess it's maybe 10 years ago when it was on the goat farm, and I would not perform. I said, well, I would come, and last year was my first year performing and I am glad I did.  
(Applause)

Jo Weldon: Thank you, Camille.

Shannon Doah: My name is Shannon Doah. (Applause) I started go-go dancing nude in San Francisco in 1968 and stayed there a couple years, then moved down to the LA area and then started working in LA clubs and ended up in a really great show. I learned a lot there, and then went on with an agent and started touring. I came to Exotic World when it was at the Celebrity Theater, Kitten Natividad invited Tiffany Carter and I to come and she said you have

to come and see this. And I just want to thank everyone that's here and everyone that couldn't make it for making it possible and keeping burlesque alive. Thank you so much.

(Applause)

Bambi Jones: Hi. My name is Bambi Jones. (Applause) I started in the business in 1949 in Buffalo, New York at a club called McVann's. And I heard Arline's son telling the story that Arline started at McVann's in 1953. He spoke the other night. But anyhow, I stripped until they told me to keep it on, put it on. (Laughter) I've been in and out of the burlesque closet for years. (Laughter) And some of you that were here the other night, you know I'm out of it again big time. (Applause) I was married to the head of the Pharmaceutical Association for the State of Nevada and when I lost him sixteen years ago, I came out of the burlesque closet. And then my daughter married Montel Williams and I was back in the closet. (Laughter) We were going to Annapolis because he was the first marine to graduate Annapolis. So all those people from Washington D.C. and Annapolis, I used to worry about if they remembered me on the block there in Baltimore. (Laughter) In and out of the closet. So I'm out of the closet big time and I was out of it for a little bit, I mean in it, but I'm out of it now. And keeping burlesque alive is what we're all here for. (Applause) Thank you. And Paula -- Miss Paula and I have been in contact and -- thank you. She is the reason I am back. I was at the goat farm the last time I was at the museum and this is my first time here, and I live in Vegas.

(Applause)

Jo Weldon: Thank you Bambi. I'm gonna have you come around from that end...

Tigger : I'll take it from here.

Jo Weldon: Yeah.

Camille 2000: You can take it from anywhere baby.

(Laughter)

Tigger: I don't think they called that lawful in 1984.  
(Laughter)

Jean Idelle: Ladies and gentlemen, first of all it's a pleasure being here, shocking that they dug me up. (Laughter) I'm from Brooklyn, New York. (Applause) Well, actually, I was with the Girl Scouts and at the end of the tour, everyone had to do a performance. Everyone had to get on stage and do whatever they felt like doing; singing, dancing, whatever. Well, for some reason I decided to do a dance. They accepted the dance. Then I got big. I went and joined the Katherine Dunham School of Dance. (Applause) I was discovered out of the class of Katherine Dunham dancers and was signed up by a New York Agency, Theatrical Agency on Broadway. Now after they do that, then a choreographer sized me over, looked me over, whatever they do (Laughter) and decided that I could do a fan dance. That would be my style. So then I had to study that, take lessons from him. Then they started touring me in burlesque tours, theaters all over the United States. I have appeared in Quebec, in every theater, city and state in the United States. All of these shows were booked by theatrical agents from Broadway, Manhattan. We had nothing to do. We had protection, chauffeurs, bodyguards and protection going from coast to coast, you know young ladies. I did not travel alone. I travelled with the entire group that was on the theater stage, you understand. So in other words, we were protected, going from state to state. I couldn't even walk out to a parking lot alone from the theater, you know what I mean? I was trying to think how many years I toured with the group. Well anyhow, something happened. Some theatrical agency made me a specialty. So then I had to go back to school and they had to decide what type they thought I was in order to perform in New York as a specialty act. So I studied with a choreographer that sized me up and decided that I would look all right using the feathered fans. So then they started advertising me as the "Sepia Sally Rand". (Applause). So from then I did nothing you see, I had to do nothing expect what they told me to do. They booked me my shows all over the United States. I had to be there, you know, in other words, I didn't have to go out on the corner and get a taxi. They chauffeured me there or flew me there. We were with a group, you know and whatnot and taken care of, body guarded in and out of the theater. There was always protection, what I'm trying to say for the girls, the chorus line and the strippers, the girls. There was always protection for them all over the United States and in all these different theaters. It was like a dream come true. It was like I



had absolutely nothing to say about what I did. They told me what to do every step of the way. (Laughter) Oh, I always thought, I never wanted to wind up, to get too old, you know. I didn't want to go downhill, put it like that. (Laughter). So when I was 29, I retired from showbiz. (Applause)

Jo Weldon: Wow, that's awesome. Thank you, and this is your first year here, right.

Jean Idelle: Yes.

Jo Weldon: Thank you. (Applause)

La Savona: My name is La Savona. (Applause) I will really make this very short because talking about me I was doing ballet dancing all my life. I'm originally from Czechoslovakia born. They wrote about me that I'm a kind of Sally Randish interpretation. I didn't know who Sally Rand was. (Laughter) I did not know her. But I danced everywhere. I was doing everything here in the United States. And I had – everybody came who want to ask me what I have, why I was a big star, and I didn't know what a big star really was because I was a star all over Germany. I dance for the Nazis. I dance for the TV here in America and I was married to American officer after the second world war for 46 years. (Applause) And I miss him very much. So good luck to you. I retired my business in 1900s and I relocate from New York to Indianapolis and good luck to you. (Applause)

Tigger: And the first time, when you first came to perform, is that when I saw you?

La Savona: First time I came it was in 1953. I was doing the... Miss... (Laughter)

Tigger: You were Miss Atomic, 1953. (Laughter)

(Applause)

Gail Winns: I'm Gail Winns. (Applause). Sometimes on the weekends they might choose to bring me out as "Gail feel the breeze" because I chit chat a lot, especially with a couple of drinks. (Laughter) It's like you get diarrhea of the mouth. (Laughter) Anyway I started out at the age of 15 as a chorus girl and then I went on, I was with my uncle and aunt so I was safe. And then I went on to just make more money being a stripper and of course my first number was done with my uncle singing Tangerine and I stripped behind him (Laughter) and he was supposed to pretend that I didn't, that I wasn't there. And so when he got all this applause, he'd go oh, wow, more of me, because at the end of the number, I would take something off and he's just like oh, it for me. (Laughter). So that was my first occasion and I found it was pretty easy.

Tigger: So what was the time period?

Gail Winns: Golly, honey I stopped at 30 when I married my husband over there in the blue shirt. (Applause) He had a strip club and how I met him was kind of funny. It was Denver's oldest bar in Denver and he had this little stage and things and I went down, I was singing at the Chez Paree at that time, and I went down and my God he had yellow and green lights on the girls. (Laughter) Yeah, I looked at him and I said these girls have more nerves than God if they're out there with those lights and of course they look like the House of Horrors. (Laughter)

Tigger: So that's horrors?

Gail Winns: Yeah, horrors.  
(Laughter)

Tigger: Yeah.  
(Laughter)

Gail Winns: So he asked me what colored lights I would use and I said, well you know the pinks and blues and things soft and lovely and I went back about a week later and he had changed them.

(Applause)

Tigger: And this is your first year?

Gail Winns: Yes, it is. And we've been married 48 years. (Applause).

Tigger: Just joining us.

Jo Weldon: Hi, Toni.

Tigger: We're still trying to get through all of our legends.

Jo Weldon: Yeah. These are the kinds of the stories you can hear in the Oral History Project. So if you want to know more about that we'll tell you at the end where you can get more information about the Oral History Project.

Tigger: Right. So we're just doing a brief, like, introduce yourself and the years you danced and when you first came to the Hall Of Fame.

Toni Elling: I want to apologize for being late. I came here first in 2006. (Applause) Thanks. A journalist who was also a stripper, who comes here, Sparkly Devil, did an article on me in Detroit where she discovered me. She wanted to do an article on black strippers, didn't have any material, didn't know where to find it, and someone told her to consult a friend of mine, who's a historian in Detroit. She recommended two people, that's what was wanted, two people, but one girl wanted to be paid and so she had to find another. And Lottie the Body came (Applause) and she consented. And Sparkly Devil, that's the journalist and she went (Applause) back to my friend and said I still need someone so she gave her my name, which I don't understand yet why she didn't do that in the first place. (Laughter) So anyway that's how

I came here, because Sparkly came back here telling people about me and they made me a legend and Monty a legend and we've been coming ever since (Applause)

J.D.. Oxblood:           Tell us your name, Toni!

Toni Elling:            My name is Toni Elling and the year I performed, I performed 1960 to 1974 and I started when I was thirty-two. (Applause)

Speaker:                I heard Toni singing behind me at the show the other night and she's got a fantastic voice and she is going to sing for you all next year.  
(Applause)

Tigger:                 You heard it here.  
(Laughter)

Tai Ping:                Hi. My name is Tai Ping. (Applause) And I actually fell into Burlesque. I was working in Philadelphia and I did character dances. And I worked at this one cool club called Los Moravian and they called up the belly dancers in there one night and they asked me who was the headliner and I told them Robin Street, and they told me, no, you should be. And they said they're going to tell Jerry, and you'll find your name in the Daily News. I said I guess, sure. (Laughter). But I came out on Friday anyway and there was my name! And after that I got hired all around town. Then my agent turned around and he said, you need to go to another state. I said now I have to talk to my mother. (Laughter). So I then went to **{unclear 28:42}** and **{unclear 28:43}** and his partner they took me to the airport and I signed the contract and I thought it was going to be fancy like I danced around Philadelphia. Hey, I got into the Mardi Gras down on Nadal Street and I'm sitting at the end of the bar and I'm going to watch a little bit of the show before I go back and change. And I saw this dancer, she got up on stage dancing really, really cool and then she comes bouncing down the track and she gets to the end of it and she goes (Gestures) and I went oh! (Laughter) So this lady who is sitting next me, I nudge her like that, and I asked her did you see what she just did (Laughter) and she just smiled at me. Well, I think I'll go back and get ready for my show. And this night I was showcasing my

calypso number. So I go back and there are two girls that I knew from Philadelphia, Esther May and Rosemarie, and so I didn't say anything to them because I figured well that was just her number. We're going to dance like we dance in Philadelphia. (Laughter). So I get on stage and I do my calypso number and the crowd really loved it and I said well, that went over good. So then I go and I sit in the audience and the club owner comes over and he says to me, he goes, he says, where is your gown? I said, gown? And he said, panel. I said, what's a panel? (Laughter) And so he goes on to explain it to me and I said well, I can't do that, you know, and he goes, well, I'll call your agent and tell him we're sending you back to Philadelphia and I said, I can't do that. (Laughter) So I said, I need a drink. He said what do you like to drink? I said V.O. and Coke. He says, oh, the customers buy the girls drinks all day long but we don't have time to wait for that. (Laughter) So he took me over to the bartender and he says, give her a double V.O. and Coke and he walked away. I drank that down real fast and I grabbed the bottle. (Laughter) And I said, pour me another and he poured me another and those four drinks, like, whoa! (Laughter) And so I went to the dressing room and I told Esther May and Rosemarie that man out there wants me to rip my clothes off (Laughter) and I don't have anything under my costume. I got one leg of ruffles and one arm of ruffles and I said, what can I take off? And she said, don't worry about anything, don't worry about anything. And she takes my boob and wraps it up in some sequins (Laughter) and she covers almost the whole thing and it looks like I had a strapless bra on, and then she put on those flesh colored net panties that had a strip in the front and in the back, and then she gave me a orange skirt that picked up one of the colors is my ruffles and she tied that over my hand. Okay.

(Laughter)

Jo Weldon:                    Yeah. Sorry, Tai Ping, right now we're just asking basic questions. The stories are so amazing I can't stand it.

Tai Ping:                      Well that was my first time in Burlesque. (Applause)

Tigger:                        How long have you been coming to the Hall of Fame?

Tai Ping: My first time to the Hall of Fame was in 1986, down at the ranch; there were seven of us here for that first meeting and Jenny said, bring a picture of yourself and a frame because I'm hanging you. (Laughter)  
(Applause)

Holiday O'Hara: I've heard too much. (Laughter) My name is Holiday O'Hara. (Applause) I started dancing in 1968. I was 18. I had a phony ID in San Francisco. I was a go-go dancer and it was in one of the clubs at the very bottom of the street and I wore so many clothes because I got really bored being a go-go dancer. So I was told you should go work and learn how to be a stripper. So I went to the Chez Paree on Mason Street in San Francisco and I worked with some of the most beautiful women. My first mentor was a woman name Tori Lynn and my second mentor was right here, Alexandra the Great. (Applause) I quit dancing in 1980. I managed the Southern Theater, which was San Francisco's last bastion of burlesque from 1983 and then I got totally out of the business and I've had two careers since then. And the first time I came here was in 2007 and I came here two years and then I took a break. And last year I came back and Jacob says that I have been threatening to not come back ever since the first time, it was really the second (Laughter) at Tease-O-Rama. I was, I can't do this. And, until about... where is he? You. Until about twenty, or half an hour ago, I was in a contest, I found a station with Ada and I was like, this is the last time. I can't do it. Maybe I can do it for two days. I can't do it for four. (Laughter) So you get to be right. (Applause) And I don't know if you have idea how much it means to all of us that burlesque revived itself because it was dead. (Laughter). It was so dead, it was all about lap dances and it was a different business. You didn't get touched and you know, now you do, but for you to just bring it back spontaneously makes my heart so happy. So thank you so much.  
(Applause)

Jo Weldon: We have more legends coming in and we want to make sure that everybody gets to have an introduction. So I'm going to ask that from this point till we get to the questions and answers from the audience, please just let us know your name, let us know the years that you worked and the first year that you came to the Burlesque Hall of Fame.

Penny Starr: Hi. I'm Penny Starr. (Applause) I think I started in 1957 and I started as a cooch girl in the carnival, had a lot of fun. (Laughter). And I met this man Dewey Freddie and he had access to the Cristiani Brothers Circus and I worked myself all the way down to Florida. And that's where I learned that I had to go to work in a club and get an agent and sign a contract or I couldn't make any money. So that's exactly what I did and stayed down there for a couple of years, really learning the business.

Jo Weldon: What year did you come in?

Penny Starr: I think maybe was in the sixties about '67, '68 and I just stopped, until my granddaughter Penny Starr, Jr. (Applause) started on this and I felt, well, it would be nice to bring burlesque back because I always loved it and made a lot of money doing it.

Jo Weldon: You make a lot of money now?  
(Laughter)

Penny Starr: No money now. (Laughter) You know I can't believe now the girls sew their own costumes and this is a whole new ballgame to me because I never had to do that. I bought everything.

Jo Weldon: And when was the first year you came to the Burlesque Hall of Fame?

Penny Starr: In '06, 2006.

Jo Weldon: That's awesome. Thank you so much for being here. (Applause)  
So Ellion, when did you work?

Ellion Ness: Okay. I started working at Minsky's in North New Jersey about 14. I've been 22 since I was 14 (Laughter), still 22. That is my story and I'm sticking to it. (Laughter) And I came to the Burlesque Hall of Fame, it's her fault; Viva La Fever. (Applause)





Velvet Ice: Hi, Velvet Ice. (Applause) Thank you. I too, I don't have the words to express that this has been revived and everybody is so supportive and it's just so much fun. We are a family. It's really cool. Anyway the art form is so close to my heart. When we left, we had to like shut it down. We had to be in the closet and the secret life for years and years. Anyway I started in the early seventies, like '71 or something and quit in the early eighties or mid-eighties. You know it seems like I danced about fifteen years. I don't know where that comes from. (Laughter) Anyway, yeah and I came here the first year was it was in Vegas.

Tigger: 2006.

Jo Weldon: 2006.

Eartha Quake: The Binion, Fremont Street.

Jo Weldon: We changed that hotel forever.  
(Laughter)

Velvet Ice: I wish we were back on Fremont Street. Anyway, I want to thank everybody and the scene that we get from all y'all is so totally opposite of our experience in the business. I mean it's like oh, wow, who would have thought we would be so held up... (Applause) You know, like we had to be a hidden identity to do this work, hidden identity. If you couldn't hang with that, man, you got out. You know the work had to mean more to you than the price you paid.

Jo Weldon: Well, I put you on pedestal so we can look up your skirt, as they say. (Laughter)  
(Applause)

Viva La Fever: Hi. I'm Viva La Fever. (Applause) I accidentally moved to San Francisco from Pittsburgh in 1971 (Laughter) and within a month I walked into the Follies

Burlesque Theater and said I could do that. So I started doing burlesque. It was sort of just hippy stripping, we called it, (Laughter) but we went on the road. Harold Freeman owned a bunch of theaters and so most of us could do his whole circuit all our life if we would have wanted to and because there were a lot of theaters. And so I did that and I took a couple other tours. I met Camille. I was Camille's co-feature for a while and we travelled together and had a great time. And so I think I actually got out probably around '79 or '80. I didn't consciously quit, you know, I had other things to do and I retired anyway because I'm older. And then I didn't see Camille for about 25 years or so and she called me, she'd been down to the Goat Farm and wanted me to go and said, you've got to go, and she flew out to San Francisco, we jumped in my van and we drove down and I think that was in 2005 and I've been here ever since.

(Applause)

Dee Milo: I am Dee Milo (Applause) and yes, I want to thank everyone who has made my new star and eventually I will know what I'm going to be when I grow up. (Laughter) (Applause) I started in 1949 in New Orleans. I didn't know the first thing about burlesque but I was working as a bartender in San Francisco when they brought burlesque into the place I was working and they said no, you can't do that and I said, you wanna bet. (Laughter) I went down there to New Orleans and got the training, came back, worked in San Francisco theater and down into Mexico, had a wonderful agent that I found in New Mexico, Joe Presby, and he booked me into Mexico City and I was able to work with Jenny Lee. She was the feature, I was the co-feature and oh, what a wonderful gal. Through my sojourn I burnt everything, I became a goody two-shoe, I wore that halo (Laughter) and my mother says if you're really truly repent everything gets burnt. And if you recall the red dress survived. (Applause) And then on the TV I saw Dixie Evans and I said I'm out of this, you guys call the closet? Yes, I am out of my closet, I have the red dress and showed up at the desert as we called it or the Goat Farm in '95. (Applause) Please kids, kids; yes all of you are kids compared to me. I love every one of you and I appreciate what you've done for me. Wow.

(Applause)

Jo Weldon: Thank you.

Dusty Summers: My name is Dusty Summers. (Applause) I started dancing in Phoenix Arizona in 1965 and I retired from dancing in 1991. I have been married nine times. (Applause) I want you guys to know there's hope. I met eight of them in burlesque clubs. My husband back there, Ken and I will have been married 24 years in August. (Applause) I've been coming to the Burlesque Museum since 2006 because a certain young lady named Kitten Natividad who I worked with many times invited me and I just love you all. You make my year. Thank you.  
(Applause)

Gina Bon Bon: My name is Gina Bon Bon. (Applause) I am from Cuba. I started in the business in 1965 as a chorus girl. Then I went to see a burlesque show, I was fascinated with it, and from then on, I'm a stripper now. (Applause) I retired in 1991. Right now I'm an artist, I paint, and that's what I do. The first time I came to this reunion was in 2009. Last year I did my last floor show, that was my retirement, but I'm not done, bring me back in. (Laughter) So don't make me come back and now that I'm fully prepared to be a stripper! I now retire next year. (Applause) Okay. I love you all.  
(Applause)

Jo Weldon: Thank you.

Holly Carroll: Hi. My name is Holly Carroll. (Applause) And they dubbed me in Canada as the "Singing Queen of Burlesque". So I started out as this; I used to win swing contests when I went to LA and then I got a job offer to work at Cyril's on the strip in Los Angeles as a go-go dancer. Then I went to the Condor Room in San Francisco as a go-go dancer, worked for Carol Doda and then I got an offer to go to Bakersfield and oh, that's when I started taking my top off. The girl that was dancing got sick. They knocked on my door; I was working with the band, playing trumpet and singing backup and they said Rusty can you go out there and take your top off. And I said I don't do that. (Laughter) He said well if I give you a hundred dollars more a week would do it, and I said okay. (Laughter) Money talks, here's what, you know what I mean. (Laughter) Anyway so I got diverse with a whole lot of shaking going on, I had to climb on a piano in high heels, in the dark and you could hear the plink, plink, plink, on

the keys and dancing to the whole lot of shaking that's going on and it was really was. (Laughter) And my lips got stuck to my teeth because I was so nervous. Anyway so from there I went to LA and I got a job at the Phone Booth; I worked with Kitten. And then at Losers and LA, I worked with Haji and then got an offer to go to Vegas at the Palomino. Got to work with Dusty and Gina and Lulu. Gypsy's going to say we called her "Loofa". (Laughter) Anyway, so it's like going to a high school reunion and I'm so thankful that you all invited me here. And I quit dancing, well not really, I can still swing dance but I quit stripping in 1990 and I just sing now and I wrote a book called the "Chosen One." (Applause) It's about being adopted and what happens after you leave home. Yeah. Okay. Thank you so much everybody. (Applause)

Jo Weldon.

Thank you. Okay we're going to hear from Val now.

Val Valentine Hello, I'm Val Valentine. (Applause) I'm going to stand up because I'm really short, okay. (Laughter) I started working in 1955 as a chorus girl for one season at Big Bear Revues. I went on to become a stripper. I went right to Chicago, had the greatest wardrobe made by Tony Midnight and went on the circuit. And how I got this name, an agent came down; I would get booked in Chicago while I was having my wardrobe made and an agent came down and said I got a great name for you. I said yeah, what is it and he said Val Valentine. Oh, that sucks I hate those gimmicky names. (Laughter) I don't like that. Anyway I opened in Buffalo and I was going to rehearsal, I looked up on the marquis and it said Val Valentine. So here I am. (Laughter) (Applause) Anyway I worked from '55 and I did the last theater performance in '86. And how I happened to come here, we did a film with Leslie Zemeckis at the Stardust, "Beyond the Burly Q". It's on Showtime. And by the way we're being seen in England now. Anyway then they premiered it in Detroit at the Art Institute, LA, New York and in Detroit. So naturally it went out to Toledo, Ohio by the way and these kids were sitting in the back of us at the theater and after the performance they came down and introduced themselves and said we're the Dizzy Dames from Detroit. (Laughter) A few weeks later I get a call from the Dizzy Dames, we'd love to sponsor you to come to Las Vegas for this event. I said you're kidding me, you know, so okay. And last year, that was my first year, I did the legend's walk and this year they asked me to come back and do a number. Now I haven't

performed a number in 26 years. But you know it was great. It opened up a whole new chapter in my life, I got to see all my cool buddies here. (Laughter) You know, and see all of you and meet you and it's new baby. (Laughter) It's a wonderful thing and thank you so very, very much (Applause)

Jo Weldon:                               And we've just had another legend arrive. Tigger, can you do the honors?

Di Alba                                       I'm already on?

Tigger:                                       Yes, you are. (Laughter) Just say your name, the years that you were performing and when was your first time here.

Di Alba:                                       Okay. I'm not very good on the microphone, girlfriends and guys, but my name is Di Alba. (Applause) I came from Cuba when I was 21 years old. I started dancing as a chorus girl. After that in 1976 I became a feature dancer and I worked at the Fountainebleu and I travel with the show and that's where I met my beautiful girlfriend Gina Bon Bon; girlfriends forever. And that's it folks. What else do you want to know? I get bored very easy so ask me questions. (Laughter)

Tigger:                                       We're moving to that very shortly. Right okay.  
(Laughter)

Jo Weldon:                                       All right. Thank you everybody. So we just introduced you to 34 legends. (Applause) Thank you. That's amazing you guys. I can't tell you what it means to me to see all these people here. This is billed as a Q and A. As you see this could get extremely complicated, all right, so we have to be really realistic. But if you have a question that is not intensely deep or theoretical... (Laughter) oh, Lukki raised her hand. All right. Absolutely. All right, yeah, I know.

Lukki: It just dawned on me to ask you ladies, I can't believe I've never asked this question before. Would anyone like to share some of their beauty secrets with us?

(Applause)

April March: Well, until I met Alexandra the Great '48, I took all my makeup off with Ponds Cold Cream. (Laughter) I didn't do anything with my skin. I guess I just had good genes. Anyway, Alexandra the Great '48 and I are more like sisters than good friends. She's in the skin care business now and so I attribute the last what, 10 years, 11 years, of using her skin care products. I'll let her tell you how to get her formula. (Laughter) But anyway, whatever, I'll be 77 in two weeks.

(Applause)

Alexandra the Great '48: Actually you can find it. It's on the web but it's not under Alexandra it's under my real name [gerriwise@aol.com](mailto:gerriwise@aol.com). And it's not just another product; it's a product that has a purpose. And its purpose is to teach us how to cleanse which is something we've never really learned to do. I learned how to take my makeup off and I thought I was clean but unfortunately everything that goes on; stays on for the rest of your life if you don't know how to really get it off. And it does tend to age us before our years and I made a product that reverses that. So, just by cleansing correctly, you can actually change the color and texture of your skin and that's what I've been doing for thirty years.

April March: Give them your email address. The website is...(Applause)

Alexandra the Great '48: The website is [www.gerriwise.com](http://www.gerriwise.com).

(Applause)

Jo Weldon: Anybody else, beauty secret?

Tigger: G-E-R-R-I-W-E-I-S-E.com.

Bambi Jones: My beauty secret is I stay out really late. (Laughter) We close the joint. And the biggest secret was I was married to a pharmacist, case closed.

(Applause)

Gina Bon Bon: My beauty secret is I will be 75 this year and I am married to a 46 year old. That keeps me young.

(Applause).

Dusty Summers: My beauty secret is I'm also married to a pharmacist. (Laughter) And, soap and water, drink lots of water and smile your ass off.

(Applause)

Holly Carroll: I just use Ponds since I was a kid and Ivory soap and Oil of Olay Skin Freshener and that's about it. And drink water and do not eat fried foods.

(Applause)

Shannon Doah: My beauty secret is so simple: keep doing burlesque.

(Applause)

Haji: Cod liver oil.

Jo Weldon: What is it?

Tigger: Cod liver oil. You heard it from Haji.

Gypsy Louise: I think I just have good genes. I use of Oil of Olay and I wash my face everyday and make sure that it is clean. I don't wear make up unless I'm going out here and I eat fresh foods, exercise, get plenty of rest and keep smiling.

(Applause)

Di Alba: My beauty secret is be married nine times (Laughter) and it's sex of course. Thank you.  
(Applause)

Gail Winns: I never take my make up off at night and my beauty secret is Dr. Grossman and I'm 77.  
(Applause)

Holiday O'Hara: Well I'm 63 and I have two beauty secrets; one I didn't do this weekend, which is plunge your face into a bowl of ice water. If you want to tighten up your skin, (Laughter) it hurts like hell, but hey. (Laughter) As my mother said we have to suffer to be beautiful.

Tigger: Yes.

Holiday O'Hara: My second beauty secret was taught to me by my first teacher that I ever met, Anita Mann in San Francisco and she gave me these words that I will share with you, which is, if you can't fix it, feature it. (Applause) So whatever you've got going on, make it work for you.  
(Applause)

Eartha Quake: Hi, guys. I'll be sixty in a couple of days here and I think we're on to something with this younger man thing. (Laughter) My man is younger than me too, four years younger. And yes, smile, and lots and lots of water. I lived in Seattle; water, water.

Velvet Ice: I just want to say that the food thing really matters and you know I quit drinking and doing drugs and stuff and that really helped a lot. (Laughter) And burlesque, really, that is huge, I mean you just don't ever go back to whatever it was before burlesque, you know. So there you go.  
(Applause)



Jo Weldon: Thank you everybody, thank you. J.D., you had a question?

J.D. Oxblood: Yeah, I have a quick question for Penny Starr. I was hoping you could help me put something into words. What was going through your mind, what was going through your heart the other night when you were on that stage stripping with your granddaughter?  
(Applause)

Penny Starr: I thought it was wonderful, just wonderful. No problem with me. I mean I'm so proud of her. I never thought it would happen but it did. (Laughter) She was brought up around pasties and what have you. (Laughter) Plus she was in dressing rooms when she was very, very tiny and while I went on showgirls would feed her (Laughter) in the wash basket. (Laughter) And then of course, she played with the pasties, you know. (Laughter) That was one of her toys. (Laughter) I'm really very happy that she's doing what she's doing and I enjoy working with her when I have time and when I can get to work because we're so far apart. But yeah, I'm looking forward to something very, very, big to happen with us. Thank you.  
(Applause)

Jo Weldon: Who else has anything to ask?

Speaker 1: Oh, hi everyone. I'm from North Carolina. (Applause) Wow, thanks. (Laughter) I've tried very hard to find any history at all. I've researched in full and all the newspaper records and libraries across the state and I can't find anything. Does anybody have any recall at all?

La Savona: All over the newspaper.

Speaker 1: In North Carolina; be it Raleigh or Charlotte or any clubs that happen to have hosted ladies?

Bambi Jones:                    **{unclear 1:05:38}**; the carnival, used to go through Fayetteville every year. I trying to, I can't seem to remember...

Speaker 1:                    Any other clubs or anything like that?

Bambi Jones:                    No, no.

Jo Weldon:                    What sort of carnival? Touring carnival or a club kind of carnival?

**[Inaudible from 1:05:50-1:05 55]**

**Speaker 1:**                    We had the carnivals.

Penny Starr:                    They were called Girl Shows. Girlie Shows, yeah, in the carnival in North Carolina.

Speaker 1:                    That was my first exposure as a child was going to a “hoochie coochie” show at the Stokes County fair.

Penny Starr:                    Absolutely.

Jo Weldon:                    So that's proof that children should be exposed to this.  
(Applause)

Val Valentine:                    I posed in North Carolina State Fair every year in Raleigh. We had a big show there, a burlesque show. A revue with chorus girls and everything. It was one of the best spots in the season. They came out in the rain and mud every day.

Speaker 1:                    Got to love them for that.  
(Laughter)

Tigger: Toni Elling also has a beauty secret.

Toni Elling: You know I'm just looking around here and listening to all of these youngsters. (Laughter) Do you realize that Jean and I are the oldest, I guess, I think I am the oldest, we're in our eighties. (Applause) And you guys are babies. If I had a beauty secret it's Ivory soap and Vaseline.

Jo Weldon: Oh yeah, Vaseline.

La Savona: I think I am the oldest.

Speaker 2: Hi. My question was at breakfast we were talking and I was curious to know if you ladies are fans of having tight choreography or are you fans of improvising?

Legend Panel: Improvising. (Laughter)  
(Applause)

Bambi Jones: Play it by rear.  
(Laughter)

Jo Weldon: What did you say Bambi?

Bambi Jones: Play it by rear.  
(Laughing)

Jo Weldon: Play it by rear.

Velvet Ice: You know when you're dancing all the freaking time, you know your choreography evolves for an act, a specific act and you get really tight choreography but

you're so, it's like driving, you don't even think about it. So there's improvisation too. I mean, I don't even know how to explain it.

Jo Weldon: Well, Velvet, you said to me another time that you were improvising with a set of moves you already knew. Not making up moves on stage, not improvising in that sense, but improvising; several of you have told me this, you're improving with moves that you had done before or had rehearsed, although you might be doing them in and un-choreographed order.

Dusty Summers: What you really are doing is you are being flexible according to the size of your audience, the size of your stage, whether or not you have lighting, whether or not you feel worth a shit, (Laughter) whether or not your zippers work, (Laughter) flexibility in improvising that's the key. (Applause.)

Camille 2000: I think it depends on what kind of show you were doing, what kind of act. I used to go out and improvise too when I was doing just the basic strip thing everybody did but if you're planning on a certain number like say Shannon's. You know, she had to do the choreography for some things so everything would go right, because she's telling a story. Yeah, I improvised too, that's easy, but on certain acts you have to, it's got to be choreographed down pat, so you know what you're doing when you hit the stage.  
(Applause)

Jo Weldon: You have question? Can you come to me? I think I might be able to hear you, I'll just repeat it.

Holiday O'Hara: So get your choreography down, take dance lessons, please, please. (Applause) It's basic, just basic ballet really. Basic ballet; that's all you need to be graceful and develop a walk, develop a signature walk. The person that made me cry the first time I came here is standing right over there; you, Jo Boobs. (Laughter) You made me cry with delight, girl. You did, okay. Jo, never apologized.

Jo Weldon: Well I'd like to apologize. I'm gonna sit on your later.  
(Laughter).

Holiday O'Hara: Bring it on. I started working in theater and I developed this show and I couldn't see anybody so I just would sock it to the light man; that was the second thing I was taught. But let go of it in the night clubs because those people are close to you. The first time at the theater I walked out on stage, I was very moody, you know what, I didn't get much applause and I was like, what the hell. Everybody used to love me, what's going on? (Laughter) So I started just walking out. I'm like walking into party and saying hello and dropping my act and bringing it back and dropping it and bringing it back. I want to say one last thing which is why I grabbed the microphone. Would you all please work the stage, the whole stage. (Applause) And you tell anybody here that's working tonight, would you please work stage right (Applause) because they'll know why. I know it's a big stage but if you just come out and work a little bit, uh-uh, that is not professional. I know you'll don't like to hear that but everybody paid their money and the people in the far, the little seats over there, they deserve your attention just as much as the people out in front.  
(Applause)

Speaker 3: Thank you so much for that question of the improvisation, choreography questions; big one for me, plus now we're dancing four minutes. Tricky, I wish they were two because okay, now they're doing the fifteen minutes set, this is a show about that, and now we're doing the four minute acts. Do you have any, thinking in those terms, do you have any advice of how, to make sure and get it all off and so that play of being in the moment and feeling it and using the movements that you know but in the order that you feel at that moment is really tricky in four minutes. Any words of wisdom around that?

April March: Wear less shit. (Laughter)  
(Applause)

Jo Weldon: Ok, time.

Tony Elling: I never rehearsed. I worked 14 years and I never rehearsed. I would go to rehearsal, go plan what I wanted, you know give them my music and all of that, give them my cues, just tell them, and let them write it down, see you tonight. Thank you. And they'd say, well aren't you going to, you know. No I'm working tonight, I'm not working now. (Laughter) But getting back to the improvisation. I always did what I felt for the moment and someone said something about that but that's all I ever did. A lady who was a great producer wanted to give me an act when I started but that lady was shocked, because she couldn't believe that I'd go strip in the first place. I didn't want that, I wanted to be me whatever that was, and that's how I still am. And the only criticism that I ever got, the second job I think it was, one of the chorus girls because we had a full show, came to me and said that I did one thing wrong, she said I looked down all the time. She said you have nothing to be ashamed of, just stop when they announce you, put your boobs out, straighten up, put your head back, and go on stage. And that's what I've been doing forever.

(Applause)

Gail Winns: I'd like to clear up about the carnival shows. They were very nice revues. I know Jack Norman's Broadway to Hollywood Revue, where I met Val Valentine in 1958, she was featured, I was co-featured. And we had jugglers, we had acrobats, we had a show. It was a revue show. It was great. Did I leave somebody out?

Val Valentine: Chorus girls.

Gail Winns: Oh, chorus girls, yes, it was stairs and yeah, a full band. I mean we weren't "hoochie coochie". Well (Laughter) maybe a little bit we can still "hoochie cooch".  
(Laughter)

Jo Weldon: Anybody else have a question? Hi.

Speaker 4: I hope this isn't too in depth. So I think a lot of people consider burlesque to be a feminist or a post-feminist art form and I was wondering if anyone here had

any interaction with the Feminist Movement as they performed during the fifties, sixties and seventies?

Gail Winns: Hell no.  
(Applause)

Jo Weldon: Say it again?

Gail Winns: We didn't know what that was, the Feminist Movement.  
(Laughter)

April March: They were taking off their bras and we were already taking them off.  
(Applause)

Holiday O'Hara: In 1980 I began managing the Sutter Theater and somewhere in there I became aware of feminism and that we shouldn't call each other bitch and ho (laughter) and slut and oh girl and all those things and I said okay. And I went into the dressing rooms and I was the manager and I said, you know, really, to be empowered we should, and they were like, okay. And then as I walked out of the room they all turned to each other and went, slut. (Laughter) And I thought well so much for that. (Laughter) And then I woke up. I woke up because to be a woman and to be a feminist means that I had choice and I can choose to be as highly sexual as I really am (Applause). And that's what I have to say about that. Thanks.  
(Applause)

Viva La Fever: I went to college in the late sixties and was very active, whether it was anti-war or pro-drugs or whatever. (Laughter) The Feminist Movement was just beginning but I already did what I wanted so didn't think I needed to join. And I mean I've been beating boys up since I was a little kid. (Laughter) But when I got into burlesque I found that I had a different kind of power over men and so I didn't need to join but I felt I was still doing it.  
(Applause)

Jo Weldon: Dirty, you have a question?

Dirty Martini: I keep wanting to talk about this, I love it. Camille 2000, in her book talked a little bit about tipping the light man to make sure that your lights were perfect to the places that you went. And so I'd like to ask if there are stories of, you know the technicians in the theaters you worked and what you were up against in trying to create a really great show?

Gypsy Louise: A bottle of Jack works every time.  
(Laughter)

Gina Bon Bon: I just have a little advice for the new ladies, all the new strippers. When I first went into the business I worked with Rose La Rose. I respect her very much but she told me I would not be success because I was too clean. I didn't listen to her and I became a big star in burlesque. Be clean and classy. That's all you need.  
(Applause)

Bambi Jones: The question about tipping and whatever, back in the day with our arrangements we didn't have the records. We had to have union charts played by union musicians and we had union contracts and it went on and on and on and of course, the AGBA, right. But anyway, the point is there were a lot of problems with some of the musicians because if they liked the dancer, they wouldn't play your music well if you didn't "mm-hmm". So it was a problem in a lot of places. A lot of the girls hooked up with drummers (Laughter) because drummers go "ah ha", "ah ha". You could go on and on with a drummer and know that you would do a good show because they were your foundation.

Jean Idelle: They'll make or break you.

Bambi Jones: What did you say?

Jean Idelle: I said they'll make or break you.



Bambi Jones:                    They'll make or break you. So yes, there was a lot of that stuff going on and I don't know if it goes on today with the lights because they are so union, the stage hands and all. But most of the stagehands are not, well the ones that I married were all gay. (Laughter) It was like water, water, everywhere but not a drop to drink. (Applause) I loved all of them. I really loved them.

Tigger:                            Just because they're gay doesn't mean they won't sleep with a woman.  
(Applause)

Jo Weldon:                        And I'd like to back that up. You have a question?

Speaker 5:                        Good morning. I would be looking for a few definitions or associations to the word "classic".

La Savona:                        Yes, I want to say that in Europe everybody was classic, everybody was beautiful, everybody was a dancer but it's not like here. Here you have to do certain things to please the audience, not in Europe. So I didn't please the audience, I believe in me, I think this is my classic. And so I don't understand what you're talking about. (Laughter) But I danced so long for years and every minute a star and I don't know why they made me star because I didn't have a big bosom. (Laughter) I didn't have any then and they made me big star, now you look at internet and they make me star and they put me in a museum in England and now they've sold my photograph for four hundred dollars, someone's paying. They're selling my photograph in there. So I don't know, I just can't understand how you people laughing at something what I know was classic and I did it and you loved it.  
(Applause).

Gail Winns:    Classy is a walk, very good posture and a smile and good arm movements.

Jo Weldon                    In neo-burlesque there's a distinction between classic and neo-burlesque that is never a hundred percent clear and so did any of the legends have, does that raise any comments in your heads, what I just said about classic and neo-burlesque in pursuit as two different things?

Jean Idelle:                    Than old burlesque?

Jo Weldon:                    That was the question actually.

Gypsy Louise:                I wanted to answer the question about classic. I just want you to look at the table. There you go.

(Applause)

Haji:                            When I was a very young girl, I was very taken by Lady St. Claire. She was a first class lady. She was just so womanly and so elegant and there's a woman I admired and I kind of got inspiration from her. So I find her one of the first class acts that I admired.

(Applause)

Holiday O'Hara:              I started dancing in 1968 and I've been wanting to do this since I was 10. I grew up in Boston and there was an old Hollywood theater and it burned down before I was able to actually go. But now those were the ladies that inspired me, like Lili St. Cyr; elegant, beautiful gowns, dusters, boas, fans; classy and classic. However, 1968, you remember 1968? Not so classic. So I wore gowns and I had the boa and I would come out to "Hello I Love You", by The Doors" (Applause) because the music needed to be current, otherwise the people in the audience who were my age, would look me at me like what, what, that music, they didn't really relate to it often. So I was in that era and I think that you can do classic but modernize it. This is what I love about neo-burlesque. I have to say that "Chicken Act" last night (Applause) it was wonderful. It had the feel! It had the feel. I was entertained, she's pretty, she's smiling like you wouldn't believe, she had great moves and original and sexy. (Applause) What's not to love but a fashion change?

(Applause)

Tiffany Carter:                   The word classic to me also means some of my mentors and people I looked up to as a child. I started dancing also at a young age, just taking ballet and tap and all that. So classics to me were people like Cyd Charisse {unclear 1:27:06} who just performed here in Las Vegas not too long ago and so that's kind of a classics for me too. I love that too, the people that we saw years ago and some of them are still performing, so it's great to see that also. But like she said the classic to me is what we've been seeing here, you've been seeing a lot of it on stage as we speak right now in this show. That's really beautiful.

Jo Weldon:                         And I actually had a question. Don't let me interrupt you.

April March:                     No I was just going to talk about classic. Like I guess the reason I got in the Minsky's shows and the Corio shows and did the Jim Henson film was classic burlesque, which we were all taught from the very beginning of our burlesque careers. Lili St. Cyr also was one of my idols and I met Lili and she wanted to sell me her bathtub act (Laughter) but I wasn't making five thousand a week to where I could afford to ship that damn bathtub around. (Laughter) So I just kept on my own my stocking act and my walking and I landed in the Minsky's shows and the Corio show and all the other things, the this, the that; quite classic burlesque.

Bambi Jones:                     I have a question for the audience. How many of you have ever seen a burlesque, a real burlesque show? Has anybody?

Jo Weldon:                         A variety show with live music?

Bambi Jones:                     Yes.

Jo Weldon:                         {Unclear 1:28:48}, acrobats, live music.

Bambi Jones: I'm talking about any of the old theaters. And where, could I ask where?

Jo Weldon: Anybody else want to respond to that?

Speaker 1: It's unbelievable; I've seen it. I mean that's what I aspire. I keep a comic and a magician and we have, that is what we do with my show in North Carolina because we stay with the classic, we modernize the classic with the modern music and we keep a musician and juggler and have these variety acts on call to come in and we open the show with a warm up act and it's not girls, it's always a variety act and then during the show we have the variety acts to break up the girls. We try to keep it that way.

Bambi Jones: Well I'm 81 and I'm asking if anybody has been to the Casino Theater in Boston or the Old Howard or Minsky's Marilyn Theater in Baltimore. Any of those? Nobody? Oh, my God. That makes me feel really old.  
(Laughter)

Speaker 7: I've been to both; the Old Howard and the Casino. Peaches Strange, you know her?

Bambi Jones: I worked with Peaches, long red hair and she used to do "It must be jelly 'cause jam don't shake like that." (Laughter) "It must be jelly but jam don't shake like that." And then the band used to say, "Hey Peaches" and she'd go "Uh huh." (Laughter) And they'd say, "don't you shake like that." Bum badum, bum... (Laughter) But that was Peaches.

Jo Weldon: Thank you. Thank you. The moderator is not supposed to question but it's just burning a hole in me. So we have the Burlesque Hall of Fame Pageant and over the past few years other burlesque competitions have come up. What were the competitions in your day, the Miss blah, blah, like Ms. Nude World; whatever. Who here participated in competitions and pageants? Okay, Savona?

La Savona: Yeah. I entered in soldier's competition and then I won and they make me Ms. Atomic Submarine on SEAWOLF. And then fly my {unclear 1:31:20} panties; black panties {unclear 1:31:23- 1:31:25} my G-string, my big panties. So they put them on periscope and they make me Ms. Atomic. I am Ms. Atomic; submarine SEAWOLF.

Jo Weldon: Somebody make her a ribbon, man.

La Savona: {Unclear 1:31:38-1:31:41} I am atomic person. The boys make it when I was dancing they make me accomplished.

Jo Weldon: Beautiful, I love it. (Applause) Anybody else? Tigger?

Holly Carroll: I'm 73 and when I started out we had a live band that we worked with at the Losers. Remember Haj?

Haji: Yeah.

Holly Carroll: And we had a comic relief that did twenty minutes between our shows. So we were kind of spoiled and then the owner of the Losers used to send up his girls to the Beverley Hills Health Club so we could get massages there. (Applause) That was a class act, okay. (Laughter) So we had it pretty in our day and I know that girls nowadays when they have to work in the burlesque or the strip clubs, they have to pay the owner to work there. That is not right, okay. I'm sorry but that doesn't fly with me. If you're going to take your clothes off, they pay you. (Applause) Otherwise they call them pimps, right? (Applause) They better start acting like gentlemen and they have to pay you and they walked out with more money that you did, okay I'm sorry but that...

Jo Weldon: I'm trying to remember who said this about the strip joint tip that the man would turn into jock straps and we support the men.

Holly Carroll: We never had to tip anybody. They played your music when you wanted and they treated you like a lady and that's how you worked. We all had an act (Applause) and that single act was {unclear 1:33:25} was so cute. (Laughter) Anyway so that's my statement and there you go. Thank you.

Jo Weldon: Anybody else with a comment about competition?

Kitten Natividad: Yes, in the old days if you wanted to be a performer you always had to have the perfect body, a perfect wardrobe and a perfect diet, perfect music. It was really tough. So we had to be classic and when we did the contest you were, you know everything, the wardrobe, the body, it was tough, right? Yeah and you couldn't have tattoos. Wasn't it for every state?

Tiffany Carter: Yeah, how many girls were in that?

Kitten Natividad: Yeah, one for each state. Georgia...

Tiffany Carter: Remember? About 50. We competed with about 50 girls. Miss Nude Universe Pageant.

Kitten Natividad: And they were all were gorgeous. It was tough.

Jo Weldon: What was the name of the pageant?

Kitten Natividad: Ms. Nude Universe.

Jo Weldon: Ms. Nude Universe.

Tiffany Carter: I just wanted to add to that too because it's the same thing.

Kitten Natividad: No tattoos.

Tiffany Carter:                    Yeah, the pageants we did were about 50 girls and the last one I was in was Atlantic City and we weren't performing though. We did like more like a Miss America pageant. We wore a gown and then we walked in a bikini and then totally nude. We had to parade with no body makeup. (Laughter) Nothing like that so you were actually totally nude and utterly beautiful and they just did a questionnaire thing and talked to us. There was no actual contest of talent involved. We didn't perform a show or anything like that. And also at the time the wardrobe and what you had and you know got more work that way of course when you won the pageant so.

Jo Weldon:                        There are some answers over here.

Dusty Summers:                I entered some, they called them amateur strip contestant at Club Largo in Sacramento, California and some in the Palo Alto area and they thought I was a plant because I won them all the time. (Laughter) But I was not an amateur. I just happened to really enjoy what I was doing and I knew how to dress like a secretary. (Laughter) Worked every time. A secretary outfit but underneath it you wore a black bra and lacey black panties.  
(Laughter)

Penny Starr:                     In 1961 I was named Miss Bumps and Grinds in Atlantic City, the Cotton Club.  
(Applause)

Gail Winns:                      I would like to ask the girls, the wonderful ladies, did you have any ego busters? I worked for Pink Pussycat as a singer in LA and I had to be Denise Martin but I used to say here's Judy Gail Winns at the end of the show but I used to be like God, that's an awful thing to be called and they had girls that was were Sammy and Franky...

Toni Elling:                      She's telling you the truth. They wouldn't let anyone use their names and if I worked there, I was Samia Davis Junior (Applause) and all the other black girls

who applied for the job had to be Samia Davis Junior and I don't do everything somebody else wants me to do. (Applause) I am Miss Toni Elling.

(Applause)

Jo Weldon: We have five more minutes for one more question.

Speaker 7: Hi. Can you talk a little bit about the way that the money worked when you were performing in clubs? Like, how were you paid? Where did it come from? Did you get tips? How did you interact with the audience in terms of money?

Jo Weldon: Please keep your answers short so that we can get a few of them.

Dolly Jones: It came from the mob!

Val Valentine: We worked in theatres. We were booked in by an agent who got ten or fifteen percent. We didn't make tips, we didn't mingle with the audience. When you worked in night clubs, they usually got fifteen percent, you know what I mean. You didn't make tips because they were not go-go joints or pole dancers. I must say.

Speaker 7: It was like a flat fee?

Val Valentine: A salary and with a contract. A telegram would be your contract sometimes, that's a legal contract, confirmation of a job. We didn't make tips. We made a lot of money. (Applause) The only one you tipped was the stagehand if he moved your props real nice and packed them up, if the band was excellent, you send down a bottle of booze and one more thing, you tip the chorus girl or whoever in the wings to catch your wardrobe, put it on a hanger and put it in your dressing room.

(Applause)

Jo Weldon: Anybody else has comments on getting paid, the way that you were paid, the pay structure?



Holiday O'Hara: When I first started out, I got \$25.00 a night. That was 1968. That was a lot of money in 1968, think about it, and I was a go-go dancer and I continued to get \$25.00 a night for a long time, until I went on the road in about 1972. Where did the money come from? In San Francisco, the Mob; club owners, I mean the clubs were doing great. It was 1968, topless was all the craze. Broadway was a big deal. So when I went on the road, I had an agent. You didn't have to be sponsored and a friend of mine, Polly Hills, connected her agent, Jess Mack and Jess Mack took me on the road. And I got my contracts. I never danced for tips, never. I never paid a stage fee; it shocks me that women have to do that and you're right, we're becoming jock straps. I love that. And when I quit, one of the reasons I quit was because the theaters and night clubs were changing and the women weren't being honored by a good salary. All of a sudden it was all going to the owner. So that's the structure of my life.

Jo Weldon: One more person commenting on the pay structure?

Ellion Ness: Well when I started working at Minsky's, the money came from the box office. (Laughter) I mean you paid to see the show, the money went into the bank and we got checks, well actually we didn't get checks. They paid us in cash in a pay envelope. And when I went on the road we had contracts. Everything was on the up and up. There wasn't anything with tips and anything like that. And the tips; if you had somebody catching your wardrobe, you tip them. When I was a chorus girl, I caught wardrobe for Dixie Evans, Tempest Storm; the big tippers. (Laughter) Twenty-five bucks you know for me to catch wardrobe. Anyway we have to cut it, it's over. Thank you so much for being here.

(Applause)

Jo Weldon: Thank you ladies. It's a huge privilege to be able to talk to you and hear your stories and be able to ask you questions and it just blows my mind to tell you well you make me cry, you me laugh, it is so, so nice. And I want everybody to remember that there are transcripts of the Legends Panel on [burlesquebeat.com](http://burlesquebeat.com). You'll be able to access the Oral History being recorded by Elsa Sjunneson and adapted by me and we're going to be transcribing this as

well. So please talk to the legends. Have a great day everybody. See you tonight. (Applause)  
Are there autographs of any of you guys? Anybody know about autographs?

**[End of panel transcription 01:43:29]**

*This transcript was recorded, transcribed and provided by Burlesque Beat as part of Burlesque Beat's effort to contribute to the preservation of the stories of burlesque.*

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