



**NETWORK**  
July 2021

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair and blue eyes, looking directly at the camera. She appears to be looking through a window pane, as there is a visible reflection or a grid pattern on her face. Her expression is contemplative.

**Women Writing History**  
IN A GLOBAL PANDEMIC



After a career as a dancer and actress, **Diana Eden** spent 30 years in Hollywood, costume designing television series, movies for TV, feature films, plus dozens of stage productions.

*Stars in Their Underwear* is Eden's memoir, covering her triple careers interacting with some of Broadway and Hollywood's biggest stars.

## An Explosive YEAR OF #DISCOVERY *By Diana Eden*

HASHTAGS #2020 #terribleyear #isolation #confinement #quarantine #depression #lockdown #separation and #distancing have all been the keywords during the COVID crisis.

What happens when your personal and emotional space is squeezed tighter and tighter? An explosion happens—an explosion that might include innovation and discovery. That is what happened to me.

Let me be clear. My thoughts in no way lessen my understanding of the suffering of so many people, people that I know personally or only know about. People's suffering is witnessed, those that have lost loved ones (or their own health), their businesses, their jobs, and means to support their own families, not to mention the loss of hope or optimism. Their pain is real, and I can only wish for them the emergence of new faith and confidence that things WILL get better and that new life will develop in ways we cannot yet see.

### **But here is what happened to me: Rather than my world getting smaller, it got bigger.**

In my loneliness, thanks to the internet and Zoom, I reached out to new circles of potential friends—writers, travelers, dancers, and costume designers. In particular, four groups became central to my expanding world: *Journeywoman*, The International Women's Writing Guild, *Pivot Dancer* a website for helping dancers remain strong and injury-free, and costume designers of all stripes in all parts of the country.

One day, thinking back on an article I had read, I re-visited a favorite website, *Journeywoman*, founded by a Toronto woman Evelyn Hannon, whose focus was on women's travel and safety, especially solo travel. I saw that they had a community Zoom call every Friday. At 7 a.m. PST, which was a tad early for me, I made the first one. I discovered a wonderful community of women from all over North America and Mexico of various ages to share daily struggles and past travel experiences. I was back the following week. After all, on Zoom, I only had to be presentable from the waist up!

I also started writing about the intersection of dance and costumes for a new website called *Pivot Dancer*, founded by two enterprising young Canadian physiotherapists specializing in athletes and dancers. I have loved how welcoming they have been of me. I feel no distance between us because of my advanced age and their youth. (In fact, they helped me get up to speed on Instagram!). I now have five articles and one podcast on their site.

And how can I not mention the IWWG, a community of writers that has taught me and supported me all through my book's writing and production? IWWG provides many opportunities to connect, write, listen to other writers, and share one's work in the Open Mic sessions. I feel closer to a number of these writers than I did when I first met them in person at the Summer Conference of 2019.

At UNLV, I have become a better teacher. Through teaching on Zoom, I have better connected with my students in some respects (though I do like seeing their sweet faces in person). A new way of doing "production meetings" online has given us, students and teachers alike, a way to review the research we have done through screen sharing, allowing us to have a collaborative and informative discussion about the work.

During this period of isolation, I have watched and learned from recorded interview shows and panel discussions on costume design in particular. Best of all, I can attend Zoom "parties" where I don't feel like the odd one out. Being somewhat shy in large social gatherings, I have often felt like the little invading cell on the outside of an amoeba, trying to poke my way into a conversation group not opening up to let me in. But now I am just in a box, along with everyone else, haha!

May the future continue the trend of the circles getting bigger and bigger and ever more inclusive.