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UNH Professor Authors Book on Time Travel

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DURHAM, N.H. - Fiction writing - historical fantasy to be exact - might seem like quite a leap for a psychology professor steeped in statistics, but for Rebecca Warner it's a natural transition.

A psychology professor at the University of New Hampshire for 21 years, Warner recently self-published "A.D. 62: Pompeii" through iUniverse under a pseudonym, Rebecca East.

"Statistics really is like writing fiction," she says. "It's taking a batch of data and coming up with a coherent story." One of the types of statistics she has worked with is time series analysis, which is looking at patterns in data over time.

The importance of time is a common thread in both aspects of Warner's work. She describes her novel as a fairy tale for grownups. In it, the main character, a woman, travels from the present day to 1st century Rome, gets stranded and is sold into slavery. She experiences life in the ancient world from an intimate, "Upstairs/Downstairs" perspective.

Warner and her husband, an astronomer, have traveled to Pompeii several times. "I was fascinated, but left wondering what life was like," she recalls. "I started collecting books - I now have an entire room full - on history, archaeology, anything related to the period."

The idea for the story came from overhearing a customer in a Pompeii bookstore asking what life was like in the individual houses, and a question her husband proposed to her: "If you could travel back in time, where would you go?"

Although the book is a work of fiction, some of Warner's character descriptions are based on real people. The descriptions of settings are based on ancient works of art and detailed background research. "I tried to make the story historically accurate. If I said they locked the
door with a key, I did research to make sure they had locks and keys."

Warner worked on the book nights and weekends for about a year and a half, adding that it was much more difficult to sell it than to write it.

"I always felt there was a side of myself I wasn't using," she says, "my storytelling, dreamy, imaginative side. I've gotten positive reviews, but I won't quit my day job."

The novel is available through major online booksellers or by special order from bookstores. For more information visit www.rebecca-east.com

Warner is now working on a statistics textbook.

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