

## **Reinvent Yourself—Make over your life.**

**DEBORAH JACKSON, AUTHOR** Five years ago, Deborah Jackson gave up her nursing career to write science fiction. "I'd been writing for years, on and off, but only getting short stories done ... I needed time to work on a novel," says the 43-year-old author, who lives in Orleans with her husband and two children. Losing the income of a steady job was a nerve-racking prospect, but she had an idea for a book that she just couldn't shake: an adventure story about scientists investigating a mysterious phenomenon beneath the ice of Antarctica. She knew she'd never have the time to research and write the book unless she quit her nursing career.

"Financially, it's been difficult, but I've had a lot of support from my husband. He believed I could do it," Jackson says. It took her a year to complete the novel, working during the hours when her children Liam, then five, and Jessica, then nine, were in school. She found a publisher that specialized in science fiction and conspiracy theories -- a small outfit in Virginia called Invisible College Press -- and sent them the manuscript. "Within a month, they accepted." But she soon realized that her job as an author entailed more than just writing the book. Invisible College Press had no distribution system for getting her novel into the bookstores. Promoting her novel, entitled *Ice Tomb*, and selling it to the public, would be entirely her job.

Jackson made up promotional brochures and set up book-signings, eventually selling about 1,000 copies. At the same time, she was working on her second book, a children's novel about time travel set in Ottawa, this one called *Time Meddlers*. She found a small press in Pittsburg, called LBF Books, that agreed to publish it but, once again, she had to do almost all of the promotion herself. The book is now available at some Ottawa bookstores and can be ordered over the Internet across North America.

"It's just been released and the bookstores that are carrying it are selling out, some of them. Word is spreading. The school boards are looking at it," she says. Asked whether the decision to quit her job and become an author was worth it, Jackson pauses for a moment before answering. "Yes and no, so far. It's been challenging. It's exciting, I really enjoy doing what I've always wanted to do, which is write. But there's more involved than anyone could have imagined. Even if you're with a large publisher, you have to do a large amount of promotion on your own ... And just because you're an author doesn't mean, as everyone seems to think, that money falls from the sky."

**-- Kate Jaimet  
The Ottawa Citizen**