

The Branch Line

CANADIAN AUTHORS ASSOCIATION, ALBERTA BRANCH WRITE ON! 85 YEARS STRONG! NOVEMBER 2006



Lanny Boutin: A Blueprint to Success

by Marg Stephen

Lanny Boutin is the author of three books, *John Diefenbaker*, *Mummies All Wrapped Up*, and *Titanic: the Canadian Connection*. She also has written numerous articles for *Canadian Living*, *Canadian Geographic*, *Homemaker* and many others. She is also an instructor for Metro Continuing Education in Edmonton. How, you may well ask, does she do it?

She started by building a writing blueprint. “So many of our dreams seem impossible, but if you have a plan, many of them can come true.” She was an accountant and administrator for fifteen years and considers herself a “list” person. She has sold 150 articles. Her writing business flourishes because she has a good plan.

Writing a business plan is vital to success. It “proves to yourself it (writing) is not just a hobby.” Writing your plan down gives you a strong reason to follow through. If your dream grows bigger or changes, then change the plan to suit. In the plan, divide your time according to how you want to spend it.

Lanny quoted from *Seven Habits for Highly Efficient People* by Stephen R. Covey: “Take the initiative and the responsibility to make things happen. Begin with an end in mind: start with a clear destination to understand where you are now, where you’re going and what you value most. Put first things first: manage yourself. Organize and execute around priorities. Think Win/Win: see life as a cooperative, not a comprehensive arena where success is not achieved at the expense or exclusion of the success of others. Preserve and enhance your greatest asset, yourself.” You can achieve your goals with a comprehensive plan. The idea of writing a book is daunting, but writing only one chapter is feasible.

Your plan should start with a mission statement. “Why do you write? No reason is wrong.” Lanny writes because her “family likes to eat” and she “wants to help others.” She also enjoys being a detective. Research is fun. The knowledge she gains, she can pass on to others. Don’t start with too many goals; otherwise you’ll be overwhelmed. Lanny feels that the more she writes the better and the faster she becomes, thereby enabling her to write more stories within a shorter time. One of Lanny’s goals is to finish her “elephant book,” hence her blueprint for the next six months sets a deadline for finishing that book.

If you want to write for magazines, target the ones you like, the ones that you might like to do research for and the ones for which you have some expertise.

Perhaps like Lanny, you would benefit from a computer program especially for query letters. Lanny sends multiple submissions, with different queries (five per week) to different magazines. The program keeps track of deadlines and where you’ve sent queries and when.

Thank you Lanny for speaking to us on Friday, October 27th. You are the epitome of a hard working, well-organized author. Your ideas will help us become more organized.

Our Next Speaker:

Patrick Lane



Patrick Lane has authored more than twenty-five books of poetry, fiction, non-fiction and children’s poetry. He has received most of Canada’s top literary awards, including the Governor-General’s Award, and his writing appears in all major Canadian anthologies of English literature.

Lane cont’d page 3

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The Branch Line 2

Periodical Writing: find the ideas, follow the rules

by Suzanne Harris

I've always wondered how prolific magazine article writers get their steady stream of ideas. Lanny Boutin, presenter of the October workshop on magazine writing, said ideas are everywhere, from newspaper articles to talk on the bus.

"Basically, if someone has a problem, other people have that problem, too, and it's a good problem to be solved," said Lanny. She illustrated how the same ideas are used repeatedly in magazines, each time with a different slant. For example, this month every magazine on the rack may have an article on stress, but one could be on how diets reduce stress, another on stress-reducing spa treatments, and another, on beating holiday stress with chocolate. The possibilities are endless!

Once you have a topic you'd like to write about, follow these simple rules:

(1) Research. Read back issues of magazines to learn what kinds of articles they like. Get a sense of who the readership is. Find clues about their age, income, occupation, mindset and values by analyzing editorials, types of articles and the ads. Are the articles fact-based or entertaining? Do the articles use experts or everyday people as sources? What do they think their readers care about?

(2) Query. Don't write the entire article before pitching it to a magazine. Write a query tailored to the magazine's readership. Fortunately, many places will accept queries by email. If the magazine replies with interest, then write the article. The editor may like your topic but ask for a slightly different slant or different length.

Query-writing has some rules of its own, but in short, a query needs three components:

First, explain why your idea is a really great story, timely or important. Then, include the sources you will contact for information. (Insider tip: If you need to talk to someone specific, make sure that they agree to be interviewed, first.) And finally, outline what qualifies you to write the article. It could be personal experience, or you could know an expert on the topic, or you could simply have a keen interest. (Another tip: Never lie about your qualifications.) Keep queries to a page in length, and start with a catchy lead to hook the reader's attention.

(3) Be professional. In magazine writing, deadlines are serious stuff. Don't miss them. If missing a deadline seems inevitable, contact the magazine well ahead of time to let the editor know. Keep a source list, identifying where you gathered your information. Make sure you have any decisions or agreements between you and the magazine in writing.

"You will accumulate a stack of rejection letters," warned Lanny. "Keep them to prove to Revenue Canada that you really are a writer." She emphasized that a rejection from an editor does not mean your story is bad. There are hundreds of reasons why a magazine might not take an article. Send the story idea out again to a different magazine. Or, she suggests, you could even wait six months and send it to the same magazine again.

All in all, you don't need much to break into writing for magazines. You need a computer; you need email. Then, find your idea and follow the rules. If you are new to magazine writing, editors will likely start you on a small article, to minimize their risk while they see if you can work to deadline. Your best bet for breaking in is with 200 word snippets, local magazines, or magazines for trades in which you or someone close to you has experience.

Want to know more? Lanny's course on magazine writing is offered by Edmonton Public Schools Continuing Education a few times a year. Check it out.



Lanny Boutin at the October 28th workshop.

Lane cont'd from page 1

He is considered by most writers and critics to be one of the finest poets of his generation. Lane has lived and traveled extensively around the world, and his work has been published in a number of countries. He has been a writer-in-residence at a number of institutions, and he presently teaches part-time at the University of Victoria. He lives near Victoria, BC with his wife, the poet Lorna Crozier.

Join us for Patrick's presentation:

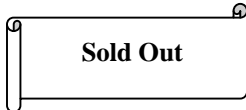
How Poetry Remembers Us

Friday, November 24, 2006 at 8:00 pm

Room 122, Education South, UofA

Edmonton, AB

Workshop:



Writing Our Memory:

The Fiction of Non-fiction

Saturday & Sunday, Nov. 25 & 26, 2006

Room 122, Education South, UofA

Edmonton, AB

Memory arises from our imagination. We make our past out of many stories, images and events, bits and pieces of ourselves that are mysterious and magical. The stories we tell are infinitesimal fragments of our lives and we weave them together into words and from them a past that resembles us, something true and not true. This workshop will ask participants to write a memory-story, how to tell it, what to put in and what to leave out.

Join us in January

CAA Alberta Branch Presents:

Patrick Twomey Workshop

Capturing the Essence of a Trip

January 27, 2007, 9:30am-4pm

Register: register@canauthorsalberta.ca



Canadian Authors Association

**Write Here!
Write Now!**

86th Annual National Conference

**July 5-8, 2007
Ottawa, Ontario**

Visit

www.canauthors-ottawa.org

to register and for
information.

Celebrating Canada's 140th Anniversary



4-for-3 Membership Promotion

Invite 3 other interested writers to join with you & you all save \$40!

Renew with 3 people new to the CAA & each membership costs only \$119.55 rather than \$159.

For more information, contact:
Membership Chair Keith Munro
at keithmunro@shaw.ca.

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CAA Memberships

Regular - \$159.00 per year

Student - \$50.00 per year

(GST incl.)

Membership can be paid in full or by installments. Applications are available from the Membership chair or from National Office.

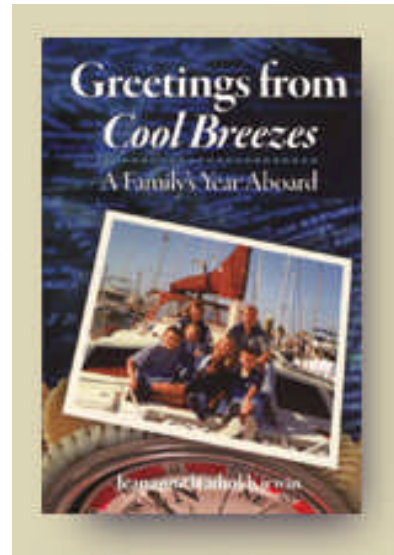


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Exporting Alberta Award-winner *Cool Breezes* sails into West coast ports-of-call by Jeananne Kathol Kirwin

One magazine interview, two radio interviews, three television appearances and three speaking engagements. Four cities, five sleeps, nine bookstore cold calls, dozens of seeds planted, and one thousand dollars. Those are the ingredients of the West coast book tour funded by the 2005 Canadian Authors Association Exporting Alberta Award.

From November 8th through 13th, 2006, I took my sailing memoir *Greetings from Cool Breezes* on a tour of Vancouver and Vancouver Island. The tour began on Wednesday at the Edmonton airport, where I placed copies of the book at the Chapters/Indigo store, and continued that evening in Vancouver, where the local CAA Branch convened its monthly meeting. There I met Vancouver Branch president Tony Dalton and program chair Margaret Hume, and conveyed greetings from our Alberta Branch to some 20 writers in attendance. Due to an injury suffered by the scheduled speaker, my 15-minute remarks were upgraded to a 60-minute reading/presentation – an unexpected honour and golden opportunity!



Thursday the 9th was the most eventful day of the book tour. Six weeks earlier, I'd engaged the services of a publicist, Kim Plumley of Publicity Mavens, who had lined up a series of media interviews. The day officially began at 9:15 with a taped telephone interview with CISL radio (to be rebroadcast in Edmonton and Ottawa later this month). At 10:00 a.m., I met the crew of Omni TV who recorded a 23-minute interview to be shown on "People Uncut" and condensed to a shorter spot on The Biography Channel. From there, the publicist's assistant whisked us away to Burnaby, where I appeared live on Global TV's noon hour show, and from there to Granville Island, where a segment for The Weather Network was taped at 1:30. (Weather is crucial to sailors!) After an afternoon of book store cold calls, I returned to Granville Island for an evening speaking engagement organized by Cooper Boating Centre and One4Yacht Fractions.

The pace slowed Friday the 10th, which was mainly spent travelling in a deluge by taxicab, ferry, shuttle bus and rental car from Vancouver to Victoria. During that day I was interviewed live on CBC radio in Victoria, and by telephone for a Glow magazine article on "unshelving" one's dreams. Any initial qualms I'd felt at the cost-effectiveness of hiring a publicist were dispelled! The late afternoon was devoted to visiting bookstores with my stock in trade. To place copies of my book with Munro's was a distinct pleasure!

After Remembrance Day off visiting relatives (and consigning books) in Comox, I drove to Sidney on Sunday the 12th for another speaking engagement organized by Cooper Boating Centre and One4Yacht Fractions, and more bookstore visits. That evening I returned to Victoria to celebrate at Pagliacci's with my mother and sister-in-law. Having run through sheets of rain to our B & B, we dried off before the hearth, savouring the moment with chocolate truffles and a glass of port.

Thanks again, Alberta Branch, for an unforgettable first book tour, and for the chance to export *Cool Breezes*!



T.A.L.E.S.

(The Alberta League Encouraging Storytelling)

Canterbury TALES on Friday, November 24, 7:30 pm at Westwood Unitarian Church, 11135 - 65 Avenue. Narrator Marie Anne McLean and storytellers Stephanie Benger, Bethany Ellis, Renee Englot, Jennie Frost, and Jennifer Kennedy from TALES Edmonton join musicians Clare Watt, Linda Jacklin, and Vince Kelly from the Edmonton Recorder Society to present five stories from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Tickets \$15 (Students \$12) available at TIX On the Square and at the door.

TALES Edmonton presents a *Story Cafe* on Thursday, December 7, 7:00 - 9:00 pm at Rosie's Bar and Grill, 10475 - 80 Avenue, cover charge \$5.00. Storytellers Stephanie Benger, Bethany Ellis, and Renee Englot will tell stories of *Perfect Gifts*.

TALES Edmonton invites you to our *Christmas Tellaround* at the City Arts Centre, 10943 - 84 Avenue, 7:45 - 10:00 pm. Tell or listen to stories of the season and enjoy a fingerfood potluck. All welcome. First time attendees free, thereafter \$3.00 (helps to pay the rent).

For tickets & info, contact:

M. Jennie Frost
Past National Coordinator
Storytellers of Canada/Conteurs du Canada
9010 - 120 Street Edmonton, Alberta T6G 1X7
Phone: (780) 433-2932
Email: mjfrost@shaw.ca
www.members.shaw.ca/mjfrost

For more information visit:

www.sc-cc.com
<<http://www.sc-cc.com>>
www.storysave.ca
<<http://www.storysave.ca>>

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The Reader's Nook

Title: *Championship Writing: 50 Ways to Improve Your Writing*

Author: Paula LaRocque

ISBN: 0-9665176-3-6

Title: *The Renegade Writer: A Totally Unconventional Guide to Freelance Writing Success*

Authors: Linda Formichelli and Dianna Burrell

ISBN: 0-9665176-8-7

Reviewer: Lanny Boutin



A while back *Marion Street Press Inc.*, www.marionstreetpress.com, sent me a couple of books on writing to review - one of the perks of teaching writing. The first book *Championship Writing: 50 Ways to Improve Your Writing* (©2000), by Paula LaRocque, is a collection of previously published columns from *Quill*, the journal of the Society of Professional Journalist. The then managing editor of the Dallas Morning News, LaRocque's columns have a strong journalistic feel, but most of her suggestions—like striking the word “as” from “he was elected as president”, avoiding writing fads, and using allusions properly—are important concepts for all writers.

I liked the numerous examples she gives, bits and pieces from US newspapers explaining each point. The book is also extremely simple to search with short chapters, comprehensive subtitles and a detailed indexing making it easy to locate the specific idea she tackles.

The other book, *The Renegade Writer: A Totally Unconventional Guide to Freelance Writing Success* (©2003), by Linda Formichelli and Dianna Burrell is touted for the rebel writer, but I found many of the “renegade” ideas were just basic common sense. It did answer some of those pesky questions new and not so new writers ask like must the story be timely, should you go through the PR department, (only if you never want to talk to anyone), and can you have too many sources or do too much research?

The thing that annoyed me about *Renegade Writer* is it was often difficult to determine who was speaking. One paragraph starts with “Linda has a whole box full...” the very next paragraph starts “Diana also rarely sends for guidelines...”. This third person composition was impersonal and confusing, leaving me wondering who was really writing the book.

DISCLAIMER:

The views of writers & contributors to *The Branch Line* are their own, and are not necessarily those of the editor or of the CAA Alberta Branch. *The Branch Line* allows free expression within the confines of professionalism & factual accuracy.

Do you have an idea for a CAA AB Branch presentation or workshop?

Visit www.canauthorsalberta.ca and review the details of how to submit a proposal or idea.

For further information, please contact the CAA Alberta Branch Program Chair, Jeananne Kathol Kirwin at JeananneKirwin@shaw.ca.



Member of the Month
Meet our New Membership Chair:
Keith Munro

Keith Munro, the Alberta Branch's new Membership Chair, has been a CAA member for one year. Keith believes that the benefits of the CAA include: "contact with other writers, their experiences, stories, and encouragement" and "programming that is interesting, informative and introduces different styles of writing and genres."

He enjoys writing science fiction, action, and adventure, allowing the characters to create and develop the stories. Currently he is working on two projects: a science fiction novel and a technical writing project. Keith worked as part of a team writing and editing technical material that is used by students in three provinces and feels this writing achievement is his greatest success.

Writing in coffee shops whenever possible, Keith does not take breaks from writing but rather fits writing into his life as often as he can: "Working full time is the biggest problem when finding enough time to write."

Keith concludes: "Everyone I have met and everything I have read has had some impact on who I am and what I write."



Pictured Above:
Cora Taylor reads from her novel *Murder in Mexico* at the book launch held at Audrey's Books in Edmonton on Sunday, October 21, 2006.

Photographer:
Suzanne Harris

Branch Members:



Please share information about your professional literary events and achievements with *The Branch Line* editor by **January 15, 2007** for the next issue.



Welcome New Members:

- LYNDA DE BEER, EDMONTON
- COLLEEN HEFFERNAN, EDMONTON
- DEBORAH VOS, EDMONTON

John Ballem signs his new novel, *A Victim of Convenience*, on December 6 at noon, at Coles, TD Square in Calgary.

Marion Brooker signs her book *Noreen and the Amazing No-Good Horse* at Viking Elementary School for students and Senior Citizens sponsored by the Friends of the Library (Nov. 23); Chapters, 3227 Calgary Trail 1-3pm (Nov. 25); Chapters, St. Albert 6:30-9 pm (Dec. 6); Coles, Southgate 6-9 pm (Dec. 14).

Diane Buchanan's book, *Between the Silences* published by Frontenac House, is one of five finalists for the 2006 Acorn-Plantos Award for People's Poetry. The results to be announced by the end of November.

Dolly Dennis's short story, *Smoke Summer*, received Honourable Mention in the Mainstream/Literary Short Story category of the 75th Annual Writer's Digest Writing Competition, and she received a Certificate of Achievement to honour her accomplishment. This year's contest attracted close to 19,000 entries!

Leanne Myggland-Carter and **Shirley Serviss** attended the first Canadian *Lapidus* (Literary Arts in Personal Development) meeting on November 1 in Edmonton; it was hosted by writer/creative writing professor Reinekke Lengelle. Originating in Britain, *Lapidus* is a member organization aiming to research, promote, and explore what creative writing has to offer our health and well being. Next meeting: Feb. 1, 2007. For more info visit www.blacktulippress.com.

Gail Sidonie Sobat will be on a cross-Canada tour to promote *The Book of Mary* (her controversial novel for adults) and *A Glass Darkly* (the third in her Ingamald trilogy). She'll be reading and speaking in Victoria (UVic) and Vancouver (UBC, UBC Bookstore) through Nov. 17; McNally Robinson Books in Winnipeg; and Free Times Cafe in Toronto (where she'll also be singing), Nov. 22-26.

Thomas Trofimuk launched his new novel *Doubting Yourself to the Bone* at 7:30 pm, Thursday November 16 at Yianni's Taverna in the Kazbar Lounge (10444-82 Avenue, Edmonton).

Book Launches

Lanny Boutin's third novel *Titanic: The Canadian Connection*

2 pm, Sunday, November 26, 2006
Audrey's Books

10702 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton

Margaret Macpherson's first novel *Released*
7:30 pm, Friday, December 1, 2006

Laurie Greenwood's Volume II
12433 - 102nd Avenue, Edmonton

The MacEwan Writing Works 2006 Courses

A One-Day Grammar Refresher: WRIT 0164 (570)

Friday, Nov. 24, 9 am – 4 pm

Instructor: Graham Bell

\$134, noncredit

Writing for the Web: WRIT 0209 (570) CCC

Saturday, Nov. 25, 9 am – 4 pm

Instructors: Gigi Meade and Ryan Jabs

\$134, noncredit

Develop Your Creativity: WRIT 0239 (570)

Saturday, Dec. 2, 10 am – 4 pm

Instructor: Joan Galat

\$124, noncredit

For info or to register, call (780) 497-5346.

**All courses offered at City Centre Campus
(10700-104 Avenue).**

www.MacEwan.ca/writingworks



Discovery Café

Theme: *Is Peace Possible?*

Date: November 25, 2006 Time: 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Grant MacEwan College City Center – Bookstore

Host: Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck

Facilitator: Nancy Mackenzie

Music: Carrie Hryniw

Readings By: Rusti Lehay, Nancy Mackenzie,

Pierrette Requier, Julie Robinson, Thomas Trofimuk,

and two selected Creative Writing Students.

F R E E

\$3.00 Underground Parking at Grant MacEwan on 105 Avenue

Free 2hr. parking on the street

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Alberta Branch Programs

Exporting Alberta Award Upcoming

The annual Exporting Alberta award is a \$1000 cash prize given to a CAA Alberta Branch member who has produced the best overall book in 2006. The prize money is to assist the author and/or publisher with out of province book promotion.

The CAA Alberta Branch accepts books in all genres, including self published books.

As part of his duties, current Writer-in-Residence Tim Bowling will oversee the award. He will select judges from the wider writing community. He will attempt to find judges in the various genres submitted but he emphasizes that they may not be CAA members. The jury's decision will be unanimous and final and critiques of the material will not be circulated to the finalists

All interested entrants must be CAA Alberta Branch members and must submit a \$25 reading fee payable to the CAA Alberta Branch. As well, the writer and/or publisher is expected to submit four copies of the book. The deadline for the 2006 Exporting Alberta award is March 1, 2007

The winner of the 2006 Exporting Alberta award will be announced at the April 2007 meeting. Submissions can be sent to:

Writer in Residence

University of Alberta Bookstore

166 Students' Union Building

8900 –114 Street

University of Alberta

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 2J7

The Poetry Pocket Members share and critique one another's poetry at monthly meetings in cafés. Details with events on page 8.

The Writers' Circle Members meet at 7 pm before regular CAA meetings and short written pieces are evaluated by their peers.

Writers in Schools takes published members into classrooms in Alberta to introduce students to the writing craft.

The Writing Roster CAA members on the roster cover events for *The Branch Line*. A fee is paid for work published. Contact the editor at branchline@canauthorsalberta.ca if interested.

POET'S INK

Writing evenings:

Most Sundays from 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
excepting long weekends, holiday dates
and summer months.

Next gatherings November 19, November
26, December 3 & December 10 and
returning January 7, 2007.

Castle Rock Pub
570 St. Albert Road
St. Albert, AB

Contact: andymichaelson@telus.net



The Branch Line 8

Mark Your Calendars:

2006 ~ 2007

Interested Poets, please contact Keith at 438-2262 for meeting information about *The Poetry Pocket*.

Nov. 24, 8 pm: **Patrick Lane** *How Poetry Remembers Us*

Nov. 25 & 26, 9:30 am – 4 pm: **Patrick Lane** Workshop *Writing Our Memory: The Fiction of Non-Fiction: SOLD OUT*

Dec. 6, 6-8pm: **U of A Bookstore** *Wine & Cheese*: exclusive event for CAA members and their family and friends (20% off books & selected merchandise). Please RSVP by Nov. 30: cmleanne@shaw.ca or (780) 960-6002.

Jan. 26, 8 pm: **Patrick Twomey** *The Lifestyle of Travel*

Jan. 27, 9:30 am – 4 pm: **Patrick Twomey** Workshop *Capturing the Essence of a Trip*

Feb. 23, 8 pm: **Mieko Ouchi** *Truth and Fiction: Writing Plays about Real People*

Feb. 24, 9:30 am – 4 pm: **Meiko Ouchi** Workshop *Living History*

Mar. 30, 8 pm: **Florence Mckie** *Writer: Reader – A Spinning Coin*

Mar. 31, 9:30 am – 4 pm: **Florence Mckie** Workshop *The Analytical Eye (I): Learning from the Written Page*

Apr. 27, 8 pm: **Chris Banks** *This Ink Painting of Wind Who Hears It? Poetry and Finding One's Audience*

Apr. 28, 9:30 am – 4 pm: **Chris Banks** Workshop *Something is down there and you want it told; Poetry and Voice*

May 25, 8 pm: **Joe Simons** *Quiet Listening and Creative Practice*



Clip & post this schedule by your calendar.

See other side for program & course info.

CAA ALBERTA BRANCH BOARD MEMBERS

2006 ~ 2007

ELECTED MEMBERS



Past President
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CAA Regular Meeting Fees:

Members: FREE

First-time Guests: FREE

Returning Guests: \$10

CAA Workshop Fees:

Members: \$30 (1 day)

\$60 (2 day)

Non-Members: \$60 (1 day)

\$120 (2 day)

Unless otherwise designated, meetings are held in Room 122, Education South Building, U of A (87 Avenue & 112 Street).

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The Writers' Circle meets Fridays at 7pm before the monthly CAA meetings. Bring two double spaced typed papers or a three minute reading.