

Local woman authors guidebook

Helping police officers get it all down in writing

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RRS Acton resident Karen Jakob, who moved here four years ago with her family has written a book especially for policemen. Husband John, an engineer, was her best editor, who said, and they made a good team. It's her first book, but Jakob has written 50 magazine articles since 1981.

by Cythia Gamble
With her eyes glazed over and typing fingers weary, RR 3 Acton resident Karen Jakob has just published her first book, *The Complete Guide to Police Writing*.

How in the world did she think up a book on that topic? Well, Jakob has had a lot of experience in that area. The Humber College teacher even rode around in Halton regional police cars on patrol.

"It was really interesting," Jakob said, "comparing what happened on the street to what you see on paper."

Jakob taught law enforcement communications for eight years to police officers and students and it was largely from these lectures that the idea of a book was born.

Jakob began sending out surveys to police forces across Canada to gather additional information as well as riding patrol.

It was from her patrol experience that she was able to gather the time restraints and writing requirements for the officers. Unlike business report writing, police reports are legal documents to be used by attorneys in legal cases. They have to work with what the officer has written. A poorly written report could mean a poor case.

"It has to be accurate. A report needs certain legal requirements but must still be very precise in a limited space. Policemen have about five lines to describe a complex occurrence, so it's important they know more about language," Jakob said.

Halton regional police were encouraging and supportive when she began writing the book. Most policemen she interviewed commented that it was about time a book like this was designed for them and most were favorably impressed with the early galley prints.

It is the only book of its type in Canada, according to Jakob, and is largely directed at Canadian police forces, police colleges and community colleges which teach law enforcement. Jakob added that she has already had some community colleges express interest in the book.

Staff Sergeant Dan Reid of the Halton Police Training Division said he has ordered a couple of copies to review it and consider it for use in training sessions.

Police forces don't have the time to teach recruits how to write well, Jakob said, so those with weak writing skills can be handed her book as a crash course on clear writing.

"It's small, compact and I've worked very hard to keep it clear and simple," Jakob said.

The first section deals with language problem areas such as spelling, punctuation and grammar. The second part provides guidelines for on-the-job writing such as reports, memoranda and press releases.

The third section was put in at the request of police forces. It teaches how to write the

academic essay. Many promotion procedures in police departments, she said, require the officer to write an essay. Good writing ability thus becomes important to a policeman's future.

"People are not frightened anymore of writing or of the blank page. If they know the rules and conventions, they can play the game," Jakob said.

Wellington NDP picks teacher, 34

Offering the federal New Democratic Party as "the only real alternative to the cynical politics of the old guard parties", high school teacher Sandy Young will carry the NDP banner in Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe in the Sept. 4 election.

Nominated last week in Orangeville, the Orton resident teaches politics and history at Bramalea Secondary School.

Young, 34, is the founding chairman of the Ontario NDP's rural caucus and is a member of Amnesty International, Greenpeace and the Canadian Wildlife Federation. He's married, a father of three, and was nominated for the riding candidacy by former candidate Marlon Chambers.

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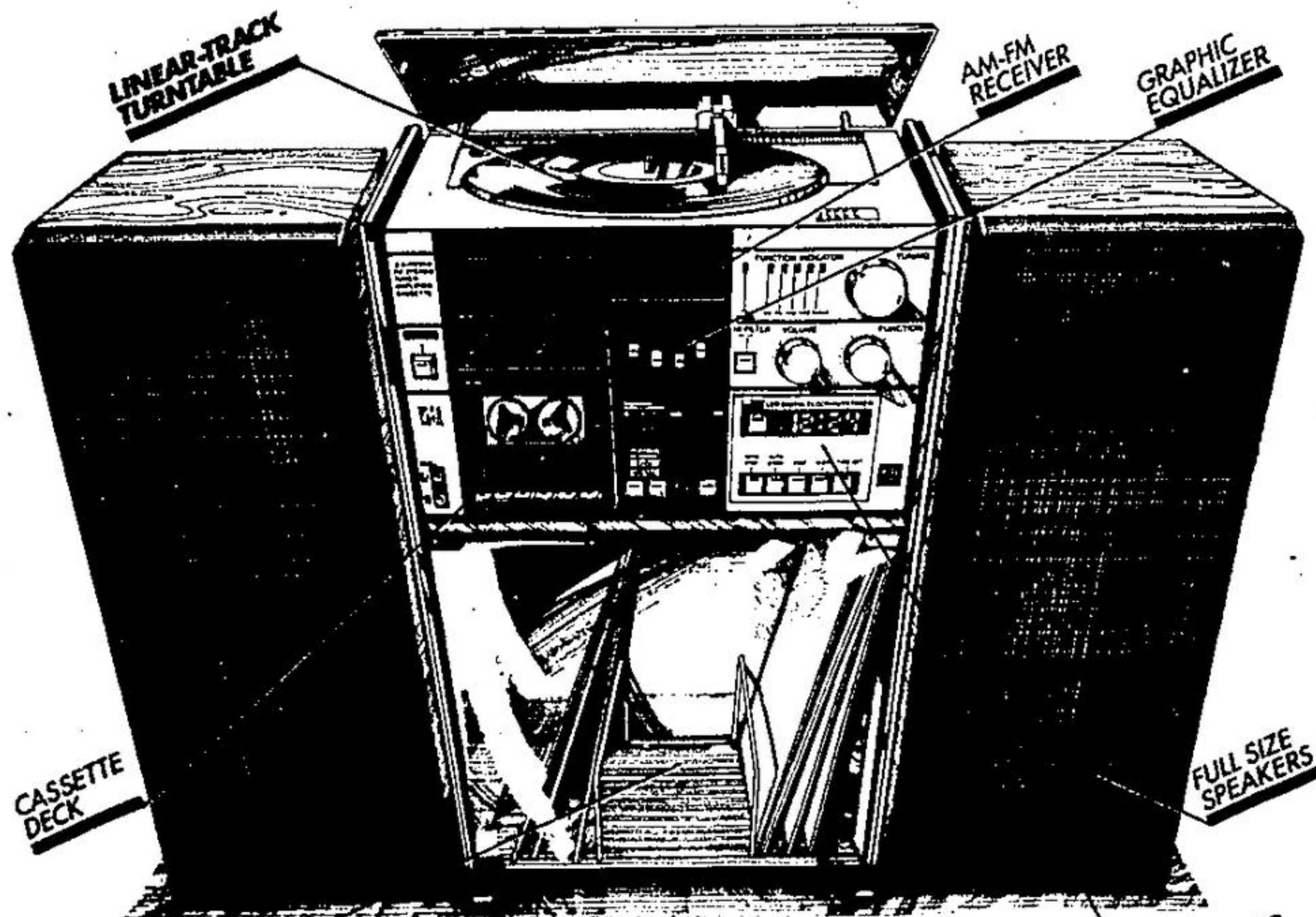
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