

Become your own Bill Gates

by ANDY MAIS
Business Editor

The high-tech engine of our economic growth all started with a couple of guys in a garage. When Wozniak and Jobs and the guys built the first Apple, little did they know they were about to hand our Garden of Eden over to the creature called Microsoft.

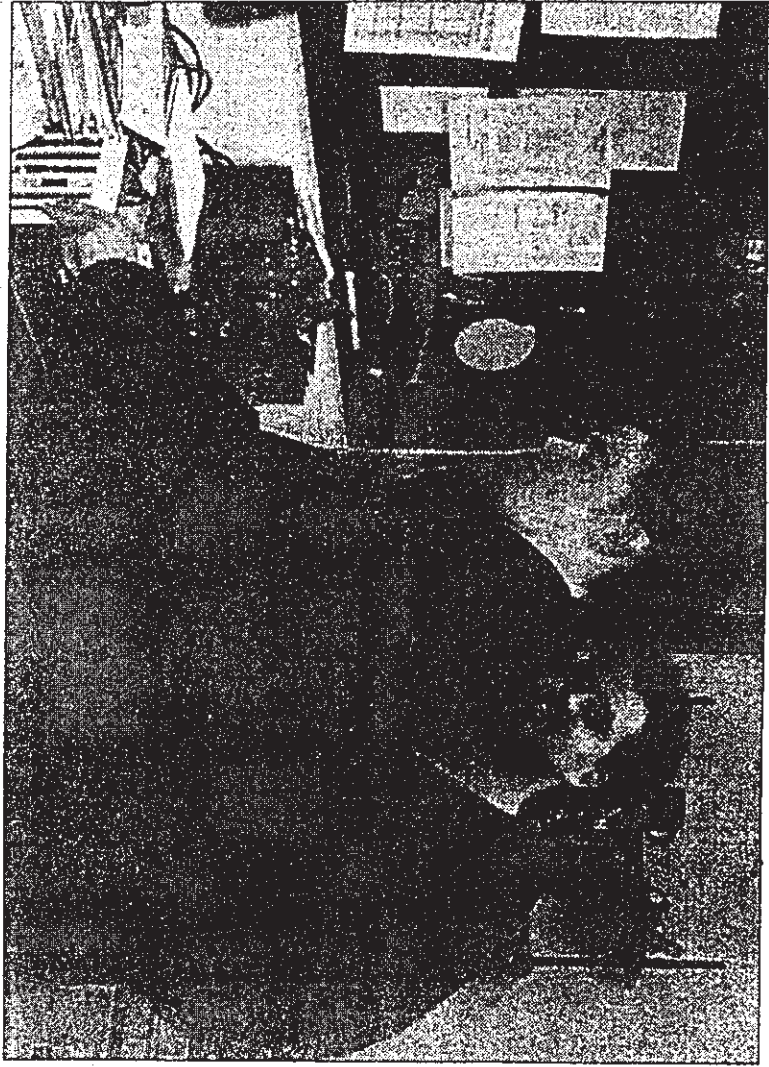
Ah, well! Not much we can do about that now. Personal computers have become as much a part of our lives as planes, trains and automobiles. Yet while almost everyone who drives at least knows where the gas tank is, many computer owners have no idea what sits inside their machines, and what to do if that interminable wait for Windows 95 to boot up does not end successfully.

The irony of being completely ignorant of the workings of a machine designed to reduce ignorance does offer an irresistible irony to some, but to the people at CT PC Exchange on Route 7, it spells opportunity.

They are offerings locals a guided tour into the world of personal computers. For no more than the price of a regular PC, the Exchange is offering four-hour seminars on Saturday mornings where consumers get to build and take home their own personal computers.

While this course may not make one an expert on all aspects of computers, it will undoubtedly demystify the contraptions, allowing every person to have at least a crack at fixing it when things go wrong, or upgrading it to make it even better.

Start
"The gist of what we are trying to do," said manager Thomas Dawson, "we can't explain every-



Douglas Eisenstein, left, and Thomas Dawson of CT PC Exchange want to help you build your own computer.

thing about a computer in four hours, but we're hoping people get an idea of what makes them work."

The program begins at 9 a.m. with putting together and testing the bread board — the motherboard, CPU, memory, and other essentials of the heart of the system. A lecture follows, and after that comes the fun part.

Each person will build his or her own computer, including monitor, modem, sound card, and all the fun

stuff. This is followed by installing the drivers, operating system, programs — the software that tells the computer what to do.

"It would take an actual technician about an hour to assemble a computer," Mr. Dawson said. "So we're allowing four to five hours where people actually are learning something in the process."

"We'll cover the components and explain how they interrelate." **Personal touch**
This is the logical next step in a

process that has seen computer sales become more and more personalized, as computer makers move to building computers to fit individual needs.

With the PC Exchange, the basic concept remains.
"It always starts with what do you want to use it for," Mr. Dawson said. A staff member will help consumers figure out how to meet their needs, then select the components required.
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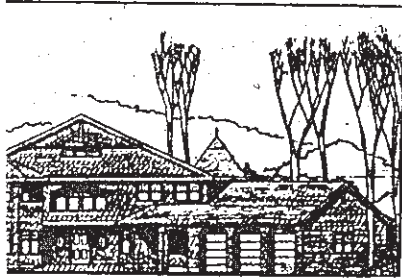
Ridgefield Bank wants 'mini-branche' at Anconna's

by MICHAEL P. McINTYRE

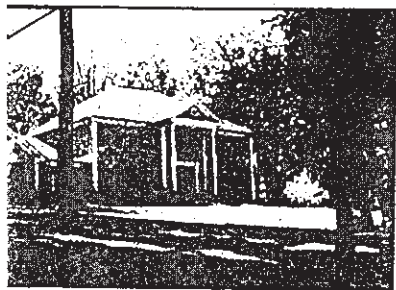
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If you think you've been scammed by a promoter pitching bogus Yellow Pages or business directories, contact your local postmaster or postal inspector. Their numbers are available in the blue pages of your telephone directory. Or, write: Chief Postal Inspector, United States Postal Service, Washington, D.C. 20260-2100 (202-268-4267).

Build one

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The consumer then puts it all together on Saturday morning, leaving with a computer he or she built, and knows more than a little about. Yet the knowledge is basically free, since there is no premium over what the computer would cost if that consumer just ordered it delivered. It also comes with the same warranty.

CT PC Exchange, which has been in business for about nine years in Ridgefield, will design, build, service, maintain and upgrade any system, if necessary. But with this new service, they hope customers get just a little more.

"They will probably end up with what they want (in terms of a computer)," Mr. Dawson said, "but the other side is they know what they are looking at."

For more information, call CT PC Exchange at 431-9662, or visit the 724 Danbury Road office.

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