Do your homework before buying that new pc

Continuing with my penance for being out of touch for the last few months, here are some thoughts on selecting a personal computer. First, having advised you in my last column upon the selection of a place to buy the PC, I feel that I should issue a warning. Just because the salesperson tells you that you need something doesn't make it so. There's a Joke about the difference between a used car salesperson and a computer salesperson. The used car seller knows he/she is lying. While that may be a bit harsh, the fact is that in computers, as in used cars, the buyer must beware of wolves in salesmen's clothing. So, start out by doing a bit of homework before you enter your lirst computer store.

store.

Head for your local newsstand and pir's up a copy of Computer Buyers Gulde and Handbook, or if you can find it, the Computer Shopper. CBG&H is a better bet for most of you because it's more easily available and industrial and the computer of the you because it's more easily avail-able and it includes well-written en-try-level information on buying a PC.

PC.
It also includes listings of "street prices" for popular PCs, printers and software. These are prices that

2 county residents named to state council

Two Oakland County residents are among 21 people appointed by Gov. John Engler to the Michigan Devipmental Disabilities Council.

The council uses money collected by the federal government for programs to help developmentally disabled people. Area appointers are:

Marion McDonnell of Birming-months and the council of th

abled people. Area appointees are:

• Marion McDonnell of Birmingham, past president and a committee chairwoman of the United Cerebral Palsy Association of Metropolition of Metropolition Detroit line. She is on the board
of Housing Alternatives Inc. and
of Housing Alternatives Inc. and
of Housing Alternatives Inc. and
of Housing Committee for
Developmental Disabilities. Her
term runs to Sept. 17, 1932.
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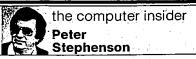
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are typical as opposed to manufac-turer's list prices. You can often save 20-30 percent if you know a lit-tle about street prices before you

ONCE YOU ARE ready to start ONCE YOU After ready to start shopping, remember that you should start out knowing what you're going to use the PC for. It it's home use only, you can get away with a bit less computer. If you want to do graphics, you might take a close look at Apple. Remember, Apple software won't run on IBM and compatible PCs. So if you want to carry your work home from the office PC, you



which was the same type of computer (IBM or Apple) at home.

Kids do well on Apple s, too. There are a lot of Apple computers in our local schools. If you are going for a blot of spenguter, you'll probably need a blt more horsepower than

WILL YOU NEED color displays,

WILL YOU NEED color displays, fancy printers and other accessories? Again, it depends upon how you plan to use the PC.

I prefer color screens because they are easier on the eyes. But I spend 10 or more hours a day in front of the screen, so that's important to me. If your use is more casual, you may not need the color screen.

For home use, if there are kids around, there will, eventually, be games on the computer. That de-

ally, a good tung to nave on case.

Choosing a new PC requires attention to detail and a rational decisionmaking process. It's not like buying lef lirst TV that looks good to you. Pick your supplier, be sure you know what you plan to use the PC for and do your homework in advance. You'll not go too far wrong. And that's the inside story.

Peter Stephenson is a comput-er consultant, lecturer, nationally published columnist and author who lives in Rochester Hills.

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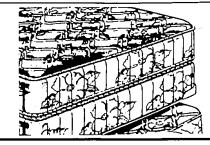
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