MARILYN FITCHETT, EDITOR
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BUSINESS

10B(F) THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1992

SUBURBAN BUSINESS LEADERS

Browning

Toni Browning has been named store manager Hudson's Oakland in Troy. Browning brings 18 years of retial experience to the position. She began her retial career at Gamble-Skogmo-Wickes Department Store in Chicago. She held merchandise and sotre management positions at Blochs in Indianapolis following their merger. Browning joined Hudsons as a store manager in Kalmazoo in 1988 and moved to the Flint Hudson's in 1990.

Smith

Greg Smith of Troy has joined Spalding, DeDecker & Associates, Inc., a Madison Heights consulting firm as project manager.

The Women's Advertising Club of Detroit hav announced its 1992/1993 officers and board of directors, including **Molly A. Moons**, president, of Molly Moons Marketing Events Consulting and Production; **Lori Jo Vest**, vice president, of Bette Communications; **Monica DeCola**, recording secretary, of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers; **Kathy Thornton**, corresponding secretary, of McKann/SAS; **Kay Scott Helm**, treasurer, of DDB Needham Detroit; **Gina Bartoszewicz**, director, of Sunday Magazine Network; **Therese Geer**, director, of GK Photographics; and **Kathy Huetter-Smith**, director, of Producer's Color.

Moons

Ameritech Publishing Inc. has named **Christopher A. Arnette**, senior director, information technology. In this capacity, Arnette will oversee the planning and devlopment of information technology and provide technology awareness to business management.

Arnette

Franchises enter fertile computer training grounds

■ **Computer training is no longer just the chore of the office hacker or the outside consultant. Franchises have entered the picture with a network of support to keep them current on the latest models and software.**

BY GERALD FHAWLEY
STAFF WRITER

A computer isn't worth the plastic and metal it's made with if it sits on a desk and no one uses it.

That's why hundreds of consultants have set up shop to train employees how to use computers in the past two decades.

Today, a new type of consultant has come on the scene. While computer training was once the purview of former executives and managers from the larger computer companies starting their own businesses, the future holds promise of national franchises dedicated to pure instruction in the use of commercial software applications.

Mark McManus, Sr., president of Computer Training and Support Corp. in Livonia, was the first in the nation to acquire a franchise from New Horizons, a computer training firm started in 1982 in Santa Ana, Cal.

After beginning franchising earlier this year, New Horizons has grown to 15 outlets in major metropolitan regions throughout the country; within days, that number will reach 16.

Unlike in the past where computer consultants came to the business and taught employees on the business's equipment, in the future employees will go to the computer training centers with classrooms equipped with state-of-the-art computers, up-to-the-minute software and full-time instructors, McManus said.

Still a role for the consultant

While there will always be room for the many computer consultants working today, the thriving computer education centers are here to stay, he said.

The consultants will continue doing the work they do best, including specialized computer security, systems analysis, equipment consulting and needs assessment. But McManus said the plain vanilla computer training needed by the vast majority of computer users will be the bailiwick of the franchised computer training centers.

That's a big difference from less than a decade ago, he said.

Prior to 1984, McManus said many companies used custom-made software packages or some of the early generation commercial packages.

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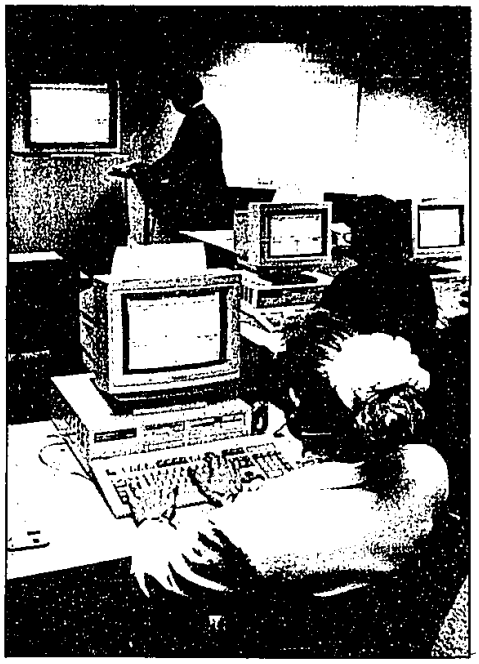

JIM JAGIELLO/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Hands on: *Bill Bell, of New Horizons in Livonia, teaches a class on the Project for Windows software program for Consumers Power employees.*

Computer industry consolidates forces

BY R.J. KING
SPECIAL WRITER

The computer industry today reminds many observers of the consolidation of the auto industry 70 years ago.

As more and more players entered an industry generating double-digit profit margins, prices dropped and growth sputtered. The auto industry's answer to the increased competition was to meld a number of individual enterprises into a handful of dominant companies.

The computer industry is chartering the same path. In turn, due to a recession and a move toward standard components, where competing manufacturers now produce almost the same basic parts in their computers, rivals have turned from highlighting technological differences to slashing prices.

Businesses and consumers taking advantage of lower costs have saved as much as 40 percent from prices a year ago, but the cuts have put some manufacturers on shaky ground and left buyers to wonder if service contracts and warranties will be honored down the road.

"In its infancy 15 years ago, the computer industry was marked by wild growth, but today the industry has matured so much that earnings are in the single digits and even strong companies are struggling," said Rick Inatome, chairman of the InaCom Corp. in Troy.

"Over the next two or three years, struggling companies will either strike a deal with someone else or fall by the wayside. That puts much more pressure on the consumer, who must now make sure he's dealing with stability at all angles."

Inatome knows of what he speaks. Last year, his former company, InaComp Computers, merged with Velcom Inc. of Omaha to better position both businesses in a market now driven by less expen-

See SHAKEOUT, 12B

DiPaolo to repeat her small business series

Teaching budding or present entrepreneurs to "run a successful business by design rather than by accident" will be the aim of Mary DiPaolo when she offers her four-class series, "Making it Big in Small Business," starting Thursday, Sept. 10, at Schoolcraft College.

"Running a successful company of any size or type isn't about selling what may be easiest or cheapest to provide to customers," she said. "Nor is it about opening up one of the 'hot' new businesses for the '90s."

Instead, she explains small-business success in terms of marketing to customer needs.

"The companies that make it biggest in small business are the ones that keep making customers needs' and satisfaction their top priority," she said. "When I hear a business owner tell me that 'everyone' is a current or potential customer of his business, I know there's a problem."

She stresses that identifying the key customer markets is the crucial first step toward better marketing. "Relying on demographic characteristics such as annual sales, number of employees or type of location just doesn't cut it any more."

Instead she believes that obtaining appropriate attitudes and lifestyles data is the most meaningful customer identification tool.

DiPaolo is the owner of MarketTrends, a Northville marketing management consulting firm. The seminar is a repeat of one taught in March that drew close to 100 present and future business owners.

Classes will run 6-8 p.m. Thursdays in Room 200 of the Liberal Arts Building. Individual sessions are $25; all four are $80. Increasing Sales and Profits (Part I) will be offered Sept 10, followed by Beter Market Planning (Part II) on Sept. 17, Attracting the Right Customers on Sept. 24, and Cultivating Customers through Networking on Oct. 1. To register call Continuing Education Services at 462-4448. Registration will also be taken at the door, space permitting.