object. HomeFind does not read its entries, it just moves them around.

Lists comprise the merge files mentioned above. Once the user gets the hang of them, they are easy to create and use. Again, two menus must be accessed to create a merge file, and the user must switch disks. It is here that the problems with HomeFind, and HomePak in particular, become apparent.

Error Handling

The dark side of HomePak comes out when you use peripherals with HomeFind. It is user fair-weather friendly. If you make a disk handling mistake error codes are displayed on the screen with no explanation. Neither the program nor the manual explains common errors that can occur when you remove the disk before the drive stops whirring, or if you send a print command to a turned off printer. Nowhere in the documentation is there an appendix listing the disk error codes. Having such an appendix would be most helpful. Not having an appendix, or any sort of clue as to what went wrong, can make using HomePak's advanced features frustrating.

In HomeFind, the most serious error you can make is inserting a new disk without going through the protocol required. Not only will you lose your data, you will destroy the data on the disk permanently. But the manual is explicit on this point!

Most errors arise when you use the more advanced features of the word processor. Print previewing long files is the worst offender.

HomeTerm

The third program in HomePak is HomeTerm, the telecommunications program. All computers need a program like this to run with their modems, and HomeTerm is not a bad one. As in the rest of HomePak, the emphasis is on the user's basic needs, with some nice touches thrown in.

HomeTerm will work with Atari, Hayes, and MPP modems. For uploading and downloading files, HomeTerm handles ASCII, ATASCII, and XMODEM protocol. It has a 7000-character buffer, and boasts a file editing menu you can use while you are hooked up. The functions menu lets you customize the terminal for different modem models.

One very useful feature of HomeTerm is its offline text editor—a window that appears at the bottom of the screen where you can edit your communications *before* you send them. The window will hold up to 120 characters, and send the text through the modem when you press RETURN. Another useful feature is the storable macros. These are combinations of keystrokes that you store on a data disk to enable you to dial and sign on to a distant terminal with just one keystroke. With a bit of fancy usage you can store as many as 700 keystrokes. The macro waits for prompts from the distant terminal.

Documentation

The HomePak manual is clever. It is a top-bound spiral book; the back cover fits into a slot in the packaging and folds up to form a stand that holds the book upright. This makes it very easy to keep the book open while you work with the programs, and lets you easily flip to your area of interest. This is necessary, since the documentation is extremely terse.

The organization of HomePak's menu screen functions is something that the user must take out of context. Often, the function indicated is part of a menu that is accessed by a console key that has not been explicitly stated by the manual. In other words, all the information is there, but it is not plainly stated. There are no reference cards, but the three programs all have "quick reference guides."

HomePak is aimed at beginners. If a beginner reads the manual from the beginning, takes notes, and follows all the instruction carefully, he or she can use HomeText and HomeFind almost immediately.

The HomeTerm section is very well done, and is ideal for someone who is new to telecommunications. Technical concepts such as duplex, baud rate are well explained. The manual's appendix on CompuServe's Atari SIG (Special Interest Group) is an excellent touch. Perhaps with the help of friends on the SIG, the new user can get enough tips to use HomePak to its fullest.

HomePak is a very reasonably priced package with most of the features a home user will ever need. If a beginner buys HomePak, and takes the time to learn all of its functions, he or she could end up with a very good working knowledge of not only the use of HomeText, HomeFind, and HomeTerm, but the sets of principles of file handling, text editing, and telecommunications.

Party Quiz Game

CONTINUED FROM 62

by allowing them only half the response time of the other players.

Each round consists of ten multiple choice questions. A countdown-bar across the bottom of the screen shows how much time is left for each question, and displays the points for correct replies. The faster the response, the higher the point total won—multiple choice questions count down from 1000 points, and true/false "stumpers" start at 500 points. Players select the correct response by pressing the appropriate key on the controller, then the computer displays the correct answer and takes care of tallying the score. Special *Lightning Bonus Rounds* 4, 7, 11, 15, and 19 feature a high speed bombardment of questions during which the computer gives each player in rotation 20 seconds to answer up to ten questions.

Every two rounds, the computer prepares a report card displaying each player's score, with a cryptic comment on how well that player has done. At the end of the game, a *Dean's List* records the initials of the top ten scorers in that play session.

PQ comes with the controllers, all necessary connector cables, and two disks that contain the program plus roughly 2500 questions. The game is a real party maker; the ease of play lends itself to social occasions (where larger groups can compete in teams), and the *Quick Response Controllers* add to the fun by ending the problem of keyboard typing errors.

PQ—The Party Quiz Game, *includes Controllers (Suncom, two disks, 32K required.)*