



A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

October in Tampa?

Vol. 17 No. 10 October 2004

Meeting

Understanding .Net

Wednesday, October 13, 2004
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
6401 N 54th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Randall Nagy, President of Soft9000.com, will do a presentation on understanding .NET. Spend an hour learning what .NET is, and what it is not. We will also have the usual half-hour Windows SIG.



Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Shorter Newsletter This newsletter is only eight pages instead of the usual 12. I have decided to change to this format for months when the material is insufficient to fill, without a lot of padding, the larger format.

More Hurricane Last month I mentioned how in preparation for Hurricane Charley, I backed up my software and prepared to move my computers to a safer location only to abort the move when Charley suddenly steered clear of Tampa. Well, since then two more hurricanes, Frances and Ivan, have threatened Tampa, with Frances passing nearby and dumping a lot of water on us as it made its way from east to west across the state.

With Frances aiming at Tampa, before turning in for the evening, I unplugged my main computer from everything and moved it, along with monitor, printer and scanner, to a safer room than the one it normally occupies with the giant oak limb overhead. The next morning the only damage we had was a lot of small limbs down in the yard. So back to the room the computer went, and I connected everything back before turning it on.

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November Meeting: New Hardware

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software; plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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Marshall & Stevens
Pepin Distributing Co.

Minutes of the September Meeting

By Kevan Sheridan, President, Tampa PC Users Group
president@tpcug.org

The Windows SIG (Special Interest Group) discussion began at 6:45 PM. Several small group topics were covered during the session. The president began the regular meeting at 7:00 PM.

Laura Royal, Financial Criminal Investigator with the Office of Financial Regulation, Bureau of Investigations (<http://www.fldfs.com/>), performed the main demonstration for the evening. The topic was **A Case Study: Securities Fraud on the Internet - Putting the Pieces Together.**

This program took us from start to finish of how an investigator uncovered a pump and dump investment scheme promoted through a message board on the Internet. We covered the basics of beginning the case with a complaint about \$33.00 which led to uncovering a \$3 million fraud from a company in Sarasota. We walked through the investigation process, bank record analysis, investigative resources, witnesses, the Internet message board and the bogus press releases. We learned what it takes to obtain a search warrant, perform an arrest and prepare for trial. As a consumer you can report suspected fraud at <http://www.fldfs.com/Data/Fraud/Report%20Suspected%20Fraud.asp> or you can request assistance at http://servicepoint.fldfs.com/eservice_enu/start.swe. Overall, this was a very interesting demonstration. The meeting ended at 8:40 PM. ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 1)

Then strange things started to happen. After booting the computer, I got messages stating that it had found new hardware, etc. The new hardware was a USB scanner and a USB external hard drive. Later on that day, when I connected my digital camera to download the photos of flooding a block away, I also got the same messages about new hardware. This didn't make sense. I had disconnected all of these peripherals while the computer was turned off and reconnected them before I turned it on. What was going on? Member Bob LaFave had the answer. He said that I must have connected the USB devices to different USB ports than they were connected to before. If that were the case, and it was, they would be treated as new devices.

Bandwidth As Hurricane Frances was leaving the area after passing north of Tampa a bit, its winds were just right to produce a

(Comments.....Continued on page 4)



Member of
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Quick Look: Delorme Street Atlas USA 2005

By Merle Nicholson, www.tpcug.org
merle@merlenicholson.com

Street Atlas USA 2005 is a very good product that is simply getting better year after year. It is travel mapping, travel planning, real time auto navigation, a “point of interest” locator, and much more. This version adds many functional improvements in addition to the expected highway and database updates. I’m going to be covering some of the improvements and also go over the disappointing installation problems. If you’re upgrading from a previous version, my own experience should save you some time.

At the minimum, even if you don’t travel with this software on a notebook as I do, you can make use of it on a desktop at home for travel planning and mapping. It’s useful as a substitute paper map of the city – for any city in the US for that matter – or perhaps to find the nearest Starbucks in Orlando if you’re visiting there and have a Latte attack. I think just about anyone can find a good use for at least some of the features. And at \$49.95, you can’t beat the price.

My own interests extend to nearly the full capability of the software. I’d say the only thing I have no personal interest in is the hands-free voice command feature. I use a Delorme Earthmate USB GPS attached, and also an inverter to power the notebook charger while in the car. My next acquisition will be a Bluetooth version of the Earthmate, so I can eliminate the too-heavy USB cord that attaches to the GPS.

New Features

First and foremost, it’s faster. The program startup is very noticeably faster, something I appreciate especially on my not-too-fast notebook. The most important change they’ve made is to recalculate the route dynamically when you’re off the planned route. Say you’re out of state and in unfamiliar territory, and you decide to leave the highway for a gas stop. When you’re a certain distance off route, the program changes the planned route to get you back on track from wherever you are, and gets you back there the shortest (or fastest) way. What a difference this makes! Way to go, guys!

As you’re moving on a planned route, the synthesized voice anticipates turns and warns you ahead of time of upcoming turns. They’ve improved this by announcing the next TWO turns. Perhaps this doesn’t sound like much, but in practice it’s a much needed improvement I didn’t know I needed.

They’ve simplified the saving of route files. There was a big controversy over the redesign of this product several years ago (in the 2002 version, I think) and the file system was clever, but just too complex. Several other displays have been improved, and the large database expanded even further. There’s a GPS Points of Interest (POI) Radar search that is much easier to use. It searches for categories of items (stores, restaurants, exits, rest facilities)

along the route, (optionally) in a forward direction. Good going, Delorme!

I do have a couple of complaints. There’s extra blank room on the right hand toolbar where a badly needed compass and speed indicator could go (and maybe altitude), and while that information is certainly available on a tab, you have to switch over to it and back to the usual tab, which for me is the next turn display. Another complaint I have is that there is no useful scale on the display to estimate distances. I say useful, because there is a fixed length bar that has a label specifying the length. How useful is a scale that says “2000 ft”? Or “500 ft”? Instead of 2000 ft it could be a slightly longer variable length bar that has marks to .5 miles. That’d be useful.

There’s a “clear trails” button that’s necessary to get rid of the green breadcrumbs wherever you go, but it’s in the wrong place in a hard to find location on one of the GPS tabs. And trails should automatically clear when you reverse your route.

Considering the complexity of this program, and make no mistake about it, this is a very complex program, it’s reliable and after a steep learning curve, easy to use. It has to be the premier product of its type. For campers, hikers and bikers, there’s a topographical version and also a version for Pocket PC’s. There are versions that also package their very fine GPS with the software. One deal is a package that bundles the Pocket PC version with the Bluetooth GPS for \$150.

Installation problems

If you don’t have a previous version installed on the target computer, and you don’t have the Earthmate USB GPS driver software, you shouldn’t have any problems. I had both products, and if they had included instructions to uninstall the three previous products before installation (in my case, S&T USA 2004, S&T USA 2004 Data, and the USB GPS driver), I wouldn’t have had any problems either.

The installation program doesn’t recognize the existence of any previous version, so all the settings you may have had for the previous version are lost to the new one. You’ll probably want to edit the preferences to designate the speed traveled on each highway type, change the preferred highway and several other items, and you just have to do them all over again, just as you had to do the previous year.

To top it all off, the Earthmate USB GPS driver must be replaced with a new one, and the existence of the old one isn’t detected until the end of the main program installation. So at the end of a very lengthy program installation, it informed me that I needed to uninstall the old driver and then do the setup again. I uninstalled the driver from the control panel and also discovered that my 2004 version was still functional, so I uninstalled that, too. Then the new setup failed, with a message that temporary files could not be copied from some temp directory and with instructions that I must delete the main program directory manually. So I did

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(Street Atlas.....Continued from page 3)

that and, with both versions blown off the computer, I could start all over again. I'm still awestruck. It's hard to believe that a computer program of this quality could not have an intelligent installation program written for it. If that CAN'T be done, at least add two sentences to the instructions: "First, uninstall any previous versions, including the Earthmate USB GPS driver" and "All your previous custom settings will be lost".

Finally

The Earthmate driver installation has an optional serial port mapper, so that if you have other software that can read the NMEA standard GPS sentences, you can designate a "fake" serial port. This is very useful. If installed, you must also use the serial port designation for S&T USA 2005. The GPS connection settings are easy to set up.

The product comes on a two CD set for \$49.95 (\$39.95 + S&H promotional price for existing registered customers). The second CD is the database that can be used in your CD drive; installing it on the hard drive is optional. There's a DVD version with a 31-million-business-telephone database on it, and various other packages including the topo version, Pocket PC and WAAS-enabled GPS, both USB and Bluetooth Logger. Look at the various packages at <http://www.delorme.com> ♦

(Comments.....Continued from page 2)

storm surge in the bay just south of our neighborhood. I have seen such high water, perhaps, half-a-dozen times in the 23 years I have lived here. It covers Bayshore Boulevard and creeps up the streets off Bayshore to varying distances depending on how quickly the elevation of the street rises.

I was ready with my camera to take some photos as soon as the rain slacked off a bit. With a modified plastic food bag covering the camera, except for an opening for the lens, and some wading boots for me, I set out. The water was only one inch deep in the road in front of my house, but, as I walked the one block to the bay, it reached mid-thigh as I came to the sidewalk on the city side of Bayshore. In the street, of course, it was deeper. For about five or six blocks I walked along the sidewalk photographing the water lapping at the doors of some homes but only up to the first or second steps of those built higher from the ground. Quite frequently I had to wipe the camera lens with some paper towels I had brought along. Later in the day I went out and photographed the odd tree or two that had been blown down by the storm.

I then put about fifty of the photos at our neighborhood website, <http://www.oldhydeparkfl.org> in the form of a slide show. Then I sent an email to the 226 homes in the neighborhood for which I, as the keeper of the database, have email addresses, telling them about the placement of storm debris for pickup

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Easy CD-DA Extractor Ver. 7

By Larry Anders, Librarian, Tampa PC Users Group
larry@andersnet.com

Since the early days of CD ripping [converting a retail CDA music file into a digital format such as MP3 or WMA], I have used various programs to do the ripping. When converting various MP3s into music files that will play in my car, I have also used various programs. But up until now, nothing seemed to be able to do it all. Now, Easy CD-DA Extractor [ECD-DA] will do it all with the right click of a mouse. ECD-DA is all-in-one audio software that rips, burns and converts between formats.

The program has a typical Windows style layout that allows you to drag and drop files to rip or convert, but I prefer the right mouse clicking from within Windows Explorer. You can highlight one or several at a time, right click and then choose what you want to do. Some of the features are:

- Volume Normalizer and Compressor, Fade In/Out, Silence deletion from the start and end of a song
- Download and upload disc information from/to the freedb, the Internet Compact Disc Database
- Copies "Copy-Protected" CD's
- Input formats: MP1, MP2, MP3, WMA, Ogg Vorbis, MP4, M4A, AAC, FLAC, Musepack, WAV, Shorten, and Monkey's Audio
- Output Formats: MP3, Windows Media Audio 8, Windows Media Audio 9, Windows Media Audio 9.1, Ogg Vorbis, MP4, M4A, AAC, FLAC, Musepack, VQF, WAV, AIFF, Monkey's Audio, and any command line encoder
- Error Recovery, reads audio from badly scratched CD's
- Reads and Writes CD Text
- Supports all CD-recorders without need to update the program when a new CD-recorder becomes available, all CD-recorder parameters are automatically detected

If you want to try a free copy go to <http://www.poikosoft.com/download.html>. If you like it, the cost is \$29.95, and all updates in the future, minor or major, are free. ECD-DA does not install any spyware or anything else that is not placed in the installation folder.

I enjoy my music and this program makes it a lot easier to enjoy my music. ♦



(Comments.....Continued from page 4)

and noting that there were photos of the storm's aftermath at our site.

Then all hell broke loose. The site normally averages no more than 10 visitors per day. The first full day the photos were at the site there were 4,025 visitors, creating 435,728 hits and consuming 22 GB of bandwidth. The site's bandwidth allocation is 20 GB/month--a pretty generous allotment for an inexpensive site. What to do? Reduce the number of photos in the show. I reduced the photos to around 20.

The next day the site had 12,008 visitors with 860,630 hits consuming 36.5 GB of bandwidth, with that reduction. Be careful what you wish for; you may get it.

Time for another reduction. I reduced the number of photos available to nine. And the third day, with 6,679 visitors and 223,343 hits, the bandwidth usage was 7.87 GB. And it has been slowly going down from there with a few blips higher. As I write this 12 days after the photos were put at the site, there have been 72,763 visitors, 2,788,623 hits, consuming 114.3 GB of bandwidth. For all those who think the Internet is free--the 94 GB in bandwidth over the 20 allowed is expected to cost \$184.

When it works, word-of-mouth advertising is an amazing thing. All of those people who came to the site did so because of those 226 emails I sent to the neighborhood, plus about six that I sent to others.

Editorial Note After writing the above about moving my computer for Hurricane Frances, I had to do the same thing for Hurricane Jeanne. Luckily for me, Jeanne's final path took her north and east of Tampa, so we received maximum winds of no more than around 60 mph or so. Not enough to bring down that big oak on my house. People in the south central and eastern portion of the state were not so lucky. Four hurricanes in about five weeks. Who would have thought it?

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Internet Picture of the Month



Damage from Hurricane Jeanne

This photo of a damaged house between Vero Beach and Melbourne is from the online version of the Miami Herald at <http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/>

Many roofs were no match for the 120 mph winds as hurricane Jeanne came inland on the Florida coast between West Palm Beach and Melbourne.

October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (That's us)
Math World
eNature.com
Spyware Guide Database
Florida State Webcam Directory
DrinkBoy Adventures in Cocktails

<http://www.tpcug.org/>
<http://mathworld.wolfram.com/>
<http://www.enature.com/>
<http://www.spywareguide.com/>
<http://webcambiglook.com/fl.html>
<http://www.drinkboy.com/>



Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

Looking Back to 1994

From the October 1994 Bits of Blue Newsletter

Secretary's Report

MINUTES OF 9/14/94 MEETING

and Personal Comments by

Jim Clark, Tampa PC Users Group

This was another great meeting, but the rain was once again not a friend to our meeting. However, the rain did not interfere with the very good meeting that took place, including a fine presentation on a very new and powerful program — Ca\$hGraf Business Office.

USER GROUP NEWS

ADOPTBBS: Harvey gave a brief summary as to what the Adopt The BBS fund raiser is all about and why and then pointed out that the newsletter includes a how-goes-it thermometer to reflect our progress toward achieving the funding needed to improve the BBS — add a second phone line, another modem to support that line, and add a 500+ MB hard drive to provide more file storage capacity. He reported that as of newsletter publication time only \$200 in contributions had been received. He emphasized how important the additional funding is to the BBS and urged all members using the BBS to lend their support to this fund raiser.

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS VIA FAX: Harvey announced that the Board of Directors (BOD) had decided to send notices of our general meetings via fax to area business and educational institutions as a means of making those organizations aware of us and what we do. These one page notification flyers would be sent to a selected group of organizations for the next meeting. Any organization that desires the notifications should inform the user group at the address shown on the back page of this newsletter, along with organizational info (name, address, fax number, etc.), or notify any member of our BOD. On the other hand, anyone who receives the flyer via fax that does not wish to receive future notifications should also let their wishes be known in the same manner.

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP: The BOD has created a new membership category, Corporate Membership. Annual membership fee is \$50, with membership commencing when the application for membership is approved and continuing for one year thereafter. This includes membership for three (3) corporate personnel, each of which would have full membership rights. The corporation may sponsor membership for additional corporate personnel if desired for an annual membership fee of \$15 per person; however, the expiration of these memberships will be concurrent with the expiration of the sponsoring corporate membership. Each of these additional personnel will also have full membership rights. The initial application should be sent to the user group under corporate letterhead and include the names of all corporate personnel for which membership is requested. Requests to add additional personnel may be submitted at any time thereafter; this request, also under corporate letterhead, must include the names of the additional persons for whom membership is requested.

TBOL PARTICIPATION: Tampa Bay On-Line is in full swing on Prodigy. Harvey explained how our user group is participating in providing reviews and articles for posting on TBOL. All articles provided by us to TBOL will have first been published in our own Bits Of Blue newsletter. Several, usually about four, will be posted on TBOL every month; articles are retained on TBOL until they become outdated. Nothing will be posted on TBOL by this user group until after it has been made available to our own membership.

INDUSTRY NEWS: A number of news tidbits from the industry were tossed out from the podium and from the membership as well. Probably the item of greatest interest is that Microsoft has selected a name for Chicago/Windows 4.0—the name announced is “Windows 95,” after the year in which it is expected to be released. Yes, the industry now expects “Windows 95” to be released in the 1st or 2nd quarter of 1995. (Will it have to be renamed Windows 96??)

PRESENTATION Ca\$hGraf Business Plus

Our own St. Petersburg-based Target Software Group, Inc. favored us with a visit by four of their staff. Richard Muscarella, Sales Manager, gave us a rundown on the company and the development of Ca\$hGraf Business Plus—a comprehensive, interactive financial management program designed for small businesses. Rich explained how the company and this program evolved. Ca\$hGraf was in development about 5 years and was first released only last May at Comdex. It has won numerous awards since release from a variety of industry reviewers and critics. The name of the software evolved from Ca\$hGraf, to Ca\$hGraf Office Plus, then to Ca\$hGraf Business Plus because of a need for a name which more accurately reflects the breadth and comprehensiveness of the program. Rich described it as the only fully integrated, single solution financial management software available and the only piece of software a small business would need. Moreover, Rich explained that great emphasis was given during development to ease of use and true user friendliness, the result being that anyone would be an effective user in a very short time. That lead-in raised our level of expectations and set the stage for the presentation of Ca\$hGraf Business Plus.

Chris Payne II, Regional Representative for Target Software, followed Rich with a review of Ca\$hGraf. The introduction given by Rich soon became evident in the review. A very comprehensive program, Ca\$hGraf includes: A financial awareness and goal tracking system, with loan and savings scheduler; full business accounting, including budgeting and projections; supports both cash and accrual accounting simultaneously; handles 3 types of invoices; does credit memos and billing statements; provides a general ledger; does full perpetual inventory with location and multi-location and price levels by item; handles check writing and deposit tracking with up to 99 accounts; provides a preset and user definable database; complete instant text and graphical reporting on all data in the program; provides contact management in client database with “Phone Script” and autodial throughout; includes word processing, complete with spell check and thesaurus, and mail merge from databases and financials; prepares purchase orders;

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Special Interest Groups

Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com, or Merle Nicholson at merlenic@tampabay.rr.com.

Digital Imaging SIG

This new SIG meets the **fourth Monday** of the month at Pepin Distributors at 6:30 PM. For information contact Mary Sheridan at mcpease@mindspring.com.

Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Kevan Sheridan moderates the discussion.

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prints to preprinted forms or will accept and fill in scanned forms; supports bar codes; does time and billing accounting; supports tab tables; provides a day planner and appointment scheduler for an unlimited number, to name just a few. And all of these features are fully integrated and interactive so that data in any portion of the program is instantly usable in all other areas of the program. Boy, that is a mouth full!!

The size of the files that Ca\$hGraf will support are limited only by the limitations of the host computer and disk drive space. Ca\$hGraf is not yet network compatible, but a network version is currently in development. Meanwhile, an easy-to-use full security capability already exists within the program that provides the capability to limit individual user access to specific areas of the program. True context sensitive help is available at every location within the program. Moreover, a single comprehensive manual provides ready information about the program in the unusual event that you cannot find your answer with on-line help. And if that still isn't enough, free technical support is provided by Target Software via toll-free telephone. To speed up the learning curve, Target includes a 1 1/2-hour videotape with every copy of the program; this video gives the guidance needed to use the program effectively quickly.

Ca\$hGraf Business Plus requires a 386 or better computer, with at least 4 Mb of RAM (preferably 8 Mb), Windows 3.1 and a total of 11 Mb of hard disk space for program files. The program lists for \$299 but is available at an introductory price of \$199 for a limited, but unspecified, time. For those in need of that kind of program who did not attend this meeting, you blew it because Target made the program available to those present for an even better price, Better luck next time.

To Target Software, Rich and Chris, and all who helped with the presentation, THANK YOU very much for an excellent presentation about Target and Ca\$hGraf. We appreciate your making our membership aware of both Target and Ca\$hGraf.

AND THE WINNER IS

Thanks to the generosity of Target Software Group and Brain-child Computer Distributions, there were a couple of very nice door prizes. Those among us to have the good fortune to win are:

Dave Clary - MosesAll!! [networking card]
Torn Cone - Ca\$hGraf Business Plus

The meeting adjourned at about 8:45 PM. ◆

(Comments.....Continued from page 5)

Windows XP Service Pack 2 I have now installed Windows XP Service Pack 2 on my main desktop computer and my laptop. If you don't have a broadband connection, it is probably better to get the CD from Microsoft since each of the downloads was in the neighborhood of 100 MB. I think the amount of download necessary is determined by how much updating has already been done to XP, Internet Explorer and Outlook Express.

For my laptop, the download was 114 MB at a speed of around one MB every three seconds. For the desktop computer, the download was around 96 MB. I think the download and installation on the desktop took a little over an hour.

After the update and a reboot, on the laptop the only difference, other than what I will mention about Internet Explorer and Outlook Express below, was that I now had to give permission for the sync of my Pocket PC to the laptop.

After rebooting the desktop and opening Internet Explorer, the first thing I noticed was that whenever I clicked on any link, a window popped up and requested that I insert the Microsoft Money 2002 installation CD. This was mighty odd. I had never used Microsoft Money, but it had come free with the computer two years ago.

(Comments.....Continued on page 8)

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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Tampa, FL 33601-3492



First Class Mail

- Member: Your membership is up for renewal
- Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ____

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So I did a little research on the Internet, and there were only a few messages about such (none pertaining to XP), and the consensus was to uninstall Money and some other Money component I can't recall the name of. Money uninstalled OK, but the other component produced an error when I tried to uninstall it. The solution for that was to download the Windows Installer Cleanup utility and run it to remove Windows Installer settings for that item. I did that. But on the next reboot of the computer, I received the message "This action is only valid for products that are currently installed."

That forced me to examine the registry for stuff related to Money. I found three items, one of them one of those strange ids like {CF5193F7-6B37-11D5-B7D2-00AA00A204F1}, that I think might be called GUIDs. I backed those up and then deleted them, and now I get a boot up without the message. Why installing SP2 caused all of this is a mystery.

Two nice features are that IE now automatically blocks pop-ups and Outlook Express blocks linked images unless you request that they be shown. The downloading of those linked images could be used to indicate to spammers that you received the email and thus that your address was a good one to keep spamming.

There are a lot of updates out there from Microsoft that you should install. There is one for Office that fixes the new JPEG vulnerability. I could tell of my travails with that on one of my computers, but there is no more space this month.◆

