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**"Alternate Modes"**

**By Bob Osgoodby**

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When choosing a company to do business with, we all agree that customer service is high on our list of priorities. The following relates some types of practices a business should definitely avoid.

Recently, we flew from Newark to West Palm Beach on business, and stayed a few extra days to visit with our daughter. Since this was the first time we flew since 9/11, we didn't know what to expect, so we allowed plenty of time before the flight.

We were pleasantly surprised that we could check in, and get our boarding pass at curbside. We then headed directly to security to be screened prior to boarding. Apparently my wife Sue's purse failed the X-ray check, as they put it through several times. While short of a body cavity search, they did put her through an extensive check. Taking her purse then to a different machine, they wiped it with a cloth, and then tested the cloth. They didn't make her open the purse, which I found strange, and offered no explanation of what they were doing, or why.

While I recognize that the security guards are not direct employees of the individual airlines, they should insist that these people are at least courteous. Those with a bad attitude make flying even more onerous.

We finally got through security, and had some time to wait before the flight, so we decided to get some lunch. We ordered, and while they gave us a fork, they didn't give us a knife to cut the meat. I inquired and was told that no knives were allowed in the

## "Alternate Modes"

airport or on a plane. OK, I thought but wondered how I could injure someone with one of those small plastic knives with a rounded tip – the fork would be far more dangerous.

We finally got on the plane and they served what they liberally called a snack". It was about the size of a golf ball, and had the consistency (and in my opinion the taste) of dried mud. Unable to cut it, because of the perceived danger a small plastic knife would pose, we had to pry it apart with our fingers. One taste however, and we were glad we had something to eat at the airport.

We also ordered a drink, and much to my surprise, the stirrer was about 7 inches long, made out of stiff plastic with a point as sharp as an ice pick. What a weapon!

I seriously doubt if I could kill or even threaten someone with the prohibited small plastic knife. It would probably take a half an hour or so to kill someone, and they would have to cooperate. If someone tried to threaten me with one, I might die of laughter.

You could however easily kill someone with the drink stirrer they provided, with a jab in the eye, an ear, or the throat. This was simply stupid. Why didn't they provide a small plastic straw instead?

Many people are apprehensive about flying under any circumstances, and many became even more so immediately following 9/11. A first time flyer leaving from Newark will have their heart in their throat. Due to noise abatement restrictions, the plane must make some severe turns to follow a waterway on takeoff.

Before 9/11 on a another flight, a considerate pilot warned us about the takeoff pattern, and told us just before he made the turns what was going to happen – not now – it seems that the skies are no longer "friendly".

Now with the airlines struggling to survive, you would think their service would be top notch to entice people to fly with them – Naw – in my judgement, same old, same old crummy service.

Hey guys, "wake up and smell the coffee". These people on the plane are your customers. I guess the airlines are trying to cut

costs, and probably the "bailout" by the Feds was justified, but if you want them to come back, you better start treating them like customers.

Add the inconvenience of having to arrive at the airport hours before your departure time, minimum wage security guards who don't instill a lot of confidence, and the issuance of a weapon with your drink, I think, like the well known sports announcer, I'll consider alternate modes of transportation.

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## **Window's Startup Modes for Troubleshooting**

**By Stephen Bucaro**

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#### **Window's Startup Modes for Troubleshooting**

**By Stephen Bucaro**

Troubleshooting a Windows problem is a bit difficult when the system freezes up or the display becomes unintelligible. You need a way to get Windows to bypass some of its complexity and bloat so the system can start, allowing you to perform troubleshooting. Windows provides several alternate startup modes just for that purpose.

To access these alternate startup modes, start your computer and immediately after the startup beep, press the [F8] key. The startup menu will display as shown below.

## "Alternate Modes"

1. Normal
2. Logged (BOOTLOG.TXT)
3. Safe mode
4. Step-by-step confirmation

Enter a choice: 1

Press the number key for your choice and then press the [Enter] key.

1. Normal allows you to get out of the startup menu and resume starting Windows normally if you pressed the [F8] key accidentally.

2. Logged causes Windows to log its startup activity in a file named bootlog.txt in the drives root directory. Bootlog.txt will be a very long file. Open bootlog.txt with Windows Notepad or DOS Edit and search for a line that contains the word "failure".

If Windows freezes before completing startup, the last line in bootlog.txt might give you a clue to the cause of the problem. You may find that one or more steps fail during the startup process. Don't assume those are the cause of your current problem. Those steps may have been failing all along and you didn't know it.

3. Safe mode. This mode bypasses most startup configuration files, including most of the registry. It starts windows without most of the drivers. It loads only generic mouse and keyboard drivers and a standard VGA video driver.

Safe mode lets you work with "bare bones" Windows. You have access to your drives, so you can copy or delete files. You can use the Registry Editor to inspect or edit the Registry. But Control Panel | System | Device Manager will return the message "Status is not available when Windows is running in Safe Mode" for the properties of every device, so you can't troubleshoot the area that causes the majority of Windows problems.

4. Step-by-step confirmation performs the startup process one step at a time. Before each step a message is displayed on the screen letting you select to run or bypass the step. This lets you bypass the steps that returned "failure" in

the bootlog.

Windows 95 and 98 may provide you with several additional startup options, for example "Command prompt only", "Previous version of MS-DOS", or "Safe Mode with Network Support". Windows Me does not contain an independent DOS command processor so these modes are not available.

Windows 2000 and XP also provide you with several additional startup options, for example "Enable VGA mode", "Last Known Good Configuration", and "Debugging mode", which can be used for specific troubleshooting purposes.

If Windows freezes up or the display becomes unintelligible, you can bypass some of Windows complexity and bloat by choosing an alternate startup mode. One of these alternate startup modes may provide you some clues as to the source of the problem, or permit you to troubleshoot.

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None

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