

The SAGATUG

INTERFACE

Volume 22 - Number 1

January, 2001

The San Gabriel Valley Technology User's Group. The Club for TRSDOS and MS-DOS

Free DSL - What's Up With That ?

By Bob Allen

Have you ever thought of upgrading your connection to the Internet by getting DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) because of the dramatically higher connection speed but you don't go online that often so you don't want to spend the extra monthly cost? DSL in the Los Angeles area ranges from \$35 to \$50 per month depending on the providing company.

On the other hand, you may want to go to DSL but you are currently using a free ISP (Internet Service Provider) like Juno or Netzero so you *really* don't want the DSL rates and yet the much faster download speed is very tempting.

After all, dial up modems compared to DSL or ca-

ble modems will soon become as obsolete as 3½ - inch floppy disks are becoming now that writeable CD drives have become so prevalent and inexpensive.

Enter the **free DSL** companies. My curiosity was peaked when I saw a question and answer column on TechTV.com (formerly ZDTV.com) by their columnist Leo Laporte.

First, let's explain what DSL is and what the requirements are.

DSL uses normal copper telephone wires to transmit data at high speed. Both DSL and cable modems are becoming the preferred method of residential connection to the Internet.

(Continued on page 2)

The Ghost of Y2K Is Still Haunting Us!

Roy T. Beck

Since Y2K occurred more than a year in the past, and without major disasters, I'm sure everyone has forgotten about it by now, classifying it as a non-event.

But not in Norway!

Norway's railroad system consists of electrified trains throughout the country, and of course it is computer controlled.

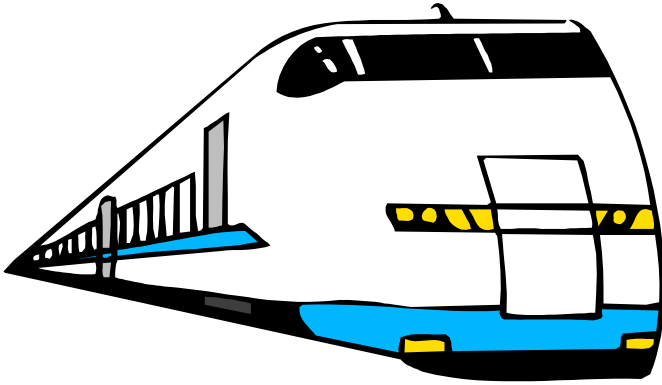
On the morning of December 31, 2000, some of the trains refused to run. The trains which would not operate included 16 airport express trains and

13 high-speed, long distance Signatur trains. Evidently these are their newest, most prestigious trains.

(Continued on page 2)

Interface Now Available Via E-mail

Many of the SAGATUG members are now getting this newsletter via E-mail, however, if you are not receiving it in its e-mail PDF form and you want to please e-mail me at boballen99@earthlink.net. Please give me your full name and your current e-mail address asking to be put on the e-mailmembership list.



(Continued from page 1)

Ghost of Y2K

Why would they not operate? I don't know, but the obvious problem is a bug in the computer code. After an hour or so of frustration, they did a quick fix. Not even a patch. What they did was they reset the system clock to December 1, 2000.

Now the bug whatever it was, was not triggered, and the system could operate. Further, this gives them about a month to find the bug and correct the code.

Of course, this adds a few complications, but at least the trains would start up and run. But since December 31 is a Sunday, and December 1 is a Friday, then there might still be a problem with the computer operating on a weekend schedule during the week, and vice versa. However, that is better than no train service at all.

Personally, I would have suggested resetting the clock to December 3, which is also a Sunday, and which I think would have synchronized correctly with the days of the week. Anyway, according to the newspaper article, the fix worked.

That is a strange bug, that responds to a date of December 31. If it were truly a Y2K bug, it should have bitten a year ago; but it is obviously a bug of that ilk, it is just a matter of digging it out and extinguishing it.

This all reminds me of the TRSDOS Model I days in 1988 when we had to tell the OS the year was 1987 in order to get it to run, until Roy Soltoff patched the OS allow dates into the next 24 years.

Anyway, I thought it interesting to note and report that Y2K still lives, in a strange form. Anyone care to bet on whether this is the absolute end of Y2K, or not?

(Continued from page 1)

Free DSL

The Advantages of DSL over dial-up are:

- ◆ DSL is dramatically faster. Conservative estimates are boast they are 50 times to 100 times faster than dial up connections.
- ◆ You can talk on the telephone at the same time you surf the net.
- ◆ You are always connected so you don't have to dial into your ISP's computer system for a connection.

As a result of the constant connection, however, you will need a good "firewall" or a system for protection from malicious hackers.

To set up a DSL connection you will need several components :

- ◆ A DSL modem (an entirely different kind of modem than your dial-up variety)
- ◆ Ethernet card
- ◆ ISP subscription
- ◆ The location where you will be connecting to the Net has to be located within a relatively short distance of a telephone switching system central office. You need to check with your ISP or telephone company to find out if you can get it where you are.

Your location, therefore, is often the factor that determines whether you can get DSL.

When you sign up for DSL with an ordinary well known ISP such as Earthlink or Pacific Bell, the modem and Ethernet card are usually provided free after you sign a six-month or one-year contract and then pay the \$35 to \$50 per month fee.

However, with free DSL the hardware is not free. You always have to pay out in one way or another. Instead of a monthly fee you usually have to pay up front for the modem and Ethernet card. In fact, for that matter, you also often have to pay for installation if you can't do it yourself. The other way you pay out is by having to look at their constant banner advertising. In addition, your

(Continued on page 3)

A Numerical Curiosity— Once But Never Again

By Roy T. Beck

A long time ago, when I was in High School, I noted one day that the date that day was 1/23/45, and realized I would never see that date again. Yesterday I saw a little piece in the newspaper

(Continued from page 2)

Free DSL

name and address are added to advertisers' data bases.

According to the Leo LaPorte in the TechTV column, prices for the hardware vary and can usually be obtained from the free DSL provider. Modems cost about \$200 and Ethernet cards cost between \$10 and \$50.

Your telephone company will usually charge a fee for using its lines which is often around \$10 according to LaPorte.

There are at least two companies that offer free DSL. Two of them are Winfire (www.winfire.com) and FreeXDSL, (www.freexdsl.com).

Winfire Service Plans

<u>Plan</u>	<u>Mo. Fee</u>	<u>What You Get</u>
Free DSL	Free	Speed: 144 Kbps Modem: \$199.00 E-mail:: Web-based e-mail account, online calendar, 50 MB Web storage Ads: Constant banner ads
DSL Plus	\$9.95	Speed: 144 Kbps (everything else same as above but no ads)
DSL Power	\$19.95	Speed: Up to 384 Kbps Modem: \$99.00 (everything else same as above)
DSL Premium	\$34.95	Speed: From 640 Kbps – 1.5 Mbps depending on region of U.S. Modem: Free (everything is same as above)

Free XDSL Service Plans

Speed:	Up to 7Mbps
E-mail, etc	Personal Free XDSLTM Internet Access account Email, news and chat groups
Modem:	Free to new members (Installation required)

After you order, a FreeXDSLTM technician will visit your home or your business to install freeXDSLTM

that one minute and one second after one AM on New Year's Day would bring about the following: 01/01/01, 01:01:01

Yes, in IBM/PC date parlance, that was one second and one minute after one AM on January 1 of 2001.

So where were you on that momentous instant? Personally, I was sound asleep. I thought of staying awake to witness the fact, but figured this would be about as significant as watching the ball drop in Times Square, New York. Interesting to note, but of no significance in the grand scheme of things.

Incidentally, That New Year's Day was truly the first day of the Third Millennium, but only if you follow the Gregorian Calendar. In Islamic countries, that was just an ordinary day in the 13th century, and in the Chinese Calendar, that date was somewhere in a year in the 50th century, and finally in the Jewish Calendar, it fell somewhere in the 58th century.

Anyway, I thought 01/01/01, 01:01:01 might be of some interest to you all.

Happy New Year/3rd Millennium to you all.

John Calhoun's Website on Langalist

John's website, www.JohnPC@homepage.com was mentioned on the Langalist newsletter. It was selected as a sort of website of the month. Go to [www.Langalist Com](http://www.LangalistCom)

Free DSL

service if required. Their technician will install the new in-house wiring and jack, and configure the Network Interface Card (NIC/ADSL Modem) and the software.

One word of caution, the FreeXDSL website does not mention anything about cost for any service, hardware or software. Everything, is free. According to LaPorte, you can expect to be charged \$500 is you cancel their **5-year** service contract early.

What's that old saying, "If it looks like it too good to be true, maybe it is?."

SAGATUG Meeting

Time and Place:

**7 to 10 p.m., Friday, January 12 2001
Arcadia Park Senior Citizen's Center
405 South Santa Anita Avenue, Arcadia.
(In the park just south of Huntington Drive)
Meetings held second Friday every month**

Upcoming Events:

TRW Swap Meet

Last Saturday, monthly, Manhattan Beach

Pomona Fairplex, January 20 & 21

(Bldgs. 6 & 7 LA Fair grounds, Gate 14) -
Admission \$7 plus parking

Buena Park, February 3 & 4, 2001

at the Sequoia Conference Center, 7530
Orangethorpe, (Beach Blvd exit from 91 Freeway)
\$3 admission

Reseda, January 27 & 28

at the Sherman Square Entertainment Center,
18430 Sherman Way. Admission \$3.

Glendora Seniors Computer Club

La Fetra Senior Citizens Center, 333 E. Foothill
Blvd., Glendora, 2nd & 4th Wednesdays at 1 p.m.

Club Officers and Board Members:

President	Royall Brown
Treasurer	Bob Day, daybob@earthlink.net
INTERFACE Editor	Bob Allen, boballen99@earthlink.net
Past President	Art Heywood, heywood@starquest.net
Members at Large	Roy T. Beck, roybeck@ix.netcom.com
Disk Librarian	John Phillipp, jphillip@pop.primenet.com

IN THIS ISSUE:

Free DSL—What’s Up With That 1
The Ghost of Y2K Is Still Haunting Us..... 1
A Numerical Curiosity..... 3

Deadline For The Newsletter

The deadline for the INTERFACE is the last Saturday of the month.

Republication:

Articles may be republished if credit is given to the author and the San Gabriel Valley Technology User's Group.

SAN GABRIEL VALLEY TECHNOLOGY USER'S GROUP
PO Box 661213
Arcadia, California 91066-1213

FIRST CLASS MAIL