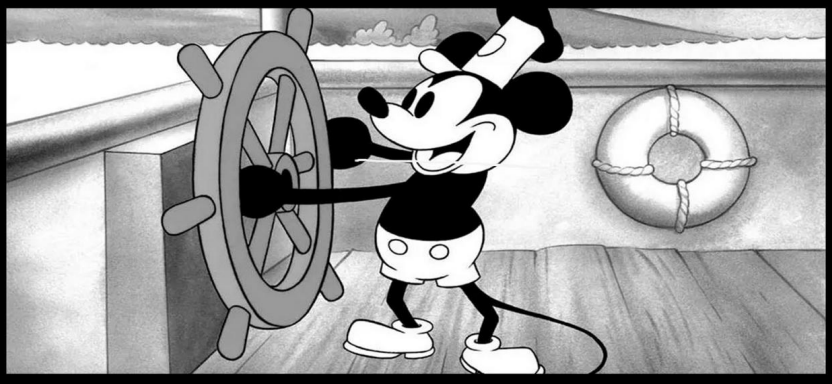
January 2024

Ctrl-Zine



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Ctrl-C Site and Server Info

Gemini Server:
Molly Brown*
*CGI Scripts disabled for Security Reasons
https://pkg.go.dev/tildegit.org/solderpunk/molly-brown

HTML/Web Server:
nginx
https://www.nginx.com/

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What members are not allowed to do

(Because at some point someone ruined it for everyone else.)
* No Eggdrop bots.
* No services that duplicate Ctrl-C.club services (email, IRC, web, Gemini, etc.)
* No virtualized/subsystem OSes (docker, junest, vagrant, etc.)
* No Bitcoin/crypto mining
* No hosting/storage of illegal (in the US) or pirated material.
* No spamming of any kind
* No hacking or attempting to get into other people's accounts/servers.
* One gigabyte storage limit

Feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns you have.
* Email: admin@ctrl-c.club
* Email: eric@pencricket.com
* IRC: #ctrl-c on Tildechat
* IRC: DM "calamitous" on Tildechat

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Submission Guidelines

Normally this is where I would again attempt to plug using dot files as way to no hassle submit content, or encourage those within the community to post to iris, but neither has really had any success in any measurable way. This isn't me slinging condemnation at anyone so much as '*huh that hasn't worked. Sucks, but oh well.*'

The actual point of concern is my life situation has a possibility of fairly sudden change in the next month, and while I'm going to make every attempt at continuing on, it's rare I have any forewarning so I wish to be up front about the chance of that happening.

Talk is being made on iris and there are people willing to step in if I'm suddenly non-communicative. So, for the time being we proceed as we have and take things as they come.

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Corrections - Ctrl-Zine December 2023

Or: *I goofed and am big enough to admit I goofed.*

With apologies to Matt6 and Rjcks I had swapped article attributions on your articles. This has since been corrected.

The creative commons footer had a typo for wierdos. That has also been corrected.

And if neither have been corrected, they shall be soon.

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Mickey The Free

Singletona082

As the internet by and large has already reported not just today, but for the past months in speculation and anticipation; Mickey Mouse, in specific the iteration based on the 1928 shorts '*Steamboat Willie*' and '*Plane Crazy,*' are in the public domain. There was no eleventh hour save. No gotcha. Nothing that wasn't already anticipated.

Say what you will about the insanity in US politics as of right now, but between that and Disney's own financial situation there seemed to be no '*Mickey Mouse Bill 2 Electric Boogaloo.*'

I am not an expert in copyright law, and just because the Steamboat Willie iterations of Mickey, Minnie, and other characters are public domain does not automatically prevent disney from suing (them using the rule of 'I have more money than you' as well as their own uses of 'willie' in later media either as identifier logo or other uses to muddy the waters on what is and isn't kosher,) it is still a known and absolute that Das Maus is in the public domain.

Which is a day I had not thought would happen truth be told.

So, while copyright might be extended and or modified, we still have a very iconic creation hit the public domain. Unlike Winnie the pooh's 'blood and honey' horror film (which I think was made purely 'because it could be' rather than any talent or want to tell a coherent story,) this is a creation that isn't just known the world over but is part and parcel with a corporation's identity. So there are going to be lawsuits. There are going to be counter-suits.

Given Devon (Legal Eagle) specializes in copyright law? I honestly am looking forward to his video on the matter.

Now I just have to somehow make it into 2078 for the entire original Star Wars Trilogy to make it into the public domain.

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A primer on GMRS radio

Wholesomedonut

Preface

What is it? Why would you use it? How? When? Glad we're both asking these questions. I'll take you through the basics of how I got onto this topic, what some key differences are between ham radio and GMRS, how to get set up with a proper license for yourself (in the US, I have no qualifications to speak about how you'd do it elsewhere), and then what ultimately you might be able to do with it for yourself.

There is a *lot* of stuff that goes into the capabilities and implications of radio in general. You can totally dumb it down and say "magic box make far talk" and frankly you'd have summed up the whole point. But figuring out what magic box, what legal requirements for said box, and how to make far talk happen.. and suddenly you are surrounded by people who have been doing it for 5, 10, 20, 30 years and still learning. So I cannot say this is a full or completely accurate summary; the amount of edge cases, pedantry, and detail-nitpicking in radio has thus far impressed me. Especially from the ham radio perspective. Not so much with GMRS, being inherently much simpler to use.

What brought me to this idea

So you might have noticed that we have an incredibly high level of reliance societally (especially in the US) on wireless cellular and internet communications. Cell towers, internet lines, and satellites suffuse our entire experience of the internet. If you're anything like me, that doesn't necessarily sit well with you. Not for a mentality of "the zombie apocalypse would take this out," so much as "putting most or all of your eggs in any one basket is universally a silly idea." I'm a fan of still being able to communicate if I don't have a phone on me, or if the ISP has decided once again that maintenance during work ours is a good idea.

So you might have realized, like me, if we were to lose access to our cell phones' full capability for a bit - say somebody accidentally broke a trunk router https://siliconangle.com/2022/07/11/major-canadian-internet-outage-attributed-router-glitch/, or perhaps the

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sun decides it has had enough of our shenanigans https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carrington_Event, that suddenly the majority of us would be left to Pony Express and sneakernet our communications and data across vast distances once more. I'm not a fan of that idea. Maybe you aren't either.

For these reasons, despite this year being a real busy one for a host of different reasons, I decided to look into ham radio a bit here in the US. I was promptly and thoroughly rebuffed by the amount of additional technical knowledge I'd have to digest and synthesize into actual competency; being very much a denizen of the digital world, and thus far woefully underprepared for the world of hardware.

"Phooey," said me. If I couldn't even figure this out without a solid bit of dedicated study time I don't have, how on earth could I get anybody else on board? Elmers https://www.qsl.net/wa6bgs/elmers.html aren't exactly in rich supply nowadays, and it deeply saddens me how soon it'll be that most all of the old guard are gone. Such is the march of time. But dammit, I still need a radio that works better than a Wal-Mart special!

Enter the General Mobile Radio Service, or GMRS.

Radio for the rest of us

The GMRS system bridges the gap between your average off the shelf plastic walkie talkie, and business-class radios used on mining properties, inside large scale compounds of many kinds, and civil services like police, fire, and ambulance companies. In fact, as far as range (including usage of repeaters), flexibility in the field, form factors, and frequency bands go, the line really starts to blur between GMRS and handheld or mobile (read: small boxes, often docked in vehicles or on desktops) ham radios.

But, there are a few key distinctions in philosophy and legality that are worth looking at.

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Philosophical differences

There is a major dividing line between GMRS and ham radio. GMRS radios are pre-approved by the FCC, given a special ID per each model, and are cleared only to function on a certain set of pre-set frequencies. In other words, GMRS radio is a tool. It functions a cut above normal Family Radio Service (FRS) radios by virtue of its ability to have stronger transmissions - up to 50 watts; repeater usage; and interchangable antennae; and more.

Ham radio, on the other hand, is really just a set of privileges governed by regulations. It is often just called Amateur Radio Service. And all you really get for passing the exam is a callsign and the approval to do what you want - within law and common convention - on the bands you're certified to use as an amateur. There are currently three tiers of licensing, and each come with increasing levels of capability over the previous.

Check out this interesting chart by the ARRL https://www.arrl.org/graphical-frequency-allocations to find out the details. Or, for those who think the chart is a bit dense, here's Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amateur_radio_frequency_allocations. I find that Wikipedia tends to be a bit more detailed than either the ARRL or FCC's pages on this subject.

So long as it's within regulation, how you communicate, when, to who, and why, is up to you. You can use grandpa's old radio from the estate sale, and chances are with a modicum of tweaking it would still work just fine. You can order a cheap Baofeng off of Amazon and do the exact same thing. You can build yourself a small radio that's capable of taking radio waves and translating them down from waves into internet packets your home network can read. There's no certification per device required for ham radio in quite the same way as GMRS is. Because you are building, and using radios, as an amateur.

In other words, per the Mother Russia joke: in ham radio, FCC certify YOU.

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That's the big difference. Are -you- certified to do something? Or is your -radio- certified to do what it does? The bureaucracy will demand one or the other. And usually, [the streams should not cross.] (https://web.archive.org/web/20230625232504/https://www.reddit.com/r/gmrs/comments/k0di2q/is_it_legal_to_use_a_ham_radio_on_gmrs_frequencies/)

How to get certified

This process is ultimately pretty easy, though it follows several steps.

1. Begin the online filing process at this FCC page https://www.fcc.gov/wireless/universal-licensing-system. You'll go through "New User Registration." This is your online FCC account that'll hold everything else.
2. Then, register for your FRN https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/userLogin.do, or FCC Registration Number. This is more or less the root ID of your possibly multiple callsigns, registrations, and certifications with the FCC. As the registrant for GMRS, you'll need one of these.
3. Go to the ULS License Manager, which you can find here https://wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsEntry/licManager/login.jsp, and apply for a new license https://wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsEntry/licManager/narli/radioservice.jsp?action=actionNew.

You will need to scroll down and choose "ZA - General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS)" down at the very bottom of the list.

Be sure to link your FRN to your FCC account! There are clearly marked options to do so on the ULS page.

Follow through with all instructions, mark down your information clearly, 100% accurately and honestly, and then wait a few days. My FRN was a very quick registration - same day - and it was less than a business week for my GMRS application to be completed and callsign assigned to me.

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Note that it will cost you $35 USD to do this, but the license lasts for 10 years from date of assignment (not date of application) and is functional and approved for use by you and your immediate family.

Wrapping up

So, ultimately, that's how you get into the hobby. As for what you do with it? Here are some ideas:

- recreation, including 4-wheeling, hiking, hunting, or long distance hide-and-seek.
- reach out to your family or friends nearby if you live out in the sticks and cell service is unreliable.
- to feel cool that you're making a buzzing crystal send vibes into the air using the powers of witchcraft.
- traveling in scattered convoy fashion across the country, where FRS might not be as reliable or reach far enough if you aren't all in formation all the time.

Best of luck to you! Follow the rules, nevermind the sticklers, and enjoy using a cool little niche of the airwaves to make life easier.

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