

Wired to the World

— by Ralph Lee Scott

As they say in the literature, "using your favorite gopher pointer ...," we will explore an index file at Appalachian State University. (Actually my gopher died a few days into the final month of 1994 just after sending me the message "unable to connect to socket #\$\$%." I had visions over the holidays of this poor gopher lying in the snow in pieces with open sockets between its legs and the rest of the body; I must have watched too many reruns of "Forensic Pathologist" on television. I was forced into the new year sans Gopher, relying only on my Chihuahua, who points to wherever he pleases without regard to any of my wishes. This being a new year I will start again at the *beginning* ...

To access computer files on the Internet using a "gopher" system, you must have three things: a connection to the Internet (either directly, through a commercial service, or via a pass-through public system such as a university computer center); the appropriate gopher software (either a so-called "client" or stand-alone) for your system; and finally, a computer or dumb terminal. If any one of these elements is missing or fails, the gopher system will not work. That was my problem; someone had changed a part of the system and the socket connection failed to work as it should have.

What a gopher enables you to do is to go to another computer, sign on to that system using a special entrance (called a port — although it really should be called a burrow), and explore public files on that computer system. The files we will be using today are at a computer at the Center for Appalachian Studies at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina.

J. W. Williamson at Appalachian State has put on the Internet, for the world to use, a file called the "Southern Mountaineers Filmography." This file is typical of the type you can use on a gopher-based system. You can either print out the entire contents of the file, save it to your computer, or search the file using a search system at the computer at Appalachian State University. This file is completely text-based. Other files available for downloading through gophers include computer programs (.BAS, .XLS), sound (.WAV, .MID), still pictures (.GIF, .JPEG), or motion picture images (.JPEG, .MPEG). Other than just as a plain file reader, this automatic logon and downloading of files is the main use of gopher.

Now, back to our gopher at Appalachian State. The file compiled by Williamson is a listing of all known fiction films (and some nonfiction) identified as "Appala-

chian" or "Ozark" in subject matter made from 1904 to the present. The file is updated online by the compiler as new movies appear. Also included in the file are: "romantic triangles in which at least one of the three principals is 'mountain' (e.g. mountain girl fought over by two men); "coonskincappers" [sic]; "Jesse James movies"; "coal mining and steel making"; "hillbilly gal movies"; "horror or monster" based in the mountains; upland Civil War stories; and "soft- and hard-core pornography that bases its lust on place (mountains)." Each of these file types can be searched by keywords such as "Civil War" or "porn." The complete file is about 150 pages in length, so some librarians may want to download the whole Filmography to paper, bind it, and put it in the book collection or vertical file.

A typical entry includes the title, production company, and a brief annotated description of the film. For some films the players, producers, and directors are included. To get to this file, point your favorite gopher to: acs.applstate.asu.edu port 70. From the main university menu, select "departments," then select "library," and from the library menu select the Appalachian Center menu. As mentioned above, at this point you can either search the file through the gopher, download the file, or view it on your computer monitor. Some typical entries from the Filmography are quoted below:

ALEXANDER, WILLIAM FOSTERWICK, C C CHASE, BARBARA PARKS

Comments: Sexploitation, set post-Civil War, when Missouri bad boy Quantrill rules the bandits of Kansas, and Frank James helps free an abducted and roped young woman from Quantrill's "pleasure house."

1969 SOD SISTERS / POPULAR PRODUCTIONS Produced by J T URISHIN Directed by LESTER WILLIAMS Starring: GENIE PALMER, BREEGE MCCOY, HANK HARRIGAN, TIM E LANE, JAMES SCHACHT, GLEN STANNEL

Comments: A young man knocked unconscious while involved in a robbery is taken home by a hillbilly named Zeb, where his two licentious daughters take turns using the young man's body for sexual pleasure. Meanwhile, Zeb is protecting his moonshine still.

1969 THE DEVIL'S EIGHT / AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL

Produced and directed by BURT TOPPER

Starring: CHRISTOPHER GEORGE, FABIAN, RALPH MEEKER

Comments: A rip-off of *The Dirty Dozen* set in moonshining country with dastardly moonshiners taking the place of the Nazi high command. Group of former prisoners trained by Christopher George to raid and break up one of the largest moonshining operations in the South. John Milius contributed to the script.

1970 THE MOLLY MAGUIRES / TAMM PRODUCTIONS/

PARAMOUNT Produced by MARTIN RITT/WALTER

BERNSTEIN Directed by MARTIN RITT

Starring: RICHARD HARRIS, SEAN CONNERY, FRANK FINLAY, SAMANTHA EGGAR, ANTHONY ZERBE, ART LUND

Comments: Mine owners hire Pinkerton spies to crack a secret organization that is using violence to attack the powerful and ruthless coal industry. Based on fact and filmed on location in Eckley, PA, and in other PA towns.

1970 THE MOONSHINE WAR / FILMWAYS INC./

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER Produced by MARTIN

RANSOHOFF Directed by RICHARD QUINE

Starring: ALAN ALDA, PATRICK MCGOOHAN, RICHARD WIDMARK, WILL GEER, TERRY GARR

Comments: Script by Elmore Leonard, from his novel. "Ballad of the Moonshine" sung by Hank Williams. Bizarre movie about government agents and bad guys trying to get their hands on Alan Alda's stock of fine moonshine before the repeal of Prohibition. Alda as a mtn moonshiner is an unintentional hoot.

The Southern Mountaineers Filmography is typical of the type of file you can search using the gopher system. If you want to practice at another library site having a similar system, you might want to check out the North Carolina Periodical Index at East Carolina University's Joyner Library. (see *North Carolina Libraries*, Fall/Winter 1994) The address for the gopher is: fringe.lib.ecu.edu. Here you can reach a searchable index to current North Carolina periodicals that was designed primarily to be used by undergraduate students at East Carolina, but which is highly useful to others in the state.

Finally, to end this "Wired to the World" article on a humorous note, a recent "Far Side" cartoon asks: How can you tell if you have left the Information Superhighway and are on the Information Dirt Backroads?? When the sign at the computer reads: "Bring a formatted eight-inch floppy to download your information from our computer."



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