Who's this Who?

Doctor Who is the central character in the longest-running and most loved series on British television. The character was created by writer Ian Stuart Blackwood and first appeared in the serial "An Unearthly Child" in 1963. The Doctor is an alien being who travels through time and space in his TARDIS, a time machine.

The Doctor is a bit transcendentalist. When his body wears out or is seriously damaged, he regenerate in a new body with a new voice. Each time, he emerges with a slightly different personality, as well as a slightly different look. The first Doctor, played by William Hartnell, was a proper, stout English country gentleman. Patrick Troughton played the second incarnation of the Doctor as a cosmic bore. Jon Pertwee was Doctor Who in his third regeneration. He was more of a man of action. See Dr Who on page 6.

Fans plan to band

by Pat Randel

"The Doctor" is an extension of araj party who includes Tom Baker, center, and counter-clockwise: Hartnell, from the top, Jon Pertwee, Sylvester McCoy, Peter Davison, Colin Baker, Paul McGann, Peter Jackson, Colin Baker, Peter Davison, and Sylvester McCoy. (Photo by Mark Hartman)
and a tinkerer with a penchant for gadgetry.

The Doctor most familiar to many Americans is Tom Baker, who portrayed Doctor Who in his fourth "life." Baker was the Doctor Who most Americans saw the first time they caught the series, and he played the role for a long time.

With his 17-foot-long knit scarf, floppy hat and wild hair, Baker's Doctor Who was eccentric and flamboyant.

The fifth incarnation of Doctor Who, played by Peter Davison, was a younger man and a sort of reckless innocent.

The sixth Doctor, portrayed by Colin Baker, didn't last too long.

Right now, he is in his seventh incarnation. Played by Sylvester McCoy, the newest Doctor has the humor, charm and wit of some of his predecessors.

The Doctor already was 745 years old and a seasoned time traveler when he made his television debut.

His TV adventures began in contemporary time when the first show was broadcast in 1963.

But he was soon zipping off to the past and future.

The early adventures took Doctor Who and his companions through caveman days, 28th Century Earth, the French Revolution and the OK Corral.

But BBC officials found that historical programs didn't draw the same high ratings as the adventures in space and into the future.

So in his later years, The Doctor has spent more time traveling to distant planets. He's battled the forces of evil and help the good guys pull off their victories against a wild variety of adversaries.

The serial still is produced by the BBC and plays on WTTW, Chicago's Channel 11.

What Channel 11 traditionally does is play a new series of programs, then replay older ones again until another new set of shows is available.

Local Doctor Who fans will soon get the chance to sample the latest programs.

On March 1, the 25th anniversary season will start at 11 p.m. on Channel 11.