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Doctor Who? Members of the recently formed Winona fan club, Companions of Doctor Who, know only that this Time Lord who travels in a TARDIS to right wrongs throughout the universe was nicknamed Theta Sigma in his school days on the planet Gallifrey. When the Doctor's amazing self-healing

powers fail, he regenerates into another physical body, easily explaining the six actors so far who have played Who. From left are four of the Doctors: Tom Baker, the fourth and most popular; Peter Davison (No. 4), Patrick Troughton (No. 2) and Jon Pertwee (No. 3).

Who's Who?

Fans know only his nickname

By LUCY CHOATE ECKBERG
Winona Daily News

Who's Who?

Fans of the herioc but humanly klutzy Time Lord know only that he was nicknamed Theta Sigma in his school days on the planet Gallifrey. His real name is unpronounceable; he is introduced simply as the Doctor.

That mystery and the intellectual challenge of trying to understand the complex peoples and worlds the Doctor encounters in his time-space travels are a large part of the world-wide appeal of this British television series.

Introduced on BBC in November 1963, "Doctor Who" was first aired in the United States in the Chicago area in 1977. Three years ago, the series was picked up by the Public Broadcasting System and today has an international cult following of about 100 million.

Fan clubs in this country include The Companions of Doctor Who, Doctor Who Fan Club of America, North American Doctor Who Appreciation Society, Northeastern Wisconsin Friends of Doctor Who, Friends of Tom Baker (the fourth and most popular Doctor), and American Fans of Jon Pertwee (Doctor No. 3).

Weekend conventions draw thousands of fans. In November, Chicago will be the site of Tardis 21 which will feature an anniversary reunion of four of the Doctors, the author and other actors. And, billed as "The Official Doctor Who Convention of the North American Time Festival", Panopticon New Orleans is set for next July in that city.

In Winona, a local Companions of Doctor Who club was formed in February. More than 30 are regular members and others "just show up" at the monthly meetings, ac-

cording to the group's organizer Kathy Sullivan.

The club is an offshoot of informal gatherings in Sullivan's home. A librarian at Winona State University and a long-time Doctor Who fan, Sullivan showed video taped episodes for friends. "My living room got crowded so we formed the club," she said. At the first session held at WSU, more than 50 people sat through seven hours of films and discussions.

The local club hopes to join the national group, Sullivan said. If so, they would become a regional club and be open to fans from Rochester and La Crosse who have expressed interest in joining the Winona group.

What kind of person is a Doctor Who fan? Not necessarily a science fiction buff, although many are. Mainly, "you have to accept a bit of zaniness," said Sullivan.

Part of the show's appeal, she said, is the "battle between good and evil. Some are clear-cut good and bad; others you have to think about, they're more complex." And this is not a program you can tune in the middle, she added. "You have to watch every minute or you might miss something."

But the main appeal is the Doctor himself. By earth standards, he is definitely strange. He has two hearts, a pulse of four beats per minute, body temperature of 60 degrees Fahrenheit and a secondary respiratory system. But all this comes in handy in life-threatening situations.

The 759-year-old Doctor is very strong, able to toss off boulders like skipping stones, and when wounded heals extremely quickly — except, of course, for when he doesn't heal and is forced to regenerate into another body.

The Doctor, like others on Gallifrey, can regenerate 12 times.



Collin Baker (no relation to Tom Baker) is the sixth Doctor to star as the Time Lord.

These 13 lifetimes allow for an easy transition for the six actors who have played Doctor Who. Tom Baker is set to regenerate into Peter Davison this Sunday in the episode called "Logopolis," to be aired at noon over PBS channel WHLA.

And those who have faithfully followed the series from its start know that Davison, the fifth and current Doctor, will regenerate into Collin Baker (no relation to Tom) in "The Caves of Androzani," to be shown at 10 p.m. Nov. 10 on PBS channel KTCA.

But each of the Doctors carries on the tradition of being non-traditional. Tom Baker, with his 20-foot scarf which he always wears and never trips over, is "notorious for his puns," Sullivan noted.

The series is said to appeal to peo-

ple who are childlike. And, although it was first said by Pertwee, Baker made famous among fans the line: There's no point in being grown up if you can't act childish.

Another appeal, said Sullivan, is that the Doctor doesn't respond to threats in the traditionally violent manner of other television "heroes." Baker, facing savages with knives in "Face of Evil," pulls out a jelly baby candy supposedly as a weapon. When the savage calls his bluff and says, "So kill me with the jelly baby," the Doctor pops it into his mouth, declaring, "I don't take orders from anyone."

The Doctor, a renegade bored with life on his planet, battles evil in the universe. He travels in a stolen TARDIS (Time And Relative Dimensions In Space) the exterior of which so closely resembles a British police call box it is sometimes mistaken for the real thing.

His arch enemy and rival from school days, the Master, also travels through time and space, but his pleasure is to make trouble.

Doctor Who's companions on his complicated and dangerous journeys vary in personality. Most are human but some are aliens. Only one — Romanadvoratrelundar, known as Romana — was a fellow Time Lord (or Time Lady). One of the most appealing to many fans was Leela, a savage who stowed away in the TARDIS and who reacts in a primitively defensive way to danger in a sharp contrast to the Doctor's intellectual approach.

But despite his superiority in mind and body, the Doctor wants only to be free to roam the galaxies.



BBC Enterprises photos

Tom Baker, with his 20-foot scarf which he amazingly never tripped over, was the most popular of the Doctors. Among his companions in his time-space travels was the savage Leela whose primitive reactions to danger provided a sharp contrast to the Doctor's intellectual approach.

That he is not power-hungry is evident in that he could have ruled his own planet and twice turned down offers to be president of this planet. The Doctor's philosophy is summed up by Tom Baker: "I'm not working for anyone. I'm just having fun." (The local group, which has

become an official campus club, meets next at 12:30 p.m. Saturday in Dining Rooms C-D of Kryzsko Commons, WSU. In addition to "Doctor Who" tapes, a television episode of "Star Trek" will be shown. For more details, call Sullivan at 452-2643.)