

Doctor Who followers transported to St. Paul

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With temperatures in the 80s Friday, not many people roamed the streets of St. Paul wearing fedoras, long coats and multicolored scarves.

Unless, of course, they were dressing as Doctor No. 4 and going to the 1988 Time Festival, a gathering of the nation's Doctor Who fans this weekend at the St. Paul Radisson.

The popular British television program has been on the air 25 years, including locally on KTCA-TV, Channel 2.

The show's title character travels through space and time to battle evil. He is transported into different time periods by a magic London police booth, which sometimes drops him in unexpected places.

But that's all part of the fun, ac-

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Chet Johnson
Doctor Who fan

cording to many of the 600 fans who dressed as their favorite character and showed up Friday to swap stories and see some of the program's stars.

“It's the pure escapism of the show,” said Lisa Albergo, 34, of Chicago, when asked about the program's appeal. “The crazy things. The warp drives, jumping time tracks.”

And the bizarre costumes. Albergo dressed in a velvet coat, long scarf and checkered arm band, a

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combination of doctors' costumes, she said.

Ricky Moore, 11, of North St. Paul, wore a tan and red suit, similar to the dress of Doctor No. 1.

Throughout the years, the show has had seven doctors playing the main character, Albergo said. As each lead actor leaves the show, the doctor "regenerates" and creates a new doctor with a totally different style of dress. And, undoubtedly, a whole new set of fans.

Jason Elliott, 14, and Chet Johnson, 16, are both Doctor No. 4 fans. Friday, each wore scarves made by Johnson's grandmother. Elliott even brought along a replica of K-9, the doctor's mechanical dog companion that he had built.

"It's not the average cop-robber show," Johnson said. "There's more to it."

"I like science fiction, and there's hardly any of that around," Elliott said.

But for some, the convention is more than a show.

Robbie Cantor of Los Angeles said she has organized and attended Doctor Who festivals for the past eight years, including one in England. Cynthia Novacek, who helped organize this festival, said the number of fans and participants forced the organizers to treat it in a business-like fashion.

The festival, which runs through Sunday, will include screening of some episodes, dealers' rooms, games and contests. Friday, Jon Pertwee (Doctor No. 3) and Janet Fielding, a show character, signed autographs and spoke.

Still, having fun is the main objective.

"It's just fun to gather together," Wisconsin resident Julie Frey said.