

Dr. Who materializes for Chicago Convention

Attention Who-ites! Set your Tardis controls for July 16-18, beginning at 10 AM daily, Americana Congress Hotel, 520 S. Michigan, and join fellow fanatics for the second annual official Doctor Who convention. Panopticon '82 is the only national convention authorized by NADWAS (North American Doctor Who Appreciation Society) to bring together fans of BBC-TV's science fiction tour de force, *Doctor Who*.

This year's convention comes to Chicago due to the efforts of Larry Charet, owner of Larry's Comic Book Store in Chicago. "I've been spreading the word for quite a while," Charet said, "even before it was popular here." Chicago has now become one of the hotbeds of Who-mania in the U.S. (The series shows in about 50 cities here, and 40 countries world-wide.) The program airs on Channel 11 (Sundays, 11 PM), and according to public relations director, Bill Mur-



ray, is one of the station's most popular shows. "People who watch it," Murray said, "are just crazy about it."

For those not yet hooked, a bit of background: The Doctor is a Time Lord, a member of a race of super-intellecets who have mastered the mysteries of time and space. But unlike other Time Lords, the Doctor cares, so he steals a semi-functioning Tardis (a time and space traveling vehicle resembling a police call box) and heads off to battle evil.

Along the way, the good doctor meets a strange array of enemy aliens and travels with many different companions. Most of the Doctor's companions are women (the show has provided more and varied roles for women than all of American TV combined), and range from the warrior Leela to the Time Lord Romana. ("The noblest Romana of them all," the Doctor says. Tom Baker



Peter Davison (left) and Tom Baker (above with Lalla Ward), the most recent of the five Doctor Who's.

(Doctor Who) must have agreed as he married Lalla Ward, who portrayed her.)

Unlike most current science fiction, *Doctor Who* is not an overwhelming display of gadgetry and techniques. The special effects are often comically tacky, but that only adds to the show's homey charm. It doesn't distract from its central concerns—humor (even the show's title is a joke; the main character is known only as the Doctor), morality, and concern for all living creatures.

Since the Doctor is nearly 700 years old (and the series nearly 20), he sometimes must undergo regeneration, taking on entirely new features. Since beginning in 1963, there have been five doctors. The longest running and best-known doctor to American viewers is Tom Baker. Former monk and book collector, Baker was, to that point, the youngest doctor. His warmth, wit and mild mannered fallibility were some of the show's

greatest strengths. Baker insisted on keeping violence to a minimum, making the series a lesson not only of good over evil, but character, integrity, and intelligence over force.

The show is also a lesson in love lost, for all of the characters, even the Doctor, eventually must leave. Peter Davison ("All Creatures Great And Small") is the fifth doctor. Though his episodes have not been shown here, they, with Baker and Pertwee (the third doctor)'s episodes, will be shown at Panopticon. There will also be a masquerade and a vast array of Doctor Who collectibles. Guest of honor is series producer John Nathan-Turner, with special guest Sarah Sutton (Nyssa), Elisabeth Sladen (Sarah Jane), and Dalek creator Terry Nation. Admission is \$5 a day and includes both Panopticon and Chicago Comicon.