

Whovians to gather for Wichita's first 'Doctor Who' convention

BY JOE STUMPE

Eagle correspondent

It wasn't Kieran Kinsella's English accent that got him named chairman of Wichita's first "Doctor Who" convention.

The gathering devoted to the long-running British science fiction TV show was actually his idea — although one quickly seized upon by fans here.

"I basically got it rolling, then hooked up with the Doctor Who group in Wichita," said Kinsella, who moved to Kansas two years ago. "It just made sense."

"Time Eddy," as the gathering is being called, takes place Friday through Sunday at the Best Western North Wichita, 915 E. 53rd St. North.

The big draws are seven actors who've appeared in the series — including Colin Baker, the sixth actor to portray the time-traveling title character, and four actresses who played companions of various Doctors. The convention also will feature cosplay, gaming, vendors and more. A full schedule can be found at kansasdoctorwho.com.

A time eddy, by the way, is a distortion in time and space. As fans of the show undoubtedly know, the first Doctor was caught in a time eddy when the Timelords tried and failed to send him to Omega's anti-matter universe.

But that was a long time ago — 1963, when the show started. There have been more than 800 episodes and a dozen Doctors since then. Kinsella said he started watching the show 35 years ago, when he was 4 years old.

"There's always something new and fresh in them," he said. "Part is science fiction, some is fantasy. There's comedy thrown in, drama thrown in. So many variables, you know."

Kinsella, who works in banking, said this weekend's get-together was a year in the mak-



Fernando Salazar/The Wichita Eagle

Derek Ledford, left, Sean Beorn and Lisa Turner, photographed Thursday at La Galette Cafe and Bakery, are ready for the "Doctor Who" convention in Wichita this weekend.

ing and grew out of work he was doing on his website, BestBritishTV.com, a labor of love whose title is self-explanatory.

"I happened to be doing an interview with somebody from 'Doctor Who' who hadn't been to a convention in ages," he said.

That got the ball rolling, and Kinsella said he's been impressed by the response. The venue hotel, dinners with actors and vendors spots are sold out, although tickets remain for the rest of the event. Kinsella said he might have looked for a bigger venue if he'd correctly gauged the interest.

"It's been crazy," he said. "Lo-

cally, we've had good response, but we've got people flying in from New York, California, Georgia, Canada."

Wichitan Sean Beorn has been watching the show since he was 6 or 7 years old.

"My sister claimed that she wanted to scare me with an episode with of 'Doctor Who,' and it backfired seriously," said Beorn, who introduces episodes of the show when it airs Saturday nights on KPTS Channel 8.

Beorn said there have been science fiction conventions in Wichita before, but never one devoted exclusively to "Doctor

IF YOU GO

Time Eddy: 'Doctor Who' Convention

When: 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Friday; 9 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturday; 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday

Where: Best Western North Wichita, 915 E. 53rd St. North

Tickets: Prices range from \$20 for a single day junior ticket (ages 7-13) to \$69 for a three-day adult pass (singles are \$35-\$40).

For tickets and more info, visit kansasdoctorwho.com. Tickets also can be purchased at the door.

Please see 'WHO', Page 7C

'WHO'

From Page 5C

Who.” He likes the show “because it changes in a lot of ways. It’s dynamic. But also, it has an appeal because there’s always a sense of hope. Even when (The Doctor) is down on his luck, or behind the eight ball, he manages to see a way out.”

He knows a woman who, completely burned out in her career,

had her faith in it restored because of the show’s “optimism,” Beorn said. The local Whovian Facebook pages has more than 1,000 members, he said.

Beorn, who usually dresses up as the fourth Doctor (Tom Baker) for his KPTS duties, said Colin Baker probably isn’t as well-known as some of his counterparts but is “well-loved,” partly because he’s done voiceovers for Doctor Who audiobooks. Beorn thinks actress Nicola Bryant, who played Baker’s traveling companion Peri Brown,

will be one of the convention’s big hits.

“You don’t have the sixth Doctor without Peri Brown,” he said.

Another local fan of the series, Victoria French, said she’s more interested in some of the local cosplayers who will dress up for the event than the actual actors, although she’s looking forward to meeting the latter, too.

“I’m a people watcher,” French said. “Cosplayers fascinate me because they go so far out. They put so much time and effort in it. I am in awe of it.”

As for Kinsella, he’s interested in hearing the perspectives of the different actors and behind-the-scenes people who worked on “Doctor Who” from its beginnings to present times (and all

time eddies in between).

Kinsella formed a nonprofit to stage the convention. “It’s looking encouraging that we’ll break even, but it’s not a money maker,” he said.

And it’s not even popular in his own house, Kinsella admits.

“My wife really hates it,” he said. “She’s had to see it so many times.”