ConGT, the only “Doctor Who” convention in Tennessee, returns for its second year. It will feature Colin Baker, who portrayed the sixth incarnation of The Doctor.

ConGT — Doctor Who Convention
When: Friday through Sunday
Where: Riverview Inn, 50 College St.
Tickets: VIP $159, weekend $39, Saturday only $29, Sunday only $20

particularly for a relatively new convention. Three of the actors who played The Doctor have died, and only four of the remaining 10 regularly attend

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‘Whovians’ descend on Clarksville for ConGT

ANDY-LEE FRY
FOR THE LEAF-CHRONICLE

CLARKSVILLE — Among the many and varied costumes, rabid fans and Q&A sessions, the unifying features of this year’s convention were the ideas of family and community as the Riverview Inn played host to the second Doctor Who convention, ConGT.

The highlight of the convention was the attendance of special guest Colin Baker, who portrayed the sixth incarnation of the title character from 1984 to 1986.

From the parents bonding with their children over a shared sense of geekery to fans meeting for the first time in person, the atmosphere was one of fellowship.

Few attendees illustrated this quite so much as CMCSS school bus driver and cosplayer Derek Gilbreath. He’s a passionate puppet maker — he made a 6-foot model of a Doctor Who villain for the convention — but he was most keen to note how fan service can bring out the best in us.

“I drive a school bus in a pretty rough route, and there’s one girl on the bus she’s never been in trouble — and those kids can be tough to deal with — she’s had to endure that school bus, and she’s also a Whovian,” he said. “I took her aside on Thursday and told her she’d be my guest at the con — she’s here with her mom and just having the best time.”

Gilbreath’s guests, LexieMaharrey and her mother, Nicole Maharrey, were excited to be at the event.

“Lexie was so excited when she came home from school,” Nicole Maharrey said. “When you’re geeks like us, school isn’t always the easiest time, but it works out in the end.”

Though most fan conventions have traditionally been in big cities — San Diego’s Comic Con and Atlanta’s DragonCon among them — smaller cities have increasingly been getting in on the action. It’s something of a grass-roots movement, with organizers keen to help out one another.

The homegrown, affordable convention attracted most of the families in attendance.

The Hill family — parents Stormie and Maurice and their teenagers, Gracie and Joshua — heard about the event last year and decided to make the convention a family weekend.

“Gracie and I both did the cosplay competition together,” Maurice Hill said, sporting a third Doctor outfit, alongside Gracie who was dressed as seventh Doctor’s companion, Ace.

The main attraction of the weekend was special guest Colin Baker, who attended panels, signing sessions and took photos with attendees.

“Colin’s been impressed with Clarksville as a place to land,” organizer Ed Owen said. “He’s been treated so well by everybody.”

“Colin’s been my favorite Doctor since I started watching, and he’s been amazing,” Shawnta Page said. She and husband Josh live in Clarksville and were attending the convention for the first time.

“The con’s great — the costumes, the fans. Finally, there’s something like this here!”

It’s a sentiment that has been echoed by local sci-fi fans since the event was announced in 2014.

“It’s closer to us and easier to get to than Nashville,” Page said, adding that they had intended to attend a similar convention in Music City, but the high price had put them off. “For this we were both able to buy VIP tickets and still have money to buy things. I have stuff from the vendors everywhere, and stuff for the kids in the van.”