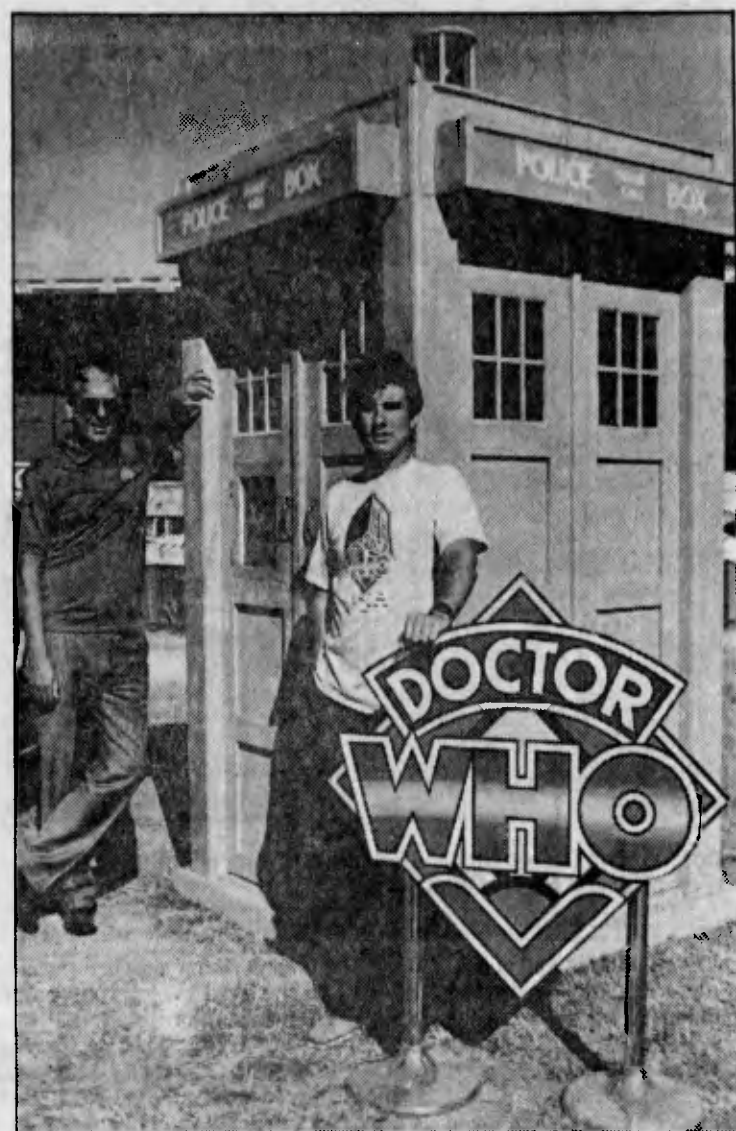
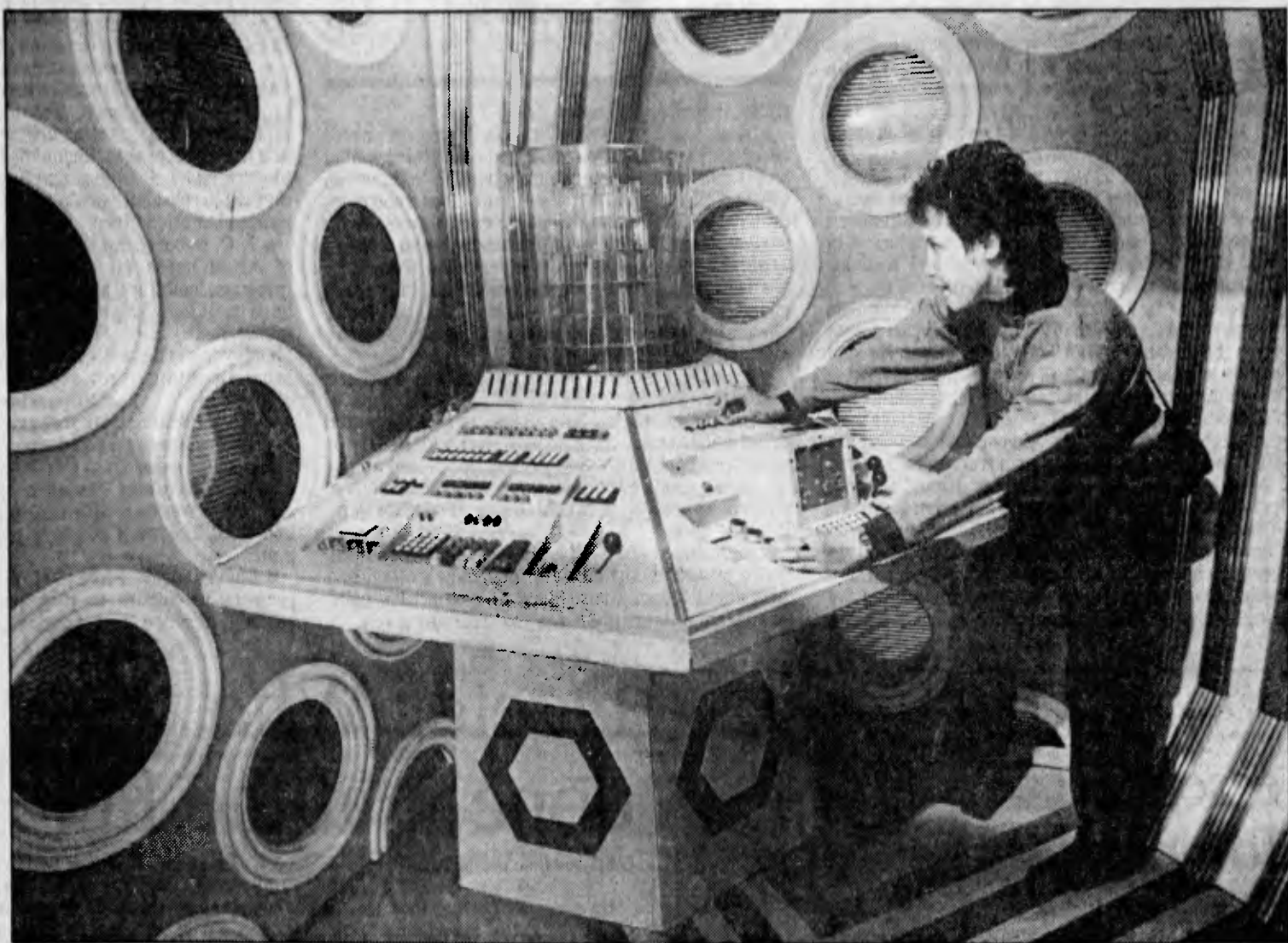


Doctor Who done it at the fair

He's not here, but the exhibit
makes up for star's absence



Terry Sampson, left, and Daniel P. Sheehy at the police call box that Doctor Who uses on the television show



Staff photos by Bob Bridges

Sandra Smith at the controls of Tardis, Doctor Who's time machine at the fair: 'It was wonderful'

By MELANIE SILL
Staff Writer

Sandra Smith of Winston-Salem knew the plot line — any "Doctor Who" fan would. A young woman went to the door of the Tardis, the Doctor's time-travel vehicle that looks like a London police call box, and disappeared.

In this case, Ms. Smith became the star of her own "Doctor Who" episode — "Revelation of a Winston-Salemite." The Tardis was attached to a 48-foot trailer parked on a grassy spot at the N.C. State Fair, right across from Boss Hog ("the world's biggest custom-built pickup truck") and just a few paces from the World's Biggest Horse.

Ms. Smith went right through the Tardis door, past the spaceship console into a dark interior. She encountered the likes of Dalek, Cryon, the Robot of Death and the Malus — creatures who have battled the hero of "Doctor Who," the British Broadcasting Corp. television series that has thrilled fans for 23 years.

She emerged a half-hour later, blinking in the autumn sunlight, wearing a beatific smile and paying little attention to the rest of the noisy goings-on at the fair.

"It was WONDERFUL," said Ms. Smith, 29, a graphic artist who had taken the day off to visit the "Doctor Who" exhibit. "I think

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— Sandra Smith

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Around her neck, Ms. Smith wore a key — a key to the Tardis that she had picked up at a "Doctor Who" convention years ago.

"I thought if I ever met the Doctor, I'd have a key to get in the Tardis," she said, laughing.

The Doctor wasn't there. More correctly, none of the doctors was there (the show is on

its seventh hero, Colin Baker).

But the BBC exhibit, now on the road in the United States, made up for it with other familiar characters and articles. There was Bessie, the bright yellow car built for Brian Pertwee, the third Doctor. There was the Tardis on the trailer and another Tardis (Carolina blue) resting on the grass nearby. Inside the exhibit were some 20 creatures, animated by lighting and sound effects.

There was even K9, the friendly and faithful robot dog who accompanied the Doctor on many of his trips through time and space.

The exhibit itself cost just a buck. Outside was where the fans had the opportunity to spend money — \$17 or \$19 for a Tardis sweat shirt, \$7 for a mug, \$2 or \$2.50 for sets of buttons.

"Doctor Who" premiered on BBC television in 1963. The doctor was not a human, but a Time Lord from the planet Gallifrey. He boarded an antiquated space ship (the Tardis) one day and shot off into space, believing the might of a Time Lord should be used to do good and that his mission in life (Time Lords have the ability to regenerate through 12 generations) was to end suffering and combat evil.

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Doctor Who done it at the fair

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He's been at it ever since, much to the delight of fans like Sandra Smith.

"There's always a philosophical basis to the story; there's always a moral, and I like that," said Ms. Smith, who started watching "Doctor Who" after it made its debut on WUNC-TV (Channel 4) several years ago.

The moral of the BBC exhibit is simple — publicity. The BBC put the trailer on the road in Washington May 9 with BBC man Brian Sloman, who has been with the exhibit during most of its State Fair stay.

Sloman and Daniel P. Sheehy, a 22-year-old Swarthmore (Pa.) College graduate who hired on at the start of the tour, will take the "Doctor Who" show across the United States over a two-year period. They'll set up at shopping malls, fairs and other local drawing-places to greet old fans and cultivate new ones for the show that has fan clubs and annual conventions on both sides of the Atlantic.

Sheehy said the exhibit has drawn all kinds of visitors — many of them "Doctor Who" devotees.

"We had a federal judge and his family from Fairbanks, Alaska, who planned their vacation so they would be in New Jersey when we would be in New Jersey," Sheehy said. "They must have spent \$300 at the booth."

One man spotted the "Doctor Who" trailer zooming down the freeway and fumbled for his camera at 55 mph, then snapped pictures as he drove, Sheehy said.

"That was a little dangerous," he said.

Another family drove 90 miles round-trip on two consecutive days to catch the exhibit in Cleveland, said Terry Sampson, a 30-year BBC veteran who was helping out with the exhibit at the State Fair.

Alexis Schoenthal, who works for Southern Bell in Charlotte, took two days off for a trip to the State Fair and ended up spending much of that time at the "Doctor Who" booth.

She watches the show "every chance I get," said Ms. Schoenthal, 39. "It comes on several public television stations that I'm able to get."

The exhibit got good reviews from this fan.

"It's quite exciting, and it really shows the characters," she said.



Doctor Who (Peter Davison), center, is apprehended by foes in the episode 'Four to Doomsday'

"I've gotten in and out of that car more than any child could without being rude."

Ms. Schoenthal had a "Doctor Who" bag and some buttons. She had bought more souvenirs the day before and seemed to be

thinking about another purchase as she eyed the brightly painted side of the exhibit trailer.

"I like 'Star Trek' a lot, too," she said. "I really think that maybe part of the future might be like this."