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# Lucky 13: New Orleans 'Doctor Who' fans gather for Jodie Whittaker's groundbreaking premiere as new Doctor

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Members of Krewe du Who pose outside Crown and Anchor English Pub in New Orleans, Monday, Sept. 24, 2018. The local Doctor Who fans will be hosting events celebrating the premiere of the new Doctor Who on Sun. Oct. 7.

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Advocate Staff photo by SOPHIA GERMER

Outside the Crown and Anchor Pub in Algiers on Monday, the after-work regulars, in shorts and T-shirts, casually drank and conversed at picnic tables. They seemed nonplussed by the arrival of an array of characters from the British sci-fi series "Doctor Who," resplendent in capes, wigs, coats and other accoutrements.

Though not an everyday occurrence — the characters were there for the photo shoot for this article — when a new season of Doctor Who premieres Sunday, Oct. 7, the pub will become an epicenter of Whovians, as the TV show's fans are called, in costume from the Whoniverse — including Doctor Who, Torchwood, The Sarah Jane Adventures and Class.

While a new Doctor is always a cause for celebration — or dismay — this premiere marks an important moment: The Thirteenth Doctor is a woman. Jodie Whittaker, an English actress probably best known for her role in the crime drama "Broadchurch," a TV show that coincidentally starred the Tenth Doctor, David Tennant.

“It was a matter of probability,” said Jessica Ports Robbins, a member of the New Orleans-based fan group, Krewe du Who. She portrayed the First Doctor for the paper’s photo shoot. “There was a 50/50 chance we would get a woman.”

Doctor Who, from the show that debuted in 1963 on BBC, is a "Time Lord" from the planet Gallifrey. The Doctor, with various companions, saves the universe while traveling in a space ship called TARDIS (Time and Relative Dimension in Space), disguised as a blue British police box. The show originally ran from 1963 to 1989, with a TV movie in 1996 and a reboot that started in 2005.

The show is famous for the Doctor’s “regeneration,” a process that allows a Time Lord to take on a new physical form and personality after events that would normally lead to death.

It was originally used as a plot device when the first Doctor, William Hartnell, needed to be recast in 1966. Since then, Doctor Who has been played by a dozen other actors as the character regenerated.

## Doctor Who by the numbers

William Hartnell (First Doctor, 1963)

Patrick Troughton (Second Doctor, 1966)

Jon Pertwee (Third Doctor, 1970)

Tom Baker (Fourth Doctor, 1974)

Peter Davison (Fifth Doctor, 1982)

Colin Baker (Sixth Doctor, 1984)

Sylvester McCoy (Seventh Doctor, 1987)

Paul McGann (Eighth Doctor, 1996)

Christopher Eccleston (Ninth Doctor, 2005)

David Tennant (Tenth Doctor, 2005)

Matt Smith (Eleventh Doctor, 2010)

and Peter Capaldi (Twelfth Doctor 2014)

Jodie Whittaker, 13th Doctor (2018)

When Capaldi announced he was leaving the show in January 2017, fans got to work speculating on who the next Doctor would be, with many saying it was time for a woman.

The announcement on July 16, 2017, of Whittaker as the Thirteenth Doctor enlivened the Whovian world, with many taking to social media to applaud or to vent their displeasure.

Whittaker weighed in on her IMDB page. “I want to tell the fans not to be scared by my gender,” she said. “Because this is a really exciting time, and 'Doctor Who' represents everything that's exciting about change. The fans have lived through so many changes, and this is only a new, different one, not a fearful one.” (There is Twitter feed from Stylist Magazine — @StylistMagazine — of Whittaker responding to comments, which shows that she is confident and undaunted; handling it all like a pro.)

The first woman Doctor is a “natural progression. It offers The Doctor and the audience the opportunity to experience adventures from a new and fresh perspective,” said Paul Patecek, who founded Krewe du Who in 2011. Patecek was also at the photo shoot, as Nardole, a companion to the Twelfth Doctor.

Krewe member Meagan Teague, costumed as the character Dalek Dollie, said, "I love it!", adding "It's about time," mirroring this season's tag line. Patecek added, "As Peter Capaldi's Doctor [the Twelfth] said, 'The Future is Female.'"

Krewe du Who has members throughout the Gulf South and up to 3,000 members from across the world on its Facebook page. It hosts events throughout the year, which will include the premiere party on Oct. 7 at the Crown and Anchor Pub.

According to pub co-owner Neil Timms, the pub will have the show on for krewe members and the general public. BBC One and

BBCAmerica will simulcast the episode, "The Woman Who Fell To Earth": In New Orleans, the show will air at 12:45 p.m.

Timms is starting the festivities, which include a potluck, at 11 a.m. Dressing as your favorite "Doctor Who" character is encouraged, but not required.

The Crown and Anchor became the place to watch "Doctor Who" just before Hurricane Isaac in 2012, when Timms' wife, Albena, had a TARDIS built in front of the pub as a birthday gift for him.

A photo was shot, it went viral, and soon Whovians were coming to the pub to watch the show.

The current TARDIS that is the entrance to the bar is the third version, built by Derek Gorsuch and unveiled in December 2017 for the Christmas episode, "Twice Upon a Time," in which Whittaker made her first appearance. (Doctors often make an appearance in an episode of their predecessor before they actually make their series debut.)

The krewe will continue to hold watch parties at the pub on Sunday nights, when the show is on, though Patecek is a little worried about some competition with New Orleans Saints games. (The show aired Saturday nights in previous years.)

For Teague, who has seen the trailer, the show is now “truly what we need represented now. It is the kind of world I want my son to grow up in — inclusive.”

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**Addition, Sept. 28:** The Bad Wolf Bar in Gretna (2010 O'Connor St; badwolfbar.com), will also be hosting a watch party at 12:45 p.m., with activities happening before and after.

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