

And the Robotech games sell well . . .

# "You get all kinds at a con"

By PAUL PAQUET

Several hundred of Halifax's most creative people gathered last weekend at the Hotel Nova Scotia for the tenth annual Halcon science fiction convention.

Many were in costume, including three good-humored trekkies in Star fleet uniform who also occasionally served as hotel doormen. Christopher Little, dressed as one of the show's admirals, says science fiction fans are a breed apart. "When you walk into the convention and talk to people, you get a different intensity. Many people come in costume so that they stand out, they're not just people who have dropped in."

"You get all kinds at a con," said floor manager Carl Smith. "It's a good chance for science-fiction and fantasy fans to get together for a weekend of madness and mayhem."

It's also a good chance to make a lot of money. Dealers in art, comics, and games come to Halcon from all over the Maritimes to sell their wares. According to Warren Wesmen, who works at the Collector's Dream, a Fredricton SF store, robot role playing games are the hottest selling.

"The Robotech games sell well because they're on TV a lot." 'Cyber-punk', a game about robots and cybernetically enhanced humans, was popular throughout the convention and seems to be the "latest thing" in



Eeek! Halcon youth!

SF fandom. In addition to the games, lecturerers such as "Texas Chain Saw Massacre" screenwriter John Stakely and SF fan Arthur Gillard discussed the latest trends in fiction about robots and computers.

Dalhousie's 'Doctor Who Prydonian Society' also played a large part at the convention. The 'Whovians' screened classics from BBC's Doctor Who television program, gave talks and supplied a large number of well-known

Photo: Ariella Pahlke & Mark Piesanen

songs rewritten with Doctor Who themes.

Prydonian Society founder Peter Jarvis says Doctor Who is rapidly achieving cult status equal to Star Trek's, and attributes the show's appeal to its "humor, imagination, and basic good-guy-ness."

Imagination seemed to be everywhere at Halcon. Fifteen year old Chantal Boudreau was in Halifax from a small village outside of Yarmouth to "game-master" a marathon eight-hour session of Dungeons and Dragons. For her, the role-playing game's appeal lies in "the creativity of the whole thing, you get to use your imagination and you can create a whole world."

Boudreau is one of an increasing number of women attracted

as "they should have been."

An international organizational, SCA has divided the "mundane" world into kingdoms, baronies, and shires. The Halifax chapter, one of Canada's most active, lives in "Seashire", while the Wolfville area is known as "Wolfsgate".

Groups such as SCA often frighten the uninitiated because members adopt auxilliary persona. Wolfsgate seneschal Allan Shaw, who is known interchangedly in SCA circles as Robert Peregrin de Marceage, says that SCA members try to "create an illusion of a different place and time. At some of our outdoor events, with the firelight and tankards of ale, for just a moment you can slip back. To a certain extent we are an escapist



## To a certain extent, we are an escapist society

to SF and its related genre. Boudreau says girls her age are conditioned away from using their imaginations. "They are more interested in talking about shopping and boys than they are in using their minds," she said.

Prydonian Society member Athena Brown kids that women are put off "mainly by (sexist) cover illustrations."

Women seem to be more attracted to medieval activities, including the Fantasy Field Trip Society, which acts out Dungeons and Dragons style adventures in the woods, and the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA), which recreates the Middle Ages

society."

Many "con-goers" are dedicated fans who go to several conventions in different parts of the world each year. At least half the atmosphere at a good con is social. Robert Adams, author of the Horseclans series, held an open-door party in his suite that attracted published writers and artists such as Spider Robinson and Dennis Beauvais.

As a community, SF fans seem to be an open, intelligent, and optimistic bunch, who have thus far operated an international network remarkably free from the elitism that tends to mar other subcultures.