

# Out & about

A&amp;E WEEKEND OUTLOOK

## Sci-fi events enter galaxy this weekend

By Patrick Hambrecht  
Staff Reporter

**A**ndromeda One will minister to the needs of 500 role-playing, Star-Trekking, Jedi-worshipping pilgrims at the downtown Ramada Hotel this weekend.

Andromeda One, a regional science fiction/fantasy conference scheduled from today to Sunday, will be chock-full of celebrities and frivolities. One of the foremost fantasy artists in America, Bill Hodgson, will present demonstrations of his craft.

Among the other big names will be Katherine Kurtz, writer of the celebrated Deryni series, and Lincoln's award-winning sci-fi writer Robert Reed. Other Nebraska professionals will attend, including comic writer Fredd Gorham and fantasy author Tom Freye.

Participants in the conference will have chances to meet the celebrities and ask them questions during a panel discussion today at 6 p.m. After the panel discussion, the artists will lead special conferences on how to write and draw for the sci-fi and fantasy industry.

Andromeda One will offer more than 50 special events, including games, panels, demonstrations, training sessions and a filksinging session.

Filksinging is the noble art of rewriting popular songs to deal with important modern themes, like space exploration and artificial intelligence.

Scott Clark, a chief organizer of the Andromeda One conference, said a filksinging performance often created a tender, moving scene.

"There's a moving song, to the tune of 'The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald,' written about an Apollo mission that nearly ended in disaster," Clark said.

Other special attractions are targeted to involve participants. An art auction will be held, featuring some of the best international and local fantasy artists. Talks will be given on everything from vampires to comic books to Dr. Who.

One audience member will even be able to join an intimate ice cream social with Katherine Kurtz, if he or she wins the "Who-Dun-It" contest.

Besides the special events, Andromeda will play host to ongoing attractions. Numerous role-playing competitions will be offered, including Dungeons and Dragons, Car Wars and Battletech modules. Awards will be given in a special ceremony to the winners of a high school writing contest.

Though the Andromeda organizers don't expect the conference to make a profit, all excess revenue will be given to charity.

Clark said he was already beginning to plan for a possible "Andromeda Two."

## UFO gurus to descend on Lincoln

By Sam Kepfield  
Staff Reporter

**I**f you're a die-hard fan of "The X-Files," you might want to skip it this Friday and head over to East Campus for a real dose of the unknown.

The Fortean Research Center is sponsoring its sixth Exploring Unexplained Phenomena Conference, running from today to Sunday at the Nebraska Center for Continuing Education, 33rd and Holdrege streets. The theme for this year's conference is "Exploring the UFO Mystery."

Scott Colborn, director of the Fortean Research Center, explained the group's working philosophy.

"We try to keep an open mind, but not so open that our brains fall out," he said.

The group takes its name from Charles Fort, an early 20th-century writer who collected data on anomalous events that science ignored.

"We don't ask people to listen to our opinions. We ask them to look at the data and make up their own minds," Colborn said.

Colborn sees his group, and the conferences it sponsors, as slowly preparing the path for the government to finally disclose that humanity is not alone in the universe. Colborn scoffs at the notion that UFO believers are conspiracy-theory cranks waiting to be beamed up to the mother ship.

"Studies show that as a person's educational background goes up, so does their disposition to believing that other life forms are out there," he said.

One featured speaker at this year's conference is Kevin Randle, a former Air Force intelligence officer and Army helicopter pilot who has devoted several years to examining the crash of a UFO near Roswell, N.M., in 1947. Randle has written two books on the subject; his second book, "The Truth About the UFO Crash at Roswell," was published three weeks ago.

Randle will review eyewitness testimony about the July 1947 crash and allow the audience to hear recordings of the witnesses' statements. Randle has also unearthed evidence of a secret investigation conducted by the Air Force into the matter. His speech is scheduled for Saturday at 8 p.m.

Marc Davenport, the editor of "Contact Forum," is another returning speaker. Davenport will present a paper entitled "Visitors from Time: The Secret of UFOs" today at 2 p.m.

James Goodall, a freelance journalist who writes on secret programs, will speak on "Secret Government Bases" Saturday evening. Goodall, from Tacoma, Wash., believes the Groom Lake facility in the Nevada desert is the most likely host for alien spacecraft or technology derived from them.

"A security clearance and 20 years in Leavenworth are real good incentives for not talking," Goodall said.

Karla Turner, a professor of English who has specialized for the past six years in examining people abducted by aliens, will present a discussion on "The Alien/Human Abduction Agenda: Propaganda, Fantasy and Fact." Turner said she was a victim of alien abductions.

In addition to the speakers, there will be displays of books and other supernatural-related phenomena in the lobby of the Nebraska Center. Also, the ever-popular ghost tour of Lincoln will be tonight from 8 to 10 for \$7.

Registration for the conference is \$50 for all 14 lectures or \$7.50 per lecture, and one can register at the door.

