A special, light-hearted, 50th anniversary

While many reflect on the 50th anniversary of the assassination of JFK or the 50th anniversary release of the book, “Where The Wild Things Are,” many of us have been enjoying a year long celebration of Whovian proportions.

What’s this great celebration? The 50th anniversary of the popular British science fiction show, “Doctor Who!”

Yes, 50 years ago, the world got it’s first taste of the Doctor, his TARDIS (which can travel through all of space and time) that is bigger on the inside than it is on the outside, and the first in a series of many adventures.

As a science fiction show, it was not unusual to see aliens. But because the Doctor could also travel through time, there were quite a few historically set adventures as well. What “Doctor Who” fan can forget the time when the Doctor made the TARDIS invisible and landed in President Nixon’s Oval Office? It was crazy, funny, and totally something the Doctor would do because he showed up to help.

That’s the thing about “Doctor Who;” it isn’t just a show and it isn’t just mere entertainment. It does what a good show, lasting this long, should do, challenge the ethical and moral values of the characters as well as the viewers.

In order to keep the show going with different lead actors, we know the Doctor (an alien who looks human from the planet Gallifrey) is the last of a race known as Time Lords. And, although they can die, they usually regenerate into a different person but with the same memories. That regeneration and introduction of a new actor, gives the audience a new way to see how the Doctor handles invasions and not letting anyone die today.

His character is a fierce protector of the planet Earth, but of all life, really. When dealing with evil he must choose the path of violence and annihilation or finding a

witty way to outsmart the enemy.

Though the world of the Doctor is fictional, it has always caused me to pause and think of real-world ramifications. That's the beauty of the show and one of the reasons it's lasted for 50 years.

While "Doctor Who" may not be for everyone, it is worth noting that there are still programs that can entertain and challenge the mind. That's why I keep watching and eagerly anticipate the 50th anniversary special airing tomorrow around the world.

So, while not a pivotal moment in American history, "Doctor Who" has a place in TV history and the hearts and minds of fans past, present, and future.

(Eleventh Doctor, actor Matt Smith, and Tenth Doctor, actor David Tennant, in "The Day of the Doctor" 50th Anniversary special