



October Entertainment Report “Where have all the Dolphins gone”

A presentation by Tom Brown
Reported by Alan Throop

At the October 7 General meeting, Tom Brown presented an informative, descriptive program on dolphins entitled “Where have all the dolphins gone?” Tom described their natural history, the challenges that they face from man, and perhaps a bit of their psychology.

Tom is a diver, certified in 1975, and enjoys abalone and lobster diving. After a career as a policy analyst, where he re-



searched and wrote four books for government agencies, he decided to make a career change as a popular fiction writer, taking odd jobs to support himself. Being familiar with dolphins, their intelligence, and their complex social behaviors from his marine activities, and seeing his nephew’s excitement about Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, he decided that he could write a fun, educational, non-violent version of the reptilian gang. Tom did a lot of research, interviews, attended conferences, and swam with dolphins in the Florida Keys and kayaked with Orcas in British Columbia. He continues as an active environmentalist and volunteers for the Marine Mammal Center.

In the program, Tom asked us to imagine that we are on a spaceship coming to earth and find an intelligent curious species that has no war or poverty, doesn’t kill their own kind, has close family bonds, a complex culture, and cooperates to help its own. These are dolphins. Tom presented some interesting dolphin facts. Man has a smaller brain than the bottlenose dolphin (25% larger) and the sperm whale (7x larger). They live in a 3-D world versus our primarily two-dimensional world. Their environment is strongly acoustic, since sound travels 5 times faster underwater, and they communicate in complex patterns. They have small pinhole ears, but receive most of the sounds through their lower jaw. They have no hands, but are known to use tools at times. While dolphins have been known to support at the surface other dolphins that are injured, we do not know if or how they experience compassion, grief, love, or joy. Tom explored this question in his books.

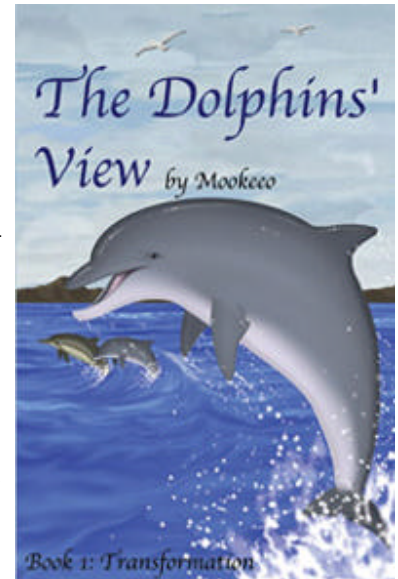


Nina, from “The Dolphins View”

The major predator and threat that they face is man. We take from dolphins (and other species) their food when we take so many fish that the fish can’t sustain their own population, poison and destroy their habitat, injure their hearing, and take their family members for food and entertainment, or just waste their lives as by-catch by ruthless fishing practices. Tom spoke about the “dolphin holocaust” and some of the atrocities involving dolphins. In particular, he described the brutal annual slaughter of dolphins by the Japanese, with permits from the Japanese government and in the name of food delicacies and tradition. Tom circulated a petition to stop this slaughter. Check out some information on dolphin and animal abuse at www.onevoice-ear.org.

Tom also talked about captive dolphins and marine parks. While they provide a useful educational and ambassadorial service for the public and the dolphin species - to try to bridge the dolphin-man communication gap - the individuals involved suffer confined spaces, lower life expectancies, and loss of the cultural experience of living in the wild. For those who might want to be a dolphin trainer, he says, “Be a dolphin savior instead. Work to keep wild animals wild. Work to protect their habitat, their ecosystem, and the environment we all share. If we can do that, we will not only save them, we will also save ourselves.”

Regarding his trilogy “The Dolphins’ View”, written under his pseudonym Mookeo (the lead character in the story), it is Tom’s way of exploring the dolphin’s society, how they live and think, and how they view humans. It is written for young adults, but – having read the first book – it is an interesting and fun read for adults also. As Infinity Press states, the book deals



with “marine science, government, technology, public policy and environmental issues.” In a brief summary about the story: Some defiant young dolphins experience an epiphany, challenge their leaders, and embark on a quest. They meet aquatic aliens who are able to transform them into a part-dolphin/part-human form with telepathic abilities. These dolphins then attempt to teach man about the redeeming aspects of dolphin society. You can check out more information, get a good set of links on dolphins, and order books at www.thedolphinsview.com.

Many thanks to Tom for an interesting program, for writing the book, and for his efforts on behalf of dolphins.