

Speaking 'dolphinese' tried with new computer

United Press International
MALIBU, Calif. — When man first began communicating with dolphins, it was done in human language. Today, new computers make it possible to talk in "dolphinese," which may mean a communications breakthrough with the clever animals.

Dr. John Lilly, who pioneered the original research into dolphin communication in the 1950s, will begin this month using a new computer to try to communicate with two dolphins on their own frequency.

Dolphins, Lilly said, have four individual voices and talk 10 times faster and at a 10 times higher pitch than do humans. Previous technology was unable to find that pitch or match the speed, he said.

He showed off the computer, part of "Project Janus," for reporters at his isolated home above Malibu. Although there are no dolphins at the house, their images are all over. A large blue flag with two dolphins on it flutters from a pole while a wooden replica cavorts at the front entrance.

The research, financed by Lilly's non-profit Human-Dolphin Foundation, will be conducted at Marine World Africa USA in Redwood City with two Atlantic bottlenose dol-

phins and \$100,000 worth of equipment.

Hooked up to the computer are two television screens — one for the human operator and another underwater for the dolphins — and equipment to pick up and transmit sound both ways.

"This is the first computer that can talk in the dolphin's own frequency range," Lilly said. "Earlier experiments depended on us using our own voices. The dolphins kept trying to raise the pitch when matching sounds. They tried to talk in 'English,' but their accent is terrible."

Letters, numbers and other symbols were assigned to 48 various tones to give the human operators a reference point. The computer translates the sounds to both human and dolphin pitches, some ultrasonic. The assigned letter appears on the screens, adding the visual stimulation that dolphins seem to love.

For example, tones assigned to the letters SUQBK will be the signal to get the dolphins' attention. As a tone, SUQBK translates into the first few notes of the tune used to hail aliens in the space film "Close Encounters of the Third Kind."

"This is the beginning step," Lilly said. "We hope the dolphin will as-

sociate the sounds with the letters. As we work out the rules in the game of language, we will be able to communicate. This will take a long time."

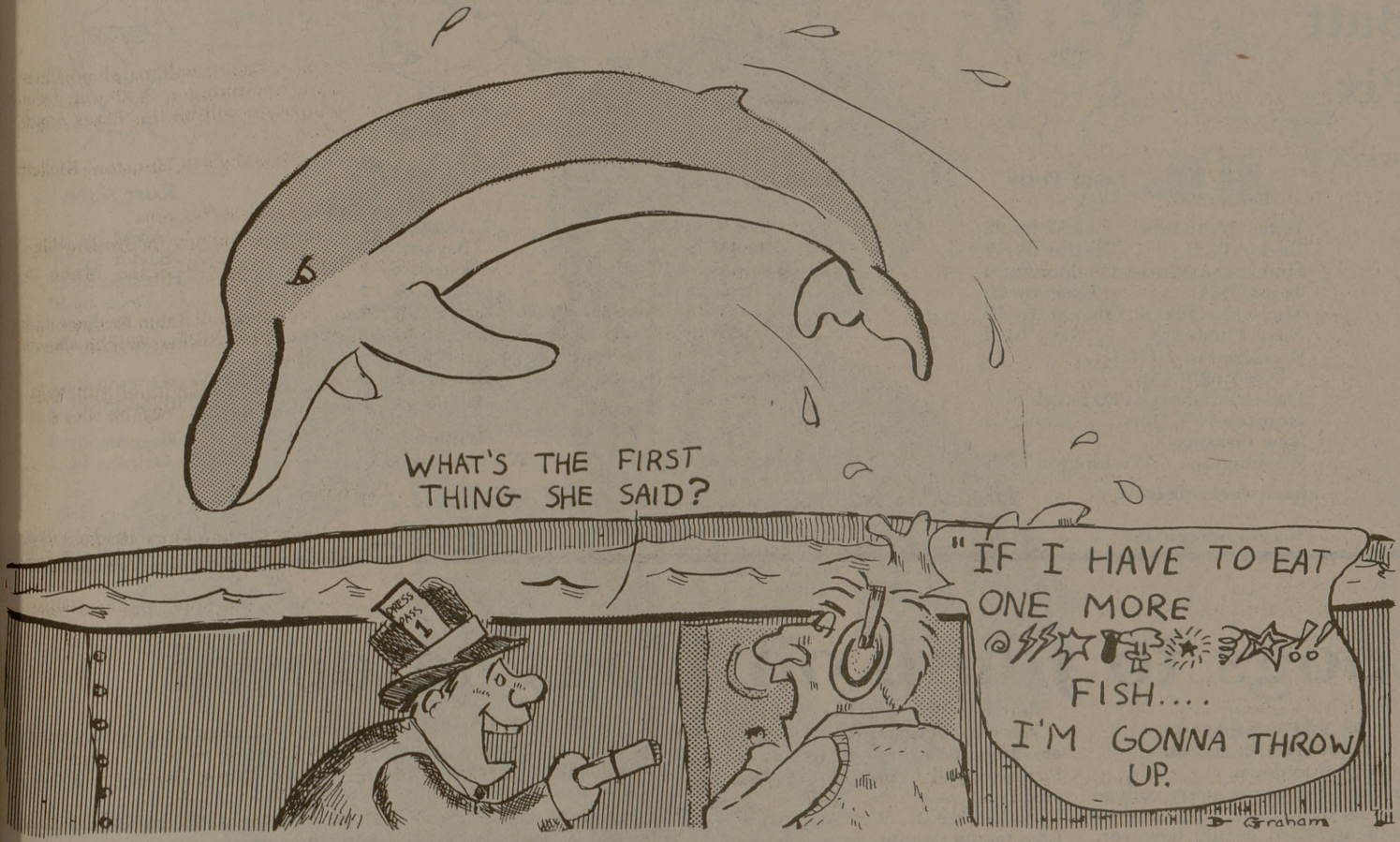
Listening long enough, one can recognize tone patterns as one recognizes a song melody. Eventually, Lilly hopes to work up to simple words, such as ball or hello.

There is something, maybe it's the way they seem to smile, that has always drawn humans to dolphins.

"There is an ancient lure," the soft-spoken Lilly said. "They're so kind to us. They rescue us, they never hurt us. They have a sense of humor."

But why bother to talk to them? "We're curious. What are they doing? What are they thinking? They've been around for 50 million years with brains larger than ours. I want to know what they have to tell us, what they know about survival. Maybe man was here before and didn't survive — but they did."

He has always been impressed by the intelligence of the creatures and their learning behavior. Once, he said, he was nearly bitten by a young dolphin. An older animal whacked the younger one on the head. The young one never bit anyone again.



Connecticut man refuses jail release

United Press International
HARTFORD, Conn. — The state plans to show John J. Palm the gate to freedom next April after 42 years of confinement, but Connecticut's longest-serving inmate says he won't leave until he's declared innocent of a holdup murder.

Palm, 68, has been incarcerated since 1937 for the killing of a deputy sheriff. Last week, the state Board of Pardons decided to commute his life sentence on grounds of mercy.

But Palm is balking and corrections officials are scratching their heads.

Palm said he couldn't accept the pardon for the same reasons he had turned down a chance to apply for parole 20 years ago.

He wants to leave prison an innocent man. He also wants to sue the state.

Pardons Board Secretary Burton Yaffie said Wednesday the board had not been notified about Palm's refusal to be released.

"We thought he'd be delighted. We weren't told he was dissatisfied," Yaffie said.

Yaffie said the board won't meet again until Nov. 19 and "if anything is to be done about Palm it won't happen before then."

"This is a very unusual case," Assistant Corrections Commissioner Raymond Lopes said. "To my knowledge, and I've been with the department for 10 years, we've never had anyone who refused to be released before."

Palm has spent more than half his confinement in a mental hospital.

He originally was sentenced to death in the electric chair for shooting Deputy Sheriff Peter Kaminski during a New Milford holdup.

But he suffered a mental breakdown on death row in 1938 and was sent to Norwich State Hospital. He was returned to prison in 1963.

Palm was convicted mainly on the testimony of two women who identified him as the robber although the man who shot Kaminski wore a mask that covered half his face.

Tuesday, Palm wrote to a newspaper stating he won't accept the commutation.

"I am not taking that sort of pardon. I am innocent and I'm not going to sell myself out after suffering all these years," Palm told the Hartford Courant.

"I wanted an unconditional pardon. I wanted to sue the state for every day I was in prison. They can't give my life back, but they could make my last years cozy with the money I should have from the suit," Palm wrote.

State correction officials refused Wednesday to grant requests to interview Palm, saying recent publicity about his case has caused him emotional strain.

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