

the new coordinator

An Interview With *John Dolly* By *Phil Trounstone*



Dolly

CN: Why don't you just rap out to us how it feels to be coordinator?

JD: Amused, and still surprized at the role that some people try to put you in. The first thing that hits you is this daddy trip that hovers around your head. By democratic process you have been elected Free U Daddy. But I can handle that pretty easy. Space your fuckups as far as part as you can. But when you do fuckup, make sure everbody sees you. There's not much place for infallibility anymore. And that is a pretty lonely place, anyhow.

CN: What have your fuck ups been so far?

JD: Nothing spectatular so far but I'm working on one. I've never blown my cool at a meeting but I've reached the point a couple of times where I felt like making a ragging asshole of myself by jumping on somebody and telling him what an idiot he is.

PT: The meetings are a fantastic scene.

CN: Can you dig the asthetics, its almost an art form.

JD: I've heard that they're been a lot better in the past. And that ain't nostalgia. The winds were against us last year. We're starting to get out of the mess we were in. And just starting to master the responsibility trip, and just waiting to get back into the action. We're all bad at waiting.

PT: That's true, if vic zaps on somebody at a meeting about responsibility, somebody will walk out the door.

JD: I would dig that the people who walk out the door should walk out the door. If they can't take a good zap on that, I'm not really too concerned if they come or not. It's not a playpen.

CN: It seems like the Free U is locked into this painstakingly slow process of decision making

And Chuck Noble

which falls back continually on a monetary world view, if you make an anlogy to a car, it is kinda locked in Second gear.

JD: I think that part of the problem is that we were too successful. We got all this money dumped on our heads, when we aren't used to working with money. It's gone to alot of peoples heads. We never had much money to work with before, it's gotten in the way of our vision. Let's learn to work with the money that we have. There are just a lot of trips that can be done without money. Coordinating Council doesn't have to be a money trip.

PT: A lot of the things that could be done as the Coordinating Council are being done as classes, they have an idea written up in the catalog and it becomes no longer, a discussion project or somebody laying out a trip in a meeting, with people digging it, rapping about it.

CN: I was rapping with a chick who got busted for A3M, we were talking about Grass Roots and she asked if there had been any confrontation, I said not so far, but I would imagine that there will be at some time. She said that she would stay home that day. I feel that a lot of people around here whou would do that kind of a trip got busted for A3M and aren't likely to do it again. So fi the vision does'nt take in money and there aren't people willing to confront, what does it take in? We have got to come up against something, somewhere -- if the Free U isn't a breeding ground of radical change, then what is it.

JD: Confrontation isn't a vision. It's a tactic. The vision that I see for the Free U is to somehow collect the vision and energy that is coming out of the still evolving communes in this area and make that the Free U vision. More and more people are living in communes, the full pontenial of that force has not filtered into the Free U. Somehow, we are going to have to bring it all home.

PT: To a lot of people this is a freaky country Club with 13 dollar dues every 3 months.

JD: Right.

CN: It's kinda and encounter hip silent majority.

PT: A lot more people could become involved in the Free U. We could really make registration go if there were 100 people willing to work, just two weeks.

JD: I don't think that moralisms change peoples lives. I think that we have to look into the Free U organization itself, with the people wo are spending a lot of time in the Free U to find the way to attract more people. Often I go to a meeting and somebody who hasn't been there in couple of months or even years will come in, they sit and listen, don't say anything, and then split after an hour. It's because they're measuring what is going on with what they could be doing. Maybe they're fantasizing about what they could be doing, but perhaps also, Coordinating Council is not what is should be.

CN: I don't know if we can attract larger numbers.

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and I don't know the way the Free U is going to radically change the meetings. We still have those financial problems, and we are conditioned to operate on that level.

JD: It's good experience to be faced with a financial crisis, but I still think that 90% of the time is way too much. A lot of the things can be handled by the Executive Council. Still, I think, some things should be brought out in the Council, if only for the reason that people who work together tend to stick together. We need outside criticism.

CN: I am wondering John, if you have any ideas or fantasies of some really far out thing that the Free U could do. I'm setting you up now.

JD: We're through the sex and drug trips, we took both of them as far as they go. One thing really hits me. That these things are really only trips, there is really no commitment to drugs or wild sex, it is as if the people know that when they are doing it, that it is only a trip, and that if we are going to go anywhere as a community, we are going to have to stop just taking trips and find some path and some kind of knowledge.

PT: I think that when the people around here were really into the acid felt that they were headed to where it really was at.

JD: But they were after this ultimate knowledge and they thought that drugs could give them that knowledge I don't see that in life at all. There is no ultimate knowledge. Still, there are some secrets. I find my secrets by switching off from path to path and testing the trail as I move along.

CN: Do you see the Free U as just another path?

JD: The political trip as coordinator is certainly one path, I hope that I am not a politician for the rest of my life, I hope that a sometime I can get to being by myself and thinking things anew and being more creativeless pragmatic. Not being someone who is always on top of a situation...I would love not to have to say something in a situation, but just dig it and be confused and let people know that I am confused.

CN: What do you think the priorities of the Free U are?

JD: I think we're making the priorities more real. Good things have been happening lately, like the printshop reorganization. There were some really bad vibes down there. The executive Council, the Resistance, and anyone interested came together at a meeting. The thing came down beautifully. We are in much better shape in the printshop now. And the Newsletter. What we had in the past was the responsibility being pushed upon one person, Fred. The young turks went to the Coordinating Council and said we want an equal say. Now we have it and it is put up or shut up. With four or five running around to get copy, the Newsletter and Fred are going to be in much better shape.

PT: In the same vein, if the Free U is going in some direction, its own direction, what do you see as an outlet for this energy, where do you see the biggest amount of energy headed.

JD: The Tangent. It's more than a coffee house, it's a community center and there are a million things that we can do, including having our meetings there. The room we meet in does a lot of things to our heads. Tressider was so sterile, the Nest is better, homier. If we are going to start to have good meetings, I would like to see 60 or 70 people, the Nest is too small. After two hours everyone gets cramped and restless. Smoke all over the air. The



Noble



Trounstine

temperature of the meetings kinda just picks up. If we could use the big room at the Tangent, our meetings might be much better. There are a million other things that we could do with the Tangent, I really get excited when I think about it....

PT: Would you see us moving our office into the Tangent. Giving up the Nest.

JD: I think it might be, that depends on the kind of deal we could work out with the Tangent, we have first right to the office space. The Nest is like a community center-office. Both areas are hurt as it is a hard combination. If we were in the Tangent, it would be a perfect situation. A community center downstairs the offices upstairs. As it is now in the Nest, when there is no one in the front room, the rappers go to the back to where people are trying to work.

CN: I would really dig moving back to Palo Alto and being a mile down the road from Stanford.

JD: It is like we are taking the offensive in moving there, if we can get into the hub of Palo Alto, we are turning so many more people on.

CN: Do you think that there are going to be good vibes between the Tangent people and the FreeU?

JD: I hope so, 90% of the Tangent people are Free U members. A lot of people feel that the Free U should have a lot more control over the Tangent. I don't think so. We are going to have to help the people in the Tangent and really pour a lot of energy into it, but it should be a community project.

PT: Phase 3 of the Tangent plan is to have it run as a community organization. That means that the Free U puts up 1500 dollars to give birth to a new community organization, in that sense in phase 3 the Free U loses its control, that is the way that it is written, I think it is groovy.

PT: I hope that the Tangent will be a vehicle which draws people to the Free U, who might not have otherwise dug it.

JD: I hope so. We should get all our freaks into that building and turn those people on.

CN: Along those lines, of community projects, what are your plans for the summer.

JD: We should continue to have gatherings, even if new laws are passed against them. There is a good chance that any laws passed will be unconstitutional, so we will take them to court as we have done in the past. If there is any trip that is going to grow in the community it is the country trip. People are realizing what a groovy thing it is to live in the country. You have to realize that a lot of the things that are done in the country can be done right here. Like gardening, working with the soil. And working together on community projects. The commune can be like a big family working together, trying to be as self sufficient as possible.

PT: The main problem is alternative vocations. There are so few things that you can do, your own gig and survive, so you are forced to the dual identity that you mentioned earlier. Do you see any way around this.



JD: Right now I think the community could afford a lot more people working for it. That requires that people who are pulling in \$150 or more a week are going to have to give more to the community to pay more people.

CN: Is that part of the commune influence, that in some ways the Free U becomes more communal, so those who have more to give and don't mind giving it, would pay more for those who work for the Free U?

JD: I think it is going to happen more, still there are a lot of people copping out. For some people the church gives meaning in their lives, and they don't kid around when it comes to giving money, because that is where it is at for them. If the Free U is where you are at, then maybe you should start thinking is the 13 dollars that you are giving each quarter as much as you can afford. This goes along with the fact that the community must become more relevant to that person, much more a part of his life.

PT: How do we get this energy?

JD: The free U has always gotten that energy when it needed it. It got that energy when it was doing things. Like Lytton Plaza, there were a lot of people who came back into the Free U when that thing came down. I really think that we will get those people back once we start doing creative things again.

CN: 1970 is the year of the issues and it could really be a good year for the Free U, but we are as far away from our hopes as we are our fears.

PT: What are some of your fears about the Free U?

JD: I kinda think that the Free U is going to be such a good welfare organization that everyone is going to get their head straightened out except me and I am going to be the only freak left in the community.

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