

**Dashiell Hammett Society of Studs (DHSOS)
San Francisco International Headquarters**

Officers

President (DUH PREZ)	Bill D_____
Communications Czar (Czar)	Geoff Noakes
Procurer of Venues (PoV)	Lee Tyree
AgendaMeister (ListMan)	Ken Monk
Archivist of Knowledge (Notes)	Dale Fehringer

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Minutes of Meeting

PoV's Man Cave and John's Grill

Wednesday, March 2, 2016

Back Where It All Began

The list of DHSOS meetings (<http://dhsos.com/3.html>) goes back to 1998. There isn't a month associated with that first meeting, but it must have been around June, which is nearly 18 years ago, and still this stately group continues to meet, learn, and remain colleagues and friends. So, here we were, 18 years later, at John's Grill, the site where it all began.

PoV's Man Cave



The officers of the DHSOS convened promptly at 6:00 PM at the worldwide headquarters of Tyree, Inc., located in San Francisco's historic Flood Building. We were invited there for cocktails, which were properly (and one could say lovingly) prepared by the Procurer of Venues himself. We were also treated to a demonstration of the PoV's newest toy, an electronic map that shows where on Earth it is daytime or night time. It was quite impressive, and as the PoV explained, quite necessary, since his

spousal unit tends to travel all over the globe. By use of his electronic map and a silver-colored extendable pointer the PoV is now able to tell where his wife is, what time it is there, and whether the sun is shining.

Sharing man cave wall space were pictures of the PoV in many stages: high school basketball champion, naval hero, college graduate, and business executive. Also sharing office wall space are several of DUH PREZ's son's Giants photos, which proudly marked some of the many highlights the local Boys of Summer have achieved.

John's Grill

Normally, the front table at John's Grill is quiet and peaceful. Not tonight! The annual RSA Conference (an internet security convention) was in town had the place filled to the brim, and it was rockin' and rollin'. A table near ours was occupied by a woman whose voice was so loud and shrill it was nearly impossible for us hear each other or carry on a normal conversation. That didn't turn out to be a deal-breaker, as most of our conversations aren't normal.

You got to look on the bright side, even if there ain't one.

-- Dashiell Hammett

Call to Order

DUH PREZ called the meeting to order with a rap on his water glass at 7:18 PM. All officers were present.

Capital Ideas

The DHSOS has an upcoming field trip scheduled this June to Sacramento, and Notes updated the status. Hotel reservations have been made, baseball tickets will be purchased early March, and transportation and extra-curricular activities will be arranged at a later date. All officers saluted Notes and all look forward to this field trip.

Remarkable Story



ListMan opened the evening by relating a remarkable story. Joe Koenig, a 92-year-old World War II veteran from Cedar Rapids, Iowa (and the uncle of ListMan's bride), believes wreckage of a plane recently found by a fisherman in France belongs to a B-17 bomber he was aboard when it crashed more than 70 years ago.

That's when and where Koenig's plane landed in 1944 after being shot down by a German fighter during an air raid in the Bordeaux region of France.

All of the 10-member crew survived the crash, and Koenig says the plane ended up about 75 yards off the Bay of Biscay. Koenig spent the rest of the war as a POW.

A French newspaper in March reported a fisherman found large pieces of a WWII bomber during low tide in the bay. Koenig's family has notified the military about the wreckage and is considering traveling to France to view it themselves.

Dub Nation



At the time of our meeting, the NBA Champion Golden State Warriors were 55-5 and quickly closing in on breaking NBA stats for most consecutive home wins (which they have since accomplished) and best win/loss record for a season. They are also impressing everyone with their skills and teamwork, and they are changing the way professional basketball is played. From spreading out the offense, using the whole court, unselfish passing, and canning three-point shots from virtually anywhere past mid-court, the Dubs are thrilling local fans and setting a high standard.

Ski Trip

DUH PREZ reported on a "working ski trip" he and several work colleagues recently took to Taos, New Mexico. While there, he reported, he did himself proud by skiing on black ski slopes, "cleaning up" at poker, and staying up each night until after ten o'clock. Five members of his party were foolish enough, he reported, to go clear to the top of the mountain and try to ski the double-black slopes. One of them came back down the hill on a sled, after wrecking her ankle. And DUH PREZ had two discoveries while there: (1) a no-skills-required card game called "between-the-sheets", which explains why he "cleaned-up", and (2) a new delicious tequila with the brand name Giro, which he will secure by our time at Drakesbad.

Drakesbad

It's never too early to start planning for our annual sojourn to Drakesbad, and the DHSOS started tonight. Early, vital topics included whether the studs should extend their stays by one or two days on the front end, and who should be responsible for drinks on which evening. Neither issue was resolved.

Vacations

This subject turned into a rather interesting and rambling discussion of where the studs plan to travel this year, where we would like to travel, and where we would travel if Donald Trump paid for our trips. Actual destinations included the U.S. Deep South, France, Spain, Italy, and a European river cruise. Wannabe locations included Cuba, New York City, Chicago, Cooperstown, and Paris.

A future possible vacation site for the group was discussed by DUH PREZ, who wants us to join him in Costa Rica next April/May. He is focusing on a house there that would be worthy of and fit the entire DHSOS.

Irish Coffees



At this point in the evening the restaurant started to quiet down and we started to relax and act like the dignified group we are. We summoned the waiter over and grilled him about how John's Grill makes Irish coffees. Satisfied that they were reasonably similar to

those at the Buena Vista (the first and best in the world), we ordered some. When they were delivered, they were in the wrong glasses, had a wooden stick stuck in them, and had suspicious-looking whipped cream on top. Again the waiter was summoned and challenged. He took it in stride, tried to answer our questions, left, and returned with a bowl of the whipped cream, demonstrating that it really was made from scratch and not dispensed from a can. That seemed to satisfy all but the true purists, and we sipped our drinks in peace.

Miss K and the Working World

Miss Katharine, a product of and favorite among the DHSOS, is now working for a start-up food manufacturer called Hampton Creek. The Czar bragged that she is doing well, as is the company, and that she is getting a true taste of the working world. Here's a link to a recent article about her company's success:

<http://fortune.com/2016/03/03/walmart-target-hampton-creek/>

Rogue Waves/Sneaker Waves



Over the past couple of weeks there have been multiple occurrences of young, healthy people being swept out to sea and drowning. The DHSOS wondered aloud how these tragedies take place, and The Czar related a story about a wave knocking Miss K down when she was a girl. The discussion

turned to rogue waves, which are defined as large and spontaneous surface waves that occur far out in open water. They can be extremely dangerous, even to large ships and ocean liners, and they have been the subject of numerous books, movies, and songs. Scientists apparently don't know much about rogue waves, but they are actively studying them.

Blast from the DHSOS Past

(from DHSOS minutes of July 22, 2012)

We could tell who he was from a block away. The Czar had contacted him weeks ago and arranged to have him guide us around the parts of San Francisco where Dashiell Hammett lived, worked, and wrote. And there he was, standing in front of the historic Flood Building on a sunny Sunday afternoon.



Don Herron looks to be around 60; his hair and beard are gray, and his attire is appropriate – a well-worn tan fedora and open tan overcoat over a black shirt, tan slacks and brown shoes.

Don was born in Detroit, moved to San Francisco from St. Louis in the 1960s, and taught literature at San Francisco State University. He originally started this tour for his college students.

In 1977, he recognized the value of the tour; copy-righted it, quit teaching, and began operating the tour for a living. Since then, he has conducted the tour "hundreds of times."

Today, Don lives in San Jose, drives a San Francisco cab part-time when he isn't giving the tour or lecturing to clubs, and manages a website and blog on Dashiell Hammett and other San Francisco and mystery writers.

Don is a wealth of knowledge about Dashiell Hammett, San Francisco, and 20th-century American literature. He talks nearly non-stop throughout the tour, relating stories about San Francisco, Dashiell Hammett, Sam Spade, and other mystery writers. He's unique and (if you like Dashiell Hammett) fascinating!

Today, Don lives in two distinct worlds: the high-tech, instant communication world of the 21st century, and the hard-boiled, shadowy world of Dashiell Hammett's Roaring '20s. He seems to thrive in both.

The DHSOS was highly entertained by Don's knowledge and his willingness to share it with us. He started the tour in front of the Flood Building, where Dashiell worked as a detective for Pinkerton's (and where the PoV now maintains a ManCave).

He toured us past the buildings where Dashiell lived, those where he wrote his most famous stories, and many sites from Dashiell's classic novel, *The Maltese Falcon*.

Standing just down the block from John's Grill, Don asked us to look across the street and up. There, in a fourth-floor window was stenciled "Spade and Archer," just like in the opening scene of *The Maltese Falcon*. We had been past this site many times, and none of us had noticed that. It was going to be that kind of day.

We learned that Hammett lived in San Francisco from 1921 to 1929. During that time he worked as a detective, an advertising copywriter for Samuel's

Jewelers, and as a writer. During his time in San Francisco, Dashiell wrote almost all the stories and all three novels in his series that featured the Continental Op, as well as *The Maltese Falcon*.

As we toured, Don kept up a steady stream of stories about Dashiell, his life, and his books. He told us when Dashiell lived in each building, and about the hotels and restaurants in his books. He ran through a chronicle of Dashiell's detective career and writing life, and listed the stories and novels that were written in each location.

Don suggested the DHSOS read some of Dashiell's early works, which featured the "Continental Op," including the *The Big Knockover* and some of the short stories that were originally published in the *Black Mask*. He also suggested we read *Our Lady of Darkness*, by Fritz Leiber, and he referred us to the blogs on Don's website for May 27, which has a link to *The Black Lizard Big Book of Black Mask Stories*, edited by Otto Penzler, which includes the original version of *The Maltese Falcon*.

We stopped for a beer at the HaRa Bar, where we learned about the old-time San Francisco boxers (Harry and Ralph) the bar was named for.

We paused at the Crawford Apartments at 620 Eddy, where Hammett and his wife, Josephine, lived for nearly five years, and where Dashiell often suffered from bouts of tuberculosis. Don told us how Hammett sometimes had to line up kitchen chairs from his bedroom to the bathroom, to support himself, and allow him get to the bathroom.

It was at 811 Geary that Sam Spade lived, and we enjoyed listening while Don ran through some of the action that took place there. It was the location where Spade (twice) took a gun away from the gunsel, Wilmer, and where Spade and Gutman waited for Da Burd to arrive.

At 1309 Hyde, Don told us that in 1926, Dashiell sent his family to Marin County so he could hole up and write the *Big Knockover*.

Don pointed out Hotel Vertigo at 940 Sutter Street. This hotel is an updated version of the Empire Hotel, which was made famous by Alfred Hitchcock's movie, *Vertigo*, which starred James Stewart and Kim Novak. When Don mentioned Miss Novak, Duh Prez's head snapped up, his eyes bulged out, and he stared at the hotel with heightened interest.

We paused at the Charing Cross Apartments at 891 Post Street, where Hammett lived (after separating from his wife), and where he wrote *The Maltese Falcon*, and Don told us how Dashiell gave up his Continental Op series of detective stories, and created Sam Spade, a much better-looking and confident hero. We bowed our heads in tribute.

Adjournment

It had been a very special evening, with an appropriate mix of fine food, good knowledge, and noble friends.

We took another look at the front of John's Grill (with **Dashiell Hammett Society** on the awning) and at the building across the street, where Dashiell Hammett once lived, issued hearty fist bumps all around, and walked off into the foggy San Francisco night.

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