

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

Officers

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

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Minutes of Meeting

Bix

Thursday, February 7, 2019

Back at Bix



Looking back on it, it wasn't one of the most contentious meetings we've had, and it might even be described as civil. There were no "objections," no threats of sanctions, not even pointed taunts. It might have been the location, Bix, which is a refined setting (as one of us pointed out "it's about the only place we go that our wives would set foot in"), or it might have been the attendance (just the four of us). Whatever the reason, we were generally-speaking pretty well-behaved.

We were seated at an upstairs booth, past the elaborate curved bar, beyond the elegant art work, and above the jazz pianist and singer, who provided background music while we settled in.

The wait staff helped us stay on track, too. They were there with the right answers to our questions, and were otherwise not there. The stars were aligned for us to have a smooth meeting.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM by DUH PREZ, as he tapped his dinner knife on his wine glass. We drank a toast to Frank Robinson, who had died that day. The former professional baseball player, first African-American baseball manager, and former manager of the San Francisco Giants was a favorite. We drank again to the Presidential son and his wife, who recently discovered they are expecting baby #2. And a third toast was offered to dearly-departed friends Ruth, Lee, Tom, Tom, and Steve.

Da Burd



Typically, the next point of business would be to welcome Da Burd, but it wasn't there to be welcomed. Notes pointed out that this was the third meeting in a row Da Burd had missed, which didn't sit well with the group. DUH PREZ had little to add.

Favorite Haunt

It was a rainy night in San Francisco, and the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge was closed, so traffic was backed up throughout the City, causing slowdowns everywhere, including on the way to Bix. Half of us (DUH PREZ and ListMan) wiggled through traffic, snagged bar stools, and ordered martinis. The other half

(Czar and Notes) sat for 20 minutes in the Broadway Tunnel and then rushed into Bix a half-hour late. Just as they ordered a drink we were told our table was ready, so we marched up to dinner.

Bix is one of our favorite haunts. It's a supper club with a 1930s ambiance, live jazz, and darn good American-French cuisine. It's not easy to find (on Gold Street in Jackson Square), which the DHSOS considers one of its redeeming characteristics.



Its website describes the scene that greeted the DHSOS:

“A lone neon sign leads into a soaring room of fluted columns, mahogany paneling, plush banquettes, and distinguished artwork. White jacketed bartenders hold forth behind a gently curved bar, mixing what many have called the City’s best classic cocktails.”

The DHSOS has met at Bix before – the last time on November 8, 2016, the date of the last U.S. Presidential election. A lot has changed since then.

Hunter’s Ideal Job

Frequent readers of these minutes know that Katharine, the offspring of the DHSOS, has a friend named Hunter, who is a fan of our group. Hunter has secured what might be the ideal job, selling imported wines from Europe into the western United States. At the time of our meeting Hunter was in Spain, doing research for his job. We raised our glasses to Hunter, in an envious gesture, and wished him well.

Stina’s Busy Job

Stina, the favored presidential daughter, was in the midst of the most demanding part of her job with the San Francisco Ballet, and she had been travelling the country, working long hours, and helped organize tryouts for kids who want to attend the ballet’s famed school. Each January, San Francisco’s Ballet School staff (including Stina) crisscross the country holding auditions to find the most promising young dancers to invite to the school’s year-round summer program. We are all very proud of Stina, and we wished her well.

DUH PREZ reported that he had attended the San Francisco Ballet’s opening with Stina, Andrew, and friends, and he presented a photo of himself at the event.

Drakesbad Updates



Drakesbad Guest Ranch, located in northern California’s Lassen National Park, has been a gathering place for the DHSOS for decades. It is the place where we go to escape Wi-Fi, news, and job stress, and to commune with nature and each other.

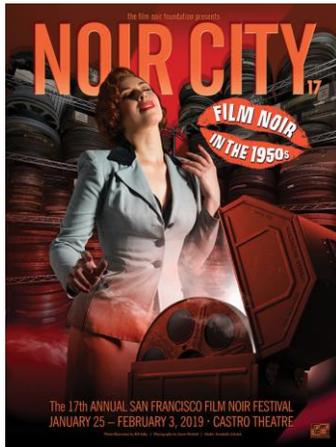
This year the management at Drakesbad has changed, after 43 years. The outgoing management was a DHSOS-friendly group who valued our long-time loyalty and friendship, and we will miss them. So, what will happen next? None of us is sure.

Drakesbad’s reservation system, which normally allows us to reserve rooms two years out, is not working. And although the

new management initially promised that the beloved former staff would be retained, they are no longer so reassuring.

On another Drakesbad topic, DUH PREZ asked how many officers believe that the waterwheel he built two years ago will still be running when we arrive this August. His hand was the only one in the air.

Film Noir



Noir City, the 10-day film noir film series at the Castro Theater, had just ended, and the gang was still excited about it (some more than others). All of us attended at least some movies; DUH PREZ saw a huge number, others only a couple. The theme this year was the 50s, with the 20 or so movies being made between 1949 and 1961. There were a couple of familiar films (*Psycho*, *The Turning Point*) and many obscure ones; many with the words “kiss” or “dying” in the title. There were performances by actors/actresses who later became household names, including Kirk Douglas, Richard Widmark, Barbara Stanwyck, Robert Mitchum, and Thelma Ritter.

The group enjoyed seeing the changes in the films through the 50s in the styles of cars, clothes, hats, and expressions. Most officers expressed interest in going again next year.

Santa Barbara Wedding

ListMan reported that he and the Mrs. recently attended a family wedding in Santa Barbara. The weather, he reported, was excellent, the food superb, and the accommodations (at the Ritz Carleton) were fantastic!

Road Trip

Each year we scour the Giants schedule to try to identify a weekend road trip to a sexy location. We identified one possible city and set of dates -- San Diego, July 27-28. Those dates are available on all officers' calendars, and we were asked to hold them. ListMan will also check to see if the Oakland As will play in Seattle on a weekend as an alternative trip.

Where Goeth the Giants?



It was just a few days until the professional baseball pitchers and catchers were to report to Spring Training, and we were agitated about baseball.

“What would it take to make the Giants a winner this year?” ListMan asked. He waited for an answer. He was disappointed.

“Pay the money for Bryce Harper,” DUH PREZ suggested.

“Get rid of the high-priced players and re-build,” another offered.

“They have to add power” a third suggested. “Trade the young players for a known entity.”

But when we discussed what it would cost to sign a known entity major power performer, some of the enthusiasm died back.

“But do season ticket holders really care how much the “Giants ownership spends on the team?” DUH PREZ asked.

“I guess not,” everyone else replied. We moved on to the next topic.

What’s on Your Nightstand?

Generally speaking, the DHSOS reads less now, which is not what you might expect from a group of “middle-aged” men raised in the 1950s and 1960s. We used to read most every night before falling asleep, but that practice has sometimes been replaced with late-night TV or earlier sleeping arrangements.

We do have a variety of books on our nightstands; ranging from books about math and science, presidential biographies, a book about Chicago’s historic Michigan Avenue, and Dan Brown’s novel, *Origin*.

*“Nick: “Don’t you think maybe a drink would help you to sleep?”
Nora: “No, thanks.”
Nick: “Maybe it would if I took one.”
— Dashiell Hammett (The Thin Man)*

Signs of Aging

We are in the late stages of our mid-60s, and whether we like it or not, we are aging. ListMan alluded to that when he asked: “Have you seen any signs of aging?”

We said “yes” and shared some symptoms:

Lower back pain was mentioned, as was getting up from the floor, which we agreed was more difficult and includes more noise. Someone mentioned age spots. DUH PREZ reminded us how fragile life is and encouraged us to use our remaining time to best advantage. We agreed and raised our

glasses to Lee, our recently-departed buddy, who was surely happy we were together and talking about him.

Adjournment

The officers of the DHSOS have known each other, hung out together, and raised kids (and now grandkids) together for three decades. We’ve shared joy, sorrow, and everything in between through countless gatherings. It was a good evening and good to be together again.

This had been an excellent evening with an appropriate mix of a first-rate venue, strong drink, manly food, stimulating conversation, and noble friends.

We exhausted our agenda, paid our check, assembled on the sidewalk outside Bix, exchanged hearty fist bumps with our fellow officers, and walked off into the cool San Francisco night.

That’s it for now, man.

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