

**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



Minutes of Meeting

Zoom Call

Thursday, August 6, 2020

Zooming Along



What do you do when restaurants are closed to indoor dining, when the bars are shut down, and when the worst pandemic in a century is raging outside? You meet virtually. That's what the DHSOS did on August 6. We hadn't been together since March when the Coronavirus was just starting to pick up steam, and we had stuff to talk about. Da Czar organized a Zoom call for 6:30, and when the appointed hour came we were there with cheery faces and drinks in hand, ready to roll.

A Decade of Change

The meeting started with small talk, which usually occurs over martinis in a bar. This time it occurred in our homes. The Czar had recently noted that Tadich Grill, the oldest restaurant in San Francisco, had decided to close at least until the pandemic is over. So, Notes entertained the group with a summary of the last time the DHSOS met at Tadich Grill.

We've met twice at Tadich – once in 1999, and again in April of 2010. The minutes of that second meeting 10 years ago revealed how things have changed for our group. In April of 2010 Da Burd was pretty new to us, and it was enjoying its brand-new travelling case (with a wooden gavel from DUH PREZ's mother). Now, Da Burd is a seasoned vet, with more than a decade of presiding over DHSOS meetings. Other goings-on then:

- The PoV was getting ready for a trip to Africa to see cheetahs and go on safaris.
- Miss K had selected Carleton College as her school of choice.
- The PoV and his bride had recently attended dinner and a play at the Bohemian Club.
- And the DHSOS were all involved in home improvement: the Czar had recently completed remodels of two bathrooms, DUH PREZ had reworked the floors, lighting, and paint in his house, Notes was remodeling his pantry, ListMan had re-done one bathroom and was doing another, and the PoV was finishing a kitchen remodel that he said involved "broken granite, broken promises, and broken hearts."

Call to Order

DUH PREZ called the meeting to order at 6:49 PM by banging a marble coaster against his drink glass. We raised our glasses in a toast to being together again (even if remotely). The Czar's glass was filled with a three-olive martini, Notes was drinking a glass of Clausthaler, DUH PREZ showed what he called a "Diefendoodle," and ListMan hoisted a Point Blank, which consists of whisky, Bruto Americano (from St. George Distillery) and sweet vermouth. **Sports**



Watching sporting events is important to all of us, and we have traditionally kept track of baseball, basketball, football, and golf (some of us). This year it's been harder to get interested in sports – mostly because there hasn't been much of it. The NBA season was cancelled part way through (and is now sort of resuming), and the professional baseball season got started late and has numerous rules changes and no in-house fans. There may not even be a football season, and if there is one it will probably be reduced and without fans. And even golf has changed, with tournaments played without fans.

Our avid readers know the DHSOS doesn't like change. Realizing this, we were asked which sports we are watching and what we think about them.

DUH PREZ was upbeat. He watches baseball (the Giants) and is OK with most of the rule changes. He's just glad to have sports to watch.

Notes usually keeps track of the Giants, but he isn't on to them yet this year. He's trying to pace himself and will get excited (a) if they do well, and (b) if the season continues. He thinks the Oakland A's have a fabulous team, and this year he will follow them as closely as the Giants.

The Czar likes Mike Yastrzemski, the Giant's talented power-hitting outfielder, who he thinks is fun to watch. He's not excited about many of the other Giants players and isn't crazy about the new rules.

ListMan will watch the NBA playoffs and is keeping track of both the Giants and A's. He feels a little sorry for the A's since the top-notch team they have developed over the past few years will be largely overlooked during this very unusual year. He will also follow the PGA tournament being held at Harding Park in San Francisco, and while he has played Harding Park many times, he confessed that the way he plays it and the way the pros are playing it are two very different experiences.

Don't Believe Reviews

These days a lot of us look for and buy stuff on the internet, especially now that in-store shopping is limited. And we often rely on strangers to tell us how good a product is by reading the reviews. But how can we trust those reviews? That's the question ListMan posed to us.

"Don't believe reviews," the Czar suggested. Some are fake, posted there by people paid to give them. He doesn't trust reviews, and instead checks *Consumer Reports* for a more objective opinion.

There are numerous articles that back up the Czar's concerns, including this one:

If you're combing Yelp reviews to decide where to eat, you're likely to be misled or even duped, according to Georgios Zervas, coauthor of a recent study concluding that at least 16 percent of the reviews are fake. The

researchers found that the worst offenders are restaurants seeking to offset negative write-ups, that chain restaurants are the least likely to commit review fraud, and that restaurants sometimes take the low ground by posting fraudulent negative reviews for establishments competing for the same customer base.

Daily Routines

ListMan suggested we describe our lives during the Covid-19 pandemic and shelter-in-place, which has been a traumatic time for all of us. Our lives, during what should be our best years, have been disrupted. We should be out travelling and playing golf and having a blast. Instead, we are home.

So, what do we do with our time? Well, we're all coping as best as we can.

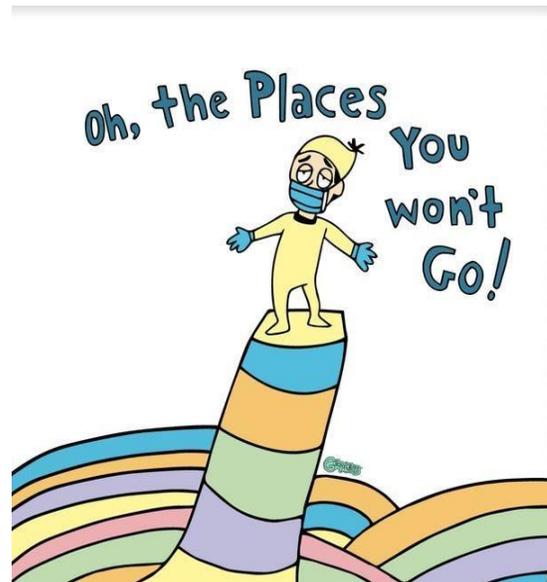
Some observations:

- The days are all basically alike now.
- It's hard to tell weekdays from weekends.
- There's a lot more "spousal" time.
- Retirement isn't what we thought it would be -- at least not right now.

Maybe some perspective here would help, including this from ListMan:

Each year gets more precious as we get older and to waste it on anything short of enjoyment and fulfillment is not productive. This is what we have been dealt so play the hand and get some pleasure out of it.

Travel Plans



Anyone thinking about where they will travel this year? That question initially fell flat. International travel is not something we can plan now and we don't really know when we will be able to again. But there are some "local" trips planned:

- DUH PREZ will host his family at a rental place in Healdsburg the third week of August.
- The Czar has an October weekend planned in Healdsburg.
- Notes hopes to go to Drakesbad August 12-16.
- ListMan will leave next Wednesday for Utah.

Hearty Good Night

Well this was awkward ... how to end the meeting? We were used to paying the check, securing Da Burd in his box, and assembling on the sidewalk outside the restaurant. But tonight, we were each in our cozy homes -- not by choice, but by necessity. It was a good call: we had enjoyed each other, noted and missed the ones who weren't there, and recorded where we were ... in the middle of a remarkable time in history.

We agreed to meet via Zoom monthly, raised our glasses, and wished each other a hearty good night.

It was another good night under unusual conditions with special friends!

That's it for now, man.

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