

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

Officers

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

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Minutes of Meeting

163 Jersey Street

Thursday, February 4, 2021

Drinks on the Veranda



It was Thursday night in early February, the time of year in San Francisco when signs of Spring are in the air and our conversations often turn to wishing for more rain. It had been a while since the DHSOS had met; it had, in fact, been a while since any of us had done much of anything, socially. We were in the middle of a devastating global pandemic and normal life seemed a long time ago. During Covid blur, which is where we have been for nearly a year, every day is pretty much like the day before.

The coronavirus was still raging as it had off-and-on for nearly a year. More than 100 million people have had the virus worldwide (27 million in the U.S.) and more than two million have died, including nearly 500,000 in

the U.S. Vaccinations were finally rolling out, and all DHSOS officers and their wives received first round shots within a few days of this meeting.

indoor seating was not available at restaurants, so we couldn't reserve our traditional round table in a restaurant where Dashiell Hammett had dined. Instead, we convened in person -- this time in the garden of the Archivist of Knowledge. It was a brisk night, clear but chilly, and we bundled up and turned on a heat lamp to take some of the chill from our bones. The Communication Czar brought all the fixin's to make mint juleps, and he stirred up a round of drinks.

Toast to Billie

At the outset of the meeting, the Czar handed each of us a mint julep and proposed a toast: "Let's drink to Billie," he suggested. Billie, our honoree, was a co-manager at Drakesbad Guest Ranch, the DHSOS's home-away-from-home. She was our host and friend for decades, welcoming us and greeting each of us with hugs. And each year Billie and her husband, Ed, joined us for cocktails, typically the night that Lee and Misty mixed and served mint juleps, which they called mint tulips. So now we call them mint tulips. We raised our mint tulips in a toast to Billie.



It is with deep sorrow we must announce that our beloved Sybille (Billie) Ann Fiebiger Baud departed this earth on Monday, January 18th at 3:30 pm in the peaceful setting of her home, surrounded by her close family, after a five-year battle with cancer

Billie was born on July 27, 1956 in Meiringen, Canton Bern, Switzerland to Gabriele Baud and Dr. Bernhard Baud. She grew up in Bern, the capital of Switzerland.

In 1983 she met Ed Fiebiger while on a tour of America, and they were married in 1986 at Lake Camanche. For 21 years, they worked together as Guest Ranch Managers at Drakesbad Guest Ranch in Lassen Volcanic National Park in Northern California, winning many awards for their exceptional customer service.

Billie is survived by her husband Ed; his daughters, Stephanie and Andrea, and their families; as well as her brothers Dominik and Martin Baud, living in Switzerland with their respective families.

Billie was a wonderful wife, friend, mother, and guest host; she left behind fond memories with those she touched during her life. Her beautiful smile, laughter, warmth, and kindness will be missed by all who knew her.

Call to Order

While sipping our drinks we were entertained by the story of DUH PREZ's recent efforts to get four antique clocks running and distributed to his children. There was a lot of detail involved in his story, about three grandfather clocks and a mantle clock, and I'm sure it was all interesting. That was followed by a rather lengthy discussion of why we were meeting out in the open and not in the backyard greenhouse that Notes has talked about for years (he had some flimsy excuse about not being able to get a permit to build the thing), and again I'm sure that was an interesting discussion.

Then, someone brought up a topic that was actually on our agenda. That provoked DUH PREZ to call the meeting to order, which he did by banging a butter knife against a glass. It was 6:48 PM.

Vaccinations

The virus was on our minds. We, along with the rest of the world, were basically hibernating, waiting for vaccinations. Two vaccines had been released for Covid-19 and California was ramping up its distribution of them. Most health care professionals, nursing home residents and essential workers had been vaccinated, and people over 65 were next. Several large distribution centers had been set up and appointments were being scheduled. Some of us even had appointments scheduled at Moscone Convention Center. This seemed to be something that California was doing well. We talked about the impact the virus was having on each of us and on the world in general, and we looked forward to getting vaccinations and eventually getting back to a more normal existence.

Darn Good Dinner

Sometime around 7:15 or so, Notes fired up his barbeque. The park chops were added, and shortly after that we noticed flames – the

drippings from previous grillings were on fire! Thanks to his quick reaction (and with help from the ListMan) the flames were extinguished and the pork chops saved. ListMan added and cooked the veggie skewers, and DUH PREZ served up bread. Then the Czar brought out the good wine (Unti Petit Frere), which DUH PREZ lapped up. It was a darn good dinner!

The meeting went on.



What's in Your Pillbox?

For a group of “mature” men, this group takes surprisingly few pills. The Czar and ListMan take statins for high cholesterol, and some of us take vitamins, fish oil, or similar over-the-counter meds. DUH PREZ claims to ingest no chemicals, other than alcohol. All-in-all, it's a pretty healthy group – could it be the clean living?

Meet More Often?

It was somewhere about this point that DUH PREZ proposed meeting more often. None of the rest of us are sure what provoked it. “I move that we meet six times a year,” he offered. “I know our usual tradition has been to meet every quarter, but I don't have anything to do and I would like to get together more often. Do I hear a second?” After he got one, he called for a vote. The proposition passed and the Czar was asked to solicit dates for meetings every two months from now on. And so he has.

Day Tripping

This is a travelling group and we've been stymied by the pandemic. ListMan surveyed us to see if we've been out-and-about:

- Czar has taken day trips to Pt. Reyes and Half Moon Bay/Pacifica.
- ListMan has also been to Pt. Reyes and to several hikes in the East Bay.
- DUH PREZ has driven to Healdsburg several times, and he has more trips there planned.
- Notes has rented a cabin at Pt. Reyes and taken trips there for the past three months.

There was skepticism about longer trips this year. DUH PREZ hopes to travel to Utah in May with cousins to tour National and State parks, and Notes hopes to travel to Maui in May. Other than that, most of us are “grounded” for now.

Aches and Pains

This wasn't actually the discussion topic, which was “What are your Doing with Your Time?” But that topic didn't go very far. DUH PREZ started down a dark road of describing how he changes diapers, and he showed us a cute video on his phone of his grandkids crawling all over him while he babysat them. The Czar told how he goes for long walks (often in Golden Gate Park) and that led to a discussion of his left knee bothering him and how his doctor suggested surgery or physical therapy (he chose therapy and has already seen improvements). DUH PREZ chimed in with a description of his cortisone shots for his hip, and Notes reported having problems with his foot. Our aches and pains weren't exactly what ListMan wanted to talk about, and he changed the subject.

What Are You Doing with Your Time?

I think ListMan wanted a broader discussion on this topic, maybe even soliciting some ideas for new hobbies or interests. And

Notes did report that he is starting a new writing project, while DUH PREZ began to re-tell his story about the clocks. The Czar reported that he cooks dinner every Monday night and is enjoying that. And ListMan talked about converting some of his music to digital format. Then the conversation devolved into a litany of TV shows and movies we had enjoyed; including *The Social Dilemma*, *Line of Duty* (British police series), *Frankie* (a British drama), and *One Step Beyond* (a 1960s sci-fi series).

Sports Corner: Warriors and Giants



We were in the middle of a professional basketball season, and our local team (the Golden State Warriors) were having a pretty-good rebuilding season. We agreed that: (a) they have changed the sport with their teamwork, ball-handling, and three-point shooting, and (b) their coach, Steve Kerr, is a smart and worldly guy who is fun to watch and listen to.

And we talked about the Giants and A's, our local baseball teams. Both teams have lost key players and both will likely have new, exciting players and challenging seasons.

If You Could Be An Expert ...

ListMan typically has a zinger topic – something to discuss that reveals a little bit of the “inner” person. Tonight, we talked about what area of expertise each of us would like to have (other than those already secured).

- Czar would like to be expert in working with people – understanding what they really mean despite what they say or do.
- Ken would like to be an expert in Geology, to really appreciate the history of the earth.
- DUH PREZ said he always wanted to play the piano or guitar.
- And Notes would like to be an expert on U.S. history.

Renaming SF Schools

In addition to an impending presidential impeachment, devastating pandemic, reeling economy, local businesses on the verge of bankruptcy, and schools closed throughout the city, now the San Francisco school board has announced that it intends to change the names of dozens of local schools. We were beyond annoyed. The Czar pointed us to an article about it in the Atlantic:

On January 26, the San Francisco school board announced that dozens of public schools must be renamed. The figures that do not meet the board's standards include Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, John Muir, Robert Louis Stevenson, Paul Revere, and Dianne Feinstein. A panel had determined that the 44 schools—more than one-third of the city's total—were named after figures guilty of being, variously, colonizers; slave owners; exploiters of workers; oppressors of women, children, or queer and transgender people; people connected to human rights or environmental abuses; and espousers of racist beliefs.

This holier-than-thou crusade is typical for San Francisco, which in recent years has traded in its freak flag to march under the banner of brain-dead political correctness. Aside from providing invaluable ammunition to Fox News, Rush Limbaugh, and the more

than 70 million Trump supporters whose most extreme caricatures of liberals have now been confirmed, renaming the schools is likely to cost the already deeply indebted district millions of dollars, and will not help a single disadvantaged student or actually advance the cause of racial justice. The nation's reckoning about its racist past might have positive aspects, but exercises in Maoist "constructive self-criticism" are not among them.

The Treehouse



We closed on a positive note when DUH PREZ gave an upbeat report on a property he is buying in the wine country near Healdsburg. The property, which he has rented in the past, is on the Russian River and in a redwood grove (and built around a huge redwood tree). He will close on the property in February and take possession shortly after. He invited the DHSOS to join him there often.

Flat Patty

About that time the wife of Notes emerged with a life-size photo of herself that had occupied her seat at Oracle Park during the past baseball season. That seemed to wrap things up and we began to gather our things and to make our way home.



Hearty Good Night

It had been a good meeting, and we hesitated to call it a night. But the decorative outdoor lights went out and it got darker; a few minutes later the heat lamp ran out of propane and it got colder. So we gave hearty elbow bumps all around, said our good-nights, and made our way to our cars.

The next DHSOS meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, April 29, 2021.

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

That's it for now, man.

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