Dashiell Hammett Society of Studs
San Francisco International Headquarters

Officers

President (the PREZ)	Bill Diefenbach
Communications Czar	Geoff Noakes
Procurer of Venues	Lee Tyree
AgendaMeister	Ken Monk
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Minutes of Meeting

Maxfield's Restaurant

Wednesday, October 4, 2006

Assembling at the Bar

Usually the first to arrive, Lee this time was the last. Geoff hovered over and secured a table in the bar, and we were mid-way through our first round of drinks when Lee came huffing and puffing into the Pied Piper Bar carrying an enormous bag and sporting a grin. He was relieved of his package, seated, and a martini secured. The Society was all here.

We were in the Pied Piper Bar, in San Francisco's historic Sheraton Palace Hotel -- a very long way from lingerie shows at the Double Play Bar and Grill.

About the Bird

Lee's huge bag held "the Bird," the real imitation Maltese Falcon, mascot of the DHSOS. Lee surrendered the Bird and all its trappings to Bill, who dug it out and placed it in the middle of our table.

Bill tried to engage the group in a discussion of whether this was the real falcon, or a cheap imitation. Was it really black, or was the black just an enamel cover over a jewel-encrusted interior?

> In 1539 the Knights Templar of Malta paid tribute to Charles V of Spain by sending him a Golden Falcon encrusted from beak to claw with rarest jewels. But pirates seized the galley carrying this priceless token. Centuries later, it was discovered in Paris, where it was painted with black enamel. Then, in 1923, a Greek antique dealer found it and gave it another coat of paint. But the dealer was murdered and the falcon stolen again. It was then traced to the home of a Russian general in Istanbul, but it was gone by the time the Fat Man visited the Russian. It was not seen again until 2005, in San Francisco, at the Noakes' Christmas party.

Lee said he and Misty enjoyed having the Bird in their home, displayed in the living room on lighted glass shelves amongst crystal, silver, and china. He made a motion to make the Tyree household the permanent residents of the falcon, which the PREZ promptly vetoed. Bill said Ruth enjoys having the Bird in their house, and he promised it will sit prominently on a pedestal in the middle of the fireplace mantle.

The Setting

We drank at the Pied Piper Bar and dined at Maxfield's Restaurant. The Pied Piper Bar was around during Dashiell's time, and he undoubtedly was there for a martini or two. The restaurant wasn't called Maxfield's in those days, but it was around, and it hasn't changed much over the years. It's still a stylish, manly. upscale eatery.

Historic Palace Hotel

When the Palace Hotel opened in 1875 it was touted as "the most spacious hotel in the world." Financed by William Ralston, who founded the Bank of California (he was found floating in the bay weeks before the hotel opened); the majestic seven-story structure occupied an entire block of prime SF real estate. Guests included Queen Victoria, Rudyard Kipling, Oscar Wilde, and Sarah Bernhardt (with her pet tiger).

The Palace survived the 1906 earthquake, but was gutted by the fires that followed. In 1909 it was rebuilt, retaining many features of the original hotel.

The most recent restoration was completed in 1991. The centerpiece is the Garden Court, where in 1875 guests entered the hotel in horse-drawn carriages. Now they can enjoy afternoon tea or a breakfast buffet underneath a domed ceiling of stained glass.

The Pied Piper Bar

The Pied Piper bar has been a landmark in the Palace Hotel since 1935. Paul McCrary remembered stopping there for a drink during World War II, and he recalled the Maxfield Parrish painting as its focal point.

The Pied Piper Bar has long catered to upscale customers. An early ad proclaimed:

> "For costliness of material and richness of design, the bar of the Palace Hotel is without equal in the world. It is presided over by experienced attendants and only the choicest of liquid refreshments are served."

Today, the Pied Piper Bar is a popular hangout for budding business execs and out-of-towners seeking a classy place to have a drink

It was a popular hangout for the DHSOS, too, and its elegance and historical context were not lost on us. We reveled in the atmosphere as we barked out drink orders to the waiter.

"A gin martini, straight up, with olives."

"A vodka martini with a twist."

"A glass of tonic water."

Pied Piper Bar is Home of the Maxfield Parrish mural, "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" and voted one of the "World's Seven Greatest Bars" - The Pied Piper provides a rich clubby atmosphere and the perfect place to unwind.

-- Frommers

Dinner at Maxfield's

While Maxfield's has only been around for a couple of decades, the Sheraton Palace Hotel has served meals in that space for nearly a hundred years. It was originally The Men's Grill Room, which was separate from the Women's Grill Room. It served "properly grilled steaks or chops," and had "an international reputation for excellence." Their slogan was "Imitated a hundred times, but never equaled."

A relaxed, inviting atmosphere and a menu featuring innovative California cuisine make Maxfield's a favorite for lunch and dinner. With beautiful hardwood accents, stained glass ceiling and mosaic floor from 1909, Maxfield's Restaurant offers innovative California cuisine. It is a favorite for locals and out of town guests for lunch and dinner. Open daily.

-- *Maxfield's Web site*

Maxfield Parrish – Our Kind of Guy

Maxfield Parrish (July 25, 1870 - March 30, 1966) was an American painter and illustrator. It is he who painted the Pied Piper portrait above the bar.

Mr. Parrish led quite a life! He made a lot of money illustrating magazine covers and children's' books, then lived on the proceeds while he painted "for its own sake" -- often doing nudes. That eventually wore him out, and he switched to painting landscapes. He painted until he was 91 years old.

For more about Maxfield Parrish, visit *http://www.dhsos.com/images/Maxfield_Parrish.doc*

Call to Order: 7:04 PM

If there was an official call to order, I missed it, but the meeting began sometime around 7:04 pm. Our waiter approached the table and asked whether we would like bottled or tap water. He was sent away to fill our glasses with water from the sink. Lee, who was beginning to feel his oats, remarked that "the DHSOS is very particular about the liquor we drink, but we don't give a shit about the water."

Ken asked whether that remark should be incorporated into the DHSOS mission statement. After some debate, the decision was to not pursue it, since the DHSOS doesn't have a mission statement. The DHSOS Website says "that's the President's job, and he hasn't gotten around to it. He doesn't get around to much of anything."

Betting on Baseball

Baseball playoffs were underway, with each Society member supporting their favorite teams. All agreed (the PREZ, who supports the Motown Muffins, later rescinded) we'd like to see an A's vs. Dodgers World Series.

The **1988 World Series** matched the Oakland Athletics against the Los Angeles Dodgers, with the Dodgers upsetting the heavily favored A's to win the Series in five games, which is exactly the opposite result of their 1974 meeting. The most memorable moment of the 1988 World Series took place in game 1 when injured Dodgers MVP Kirk Gibson hit a pinch-hit, game winning home run off Athletics closer and future Hall of Famer Dennis Eckersley.

Lee gave Geoff 10:1 odds that the Mets and Yankees would end up in the World Series, rather than the Dodgers and A's. There were a lot of rules and conditions, but since the Yankees, Dodgers and A's have been eliminated, there's little point going into it.

Future of the Giants

After a rather dismal season, the SF Giants fired their manager and vowed to "youth-in-ize" the team before next season. Peter Magowan, the Giants President and Managing General Partner, has accepted responsibility for the Giants performance over the last two seasons. He said the Giants mission this winter is to develop a team that "relies less on veteran stars and more on players who are younger, healthier, have productive track records, and have bright futures."

Gone so far is 74-year-old manager Felipe Alou. Who knows how many of the 11 Giants free agents will join him -- possibly including Barry Bonds?

And who will lead the Giants though this re-building process? There were several managerial possibilities mentioned; including Dave Righetti, Lou Pinella, Bob Brenly, Tommy Lasorda, and "anyone but Brenly."

Since then, Pinella took himself out of the running, and the Giants haven't talked to Brenley or Righetti. Is Lasorda going to come out of retirement?!?!

Giants vs. Dodgers: Is the Rivalry Alive?

A discussion of the traditional rivalry between the Giants and Dodgers led to a member opinion poll of whether the rivalry is still alive and well. Some (Dale, Ken) think it has cooled somewhat over the years, while others (Bill, Geoff, Lee) feel it as strongly as ever. It remains strong in the Noakes household, apparently, as Geoff reported that his loving daughter, Katharine, recently said she would "never cheer for the Dodgers … under any circumstances."

Bee Stings and G-Strings

Dale reported that Patty was recently stung by a bee while bike riding north of Vacaville. By the next day, her cheek had swollen to twice its size, and her right eye was nearly closed. For some unknown reason she photographed herself in this condition.

Geoff moved, and the DHSOS agreed, to exchange a bee sting photo for that of the "Mystery Woman" on the DHSOS Website. (Note: This transaction has been completed, visit http://www.dhsos.com/goodstuff.html).

Waterwheel Update

The write-up of this summer's waterwheel activities at Drakesbad is stuck in production. Drafting and approval are complete, and photo editing will be next. When finished, it will be distributed to members and posted on the DHSOS Website at http://www.dhsos.com/images/Waterwheels_2006.doc.

Here's an excerpt:

> Ten days after these events Lee called Drakesbad, allegedly looking for Misty's slippers. He had Billie run all over the lodge looking for the slippers, which she didn't find, but what he really wanted to know was whether the waterwheels were still running.
>
> The only one still in operation 10 days after installation was the Freedom Wheel 5.0. There it was, Billie said, steadily and smoothly churning away in the creek.

A "Dashiell" Contact

Communication Czar Noakes reported a contact from the outside regarding the DHSOS. He was recently contacted by Dr. Steven M. Brown, Professor of Educational Law at Northeastern Illinois

University, regarding his production of a live broadcast of an adaptation of the 1936 The Thin Man radio broadcast, as part of WGTD Radio Theatre (http://www.wgtd.org/radioplays.asp), who was looking for a recording of Dashiell Hammett's voice. While he and other DHSOS members were unable to help, this was evidence that the outside world is interested in Dashiell Hammett and the DHSOS. It caused quite a stir among Society members.

A Southwest Contact

Ken reported playing golf with Ed Downing, the former chief pilot at Southwest airlines Oakland office. Ed knows Allan McCrary.

Ed is quite a "pistol," and a "good guy, for sure," according to Allan. He was a hot shot Navy fighter pilot, flying the F-4 and F-14, and he flew for Southwest for a long time. He was John MacPherson's (Allan's good friend) predecessor, managing the 750 pilots assigned to the Oakland base. John thinks a lot of Ed and frequently has dinner with him in Alameda.

Lee's Car

Lee gave a detailed report on his trip to Texas to pick up his Porsche.

- The meeting and negotiations with Cousin Tom went well. The car was clean, (as was Cousin Tom's house), and Lee and Misty enjoyed seeing their old neighborhood and having dinner at a "real" Mexican restaurant.
- Tim, Diane, and the boys are fine. They are adjusting to Texas, and have learned to call their new home town Drippin' (only out-of-towners call it Dripping Springs). They like their new home, and Tim has bought a rider mower to cut the grass.
- Lee and Misty had planned to listen to books on tape and music on their drive from Texas to California. However, between the air noise and tire noise, they could barely hear each other, let alone the radio.
- Misty has fallen in love with Lee's Porsche. She purchased glasses to match the car, is taking driving lessons from Lee, and can rarely be pried out of the driver's seat. Lee has developed a strategy for dealing with it – let her drive it until she gets it out of her system. Then it will be his again, or so he thinks.

Brush With the Law

During the drive to California, Lee got a speeding ticket near Dalhart, in the Texas panhandle (http://www.dalhart.org/). He was the third of four cars that were driving together, at the same speed. They had been together for a couple of hours when a highway patrolman went around the end car and pulled Lee over, citing him for driving 83 mph, in a 70 mph zone.

The way the patrolman singled Lee out ticked Lee off, and he proceeded express his umbrage by letting the patrolman know how unfair he thought it was. He called him every vile name he knew (Lee was a sailor, and that list is long and colorful), and initially refused to sign the ticket. He now says he was lucky not to have been slapped in handcuffs, taken downtown, and booked. Misty's comment was, "Tyree, you didn't handle that too well."

"You won't even talk to me! That pisses me off! You're a !^*!*!&*!(! and a ^!^!$!&!*!(, and your sister is a !##@$@."*

-- Lee, arguing his speeding ticket with a Texas highway patrolman.

After returning to his home (and his senses), Lee called the judge (who's name is Wapner) in Texas, to see what he needed to do. The clerk told Lee that his ticket was for $140, but if he paid twice that amount and stayed out of further trouble for six months, Texas would not report it to California.

A poll among DHSOS members revealed that all would pay the extra fee to protect their California driving record. That's what Lee did.

Bill's Tires

Bill recently bought tires for his new Porsche, at a cost of $600 per tire. "And they only last 11, 000 miles," he told the group. "They're very wide and very soft and allow you to feel the road."

"I don't care if they feel you up," Geoff said, "I buy tires for Nancy's Volvo at Costco, and I'm upset if they cost more than $400 – for four tires."

Lee nodded and smiled as Bill told his story. Then Bill told Lee he will have to replace the tires on his Porsche soon, too, especially if Misty keeps driving it all the time, "and your tires will cost almost as much as mine." Lee was quiet for awhile, apparently re-thinking his decision to buy Misty a Porsche.

Timeshare on a Jag

Bill has offered DHSOS members participation in a "perfect" timeshare for a 1979 red Jaguar XJ12 he saw in the East Bay. It has 12 cylinders, 58,000 miles, new tires, a perfect interior, and it runs great.

An investment of $5,000 - $6,000 would give the investor occasional use of the car, if he is willing to pick it up at Bill's house. Contact Bill if interested. Note: no contact has been made, and none will be forthcoming.

Geoff's Election Picks

The November elections are fast approaching, and Geoff, the DHSOS Communication Czar, reviewed the California and San Francisco initiatives and candidates and offered his election picks.

Geoff's Picks

Prop/Candidate	Geoff's Pick
1A Transportation	Yes
1B Highway safety	Yes
1C housing/shelter	No
1D K-Univ facilities	No
1E Disaster/flood	No
83 Sex offenders	Yes
84 Water quality	No
85 Minor abort.	No
86 Cigarette tax	No
87 Alt. energy	No
88 Real prop. tax	No
89 Campaign fin.	No
90 Gov't prop. acq	Yes
Governor	Schwarzenegger
Treasurer	Parrish
Attorney General	Poochigian
Insurance	Poizner
A: $450m school bonds	No
B: Telecommute	Yes
C: Setting salaries	No
D: Disclose private info	No
E: Parking tax	No
F: Require sick pay	No
G: Retail stores	No
H: Relocation assistance	No
I: Mayor at Board mtgs.	No
J: Impeach Bush/Cheney	No
K: Sr. Housing	No

Geoff didn't include a pick for District 8 SF supervisor, who will represent the

area where Dale and Geoff live. The candidates there include:

Bevan Dufty, the incumbent, who is gay and currently enmeshed in a controversy about "experimental parenting" because he lives with and had a baby with his lesbian best friend.

Alix Rosenthal, (a Theta) who is running on a platform of "more parties." She wants District 8 to be less sedate, less wealthy, and less homogenous.

Starchild is a professional escort, exotic dancer, and porn star. Currently facing prostitution charges in Fremont, he is urging SF to abandon its ban on handguns, saying, "Armed gays don't get bashed."

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Nobel Prizes

Nobel Prize announcements were recently made, and the winners included three from the SF Bay Area. Stanford University Professors Andres Fire and Roger Kornberg, and UC Berkeley's George Smoot became the latest in a long line of winners affiliated with universities in the region. Ken noted that they had discovered the exciting connection between quantum physics (small world) and cosmology (large world). To date, the Bay Area has accounted for 54 Nobel prizes, with 51 going to researchers affiliated with Stanford (31) and Cal (20). No explanation was offered why Nobel prizes are not awarded to people from Michigan, Missouri, or Nebraska.

Delivering Beck's Tux

Bill reported successfully mailing Beck's tuxedo to Christina. It turns out that 'Stina plans to attend a black tie affair in Washington, D.C., and she invited her younger brother (whom she refers to as "Smalls") to join her. That speaks volumes about the kind of person Christina is, and the relationship she and Beck have. Much of the credit goes to the DHSOS.

How to Stay Hip

Ken told about a colleague his age at work who has managed to stay "hip," while others, like Ken, are basically ignored by the younger set. "He says Man a lot," Ken noted. "He also says "no doubt" and "no problem."

So Ken has added "Man" to his repertoire. He says it's worth a try, Man.

Proud Parent Can't Keep Up

Katharine Noakes, offspring of Geoff, Nancy, and the DHSOS, made the varsity volleyball team at Convent -- the only freshman to do so. She is practicing with the team, plays in most games, and is doing very well. The speed and skill of the sport has increased considerably the past year, and the games are very fun to watch.

In a related aside, Geoff mentioned that he can no longer keep up with Katharine when they go running.

Permanently Engraved

Dale reported a successful completion to his project of replacing 35 sidewalk squares in front of his home. By acting as his own contractor he saved a good deal of money, and gained experience in debris boxes, concrete removal, and cement mixers. This could come in handy some day. Society members were pleased to hear the initials "DHSOS" are carved into the new walks.

The YouTube Phenomenon

Less than 24 hours after the DHSOS discussed YouTube, the online video file-sharing site was purchased by

Google for $1.65 billion. *The San Francisco Chronicle* called YouTube's video boom "a social phenomenon," and said the $1.65 billion offer was "not unreasonable." YouTube has 67 employees. If the $1.65 billion was divided equally among them (not that it will be) it would come to $23 million per.

Note: Check out the Maltese Falcon and Thin Man videos on YouTube: (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDqK1h3Nrts, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjPMOQKiJ3w).

Of interest to the DHSOS, YouTube has some Dashiell-related videos, including the trailer for *The Maltese Falcon*, and a great scene from *The Thin Man* in which Nick teaches bartenders how to make a perfect martini.

eFax

Geoff described an electronic fax service that allows those without fax machines to receive faxes through the Internet. This free service allows you to pick up paper-free faxes from anywhere, store then on your computer, and forward them to others.

- Visit www.efax.com and register for the free service – it will require you to provide your email address.
- eFax will give you a fax phone number; this is the number you give people when they want to fax you something.
- When someone sends faxes to you, the eFax number is actually a server (not a fax machine). That server receives the incoming fax, and converts it to an email, and then emails you the contents of the fax.
- eFax is only for receiving faxes, not sending them. You can receive up to 20 pages/month for free. From time to time I go over this limit, and I get emails from eFax saying to sign up for the paid service, but I just ignore them.
- You will receive 1 or 2 emails a month from eFax with promotions o buy other stuff. I ignore them.

Note: Thanks were expressed to the Procurer of Venues for securing a round table, and for getting this group into such a classy place. The PREZ noted it was "very historically contextual with Dashiell."

Flipping the Bird

The Bird was quietly transferred from Lee to Bill at the conclusion of the meeting. There was some discussion of housing it permanently at Bill's house, which did not go over well with the PREZ. Stay tuned for further developments.

Adjournment

That was about it. No one was in a hurry to leave, but it was getting late and there wasn't much else to talk about. At 9:53 pm, the meeting wound to an end. That's it for now, Man.

The next meeting of the DHSOS will take place at the Cafe Majestic on Wednesday, January 24, 2007.