

**Dashiell Hammett Society of Studs
San Francisco International Headquarters**

Officers

President (the PREZ)
Communications Czar
Procurer of Venues
AgendaMeister
Archivist of Knowledge

Bill D_____
Geoff Noakes
Lee Tyree
Ken Monk
Dale Fehringer

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Minutes of Meeting

Firenze By Night Ristorante

Thursday April 3, 2008

Assembling at the Bar



A meeting of the Dashiell Hammett Society of Studs (DHSOS) was held April 3, 2008 at Firenze by Night Ristorante in San Francisco's historic North Beach district.

The Studs met in the bar, greeting each other with firm handshakes and manly remarks, then ordered drinks and got down to business.

Chris the bartender is a pro – mixing a good drink, contributing to but not intruding on the conversation, and transferring your bar tab to the table. He's popular with the fairer sex, too ...

Chris the bartender (totally cute, by the way), hooked me up with this amazing drink called an Absolut Mess.

"First thing you learn in bartending is how to get the girls drunk," he said.

He was right, after my first drink I was ALMOST in an absolut mess! This guy's a comic, an ultra sweetheart and always full of energy.

At dinner ... a bottle of Chianti, compliments of Chris ... Hmm, I think he really is trying to get me drunk!

-- Nance W. (San Francisco) on her dining experience at Firenze, on CitySearch

The conversation at the bar was very masculine – about work, travel, and baseball. We discussed the best moments in Giants baseball, which included:

- ✍ Bobby Thompson's walk-off home run ("The Shot Heard 'Round the World") to win the 1951 National League pennant,
- ✍ Will Clark's epic at-bat against Mitch Williams in Game 5 of the 1989 National League Championship Series.
- ✍ Will Clark's home run against Nolan Ryan in his very first major league at bat.
- ✍ Bill's favorite is the scoop up at home plate by J.T. Snow of Dusty's son, Darren, in game five of the 2002 World Series.
- ✍ And Ken remembers running home from school in 1962 to see Willie Mays make a game-ending catch to win a three-game playoff against the Dodgers and send the Giants to the World Series.

We also discussed the worst times in Giants baseball, which had to be the 1985 season. That year, the Giants

won 62 games, lost 100 (a .383 winning percentage). A total of 818,697 fans witnessed the 1985 season at windy Candlestick Park.

We all agreed this is going to be another tough year for fans of the Giants and As, as both teams are trying to rebuild – a season that will require steadfast and unwavering loyalty. (It should be noted the Communication Czar, a life-long Dodgers fan, did not gloat).

About Firenze (from their Website)



Ristorante Firenze features Continental Italian Cuisine with carefully selected world renowned dishes from classic and novella recipes for the enjoyment of the most discriminating palate. We proudly assure you that all food contained in our menu is prepared with the freshest domestic or imported ingredients available.

Ristorante Firenze is famous for its Award-Winning Gnocchi, which took first place for two consecutive years in the "Best of North Beach" contest. In 1993, Firenze by Night received its biggest award, and the one of which we are most proud. Chef and Owner Sergio Giusti was selected as one of the top nation-wide Italian Chefs by "The Best of the Best" and Firenze By Night became a Five Star Restaurant. We sincerely hope that we live up to your expectations as a fine restaurant and we look forward to bringing you a memorable evening.

"So Italian, you need a passport."

-Herb Caen

One in Every Crowd

People see things differently. as evident in the following reviews of Firenze Ristorante on CitySearch:

Posted by JZfZ0428:

This is real Italian food made by real Italians. I would and have recommended this place to everyone I know. The staff is excellent and makes you feel like you have stepped out of CA and into Italy.

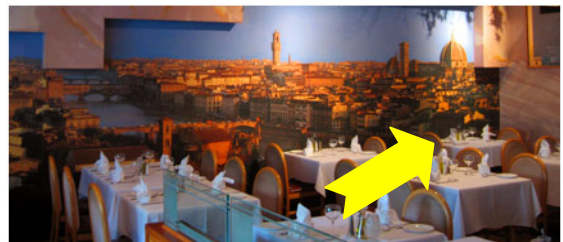
Posted by aprenergast:

We love Firenze by Night! We stumbled onto it during a trip to SF a couple years ago & make a point to eat there every time we're back in SF. The food is absolutely amazing -- simply prepared, quality ingredients, & authentic preparations. The service is always fantastic.

Posted by: Inapor:

I think that all the reviews of this restaurant so far have been planted by the owners. My friend and I had dinner here tonight and the food was absolutely terrible. The gnocchi was in a terrible cream sauce, the veal was served pesto style (instead of with the basil leaves we were imagining) and everything about the meal was completely generic if not utterly substandard. I actually lost my appetite while eating this meal. And I'm pretty sure the waiter had a fake Italian accent to please all of the tourists in this restaurant.

Call to Order



The PREZ called the meeting to order at 6:59 pm, with all Society officers present. Because of the diligent

efforts of the Procurer of Venues, we were proudly seated at the only round table in the joint.

Unfortunately for the PREZ, our table was immediately adjacent to a statue of David, and the PREZ had a rather distracting view of David's privates throughout the evening:



The PREZ did remember to bring Da Burd*, which was properly wrapped in its authentic Chinese newspapers and twine (but transported in an anonymous, brown Cal-Mart grocery bag). It was unwrapped and proudly positioned in the center of the table, where it presided over the meeting.

Car Purchases

The AgendaMeister led off with this question: How can you persuade your spouse to buy the car you want (and which you know will be better for her) – and not the one she wants? This dilemma generated a variety of responses:

- ☞ The PREZ: Stall long enough and she will eventually give in.
- ☞ Communications Czar: Buy the car you want, park it near your house, take her for a walk, hand her the key, and tell her it's her car.

* Da Burd is the DHSOS' mascot. It is an authentic replica of the Maltese Falcon, which resides on the fireplace mantle in the home of the PREZ.

- ☞ Procurer of Venues: Take the car you want to buy for a test drive with her behind the wheel, and (in front of the salesman) tell her she should buy it.
- ☞ Archivist of Knowledge: Have her father buy the car you want and tell her to go pick it up.

None of these suggestions were even remotely helpful, so Ken will try to figure out a solution on his own.

Haunted House Update

At the previous DHSOS meeting the communications Czar reported on the state of the house next door:

The elderly woman next door passed away, and her children sold her house to a developer, who obtained a permit to make "minor" repairs to the house. The developer took the roof off and prepared to add another floor to the house, at which the Communication Czar and Mrs. Czar raised an objection. So work temporarily stopped, storms came, and rain poured into the house, and eventually into the Noakes' house.

When the rains let up the construction workers came back, and again started to add another floor. So the Communication Czar again did his communication thing, and this time a large sign was installed on the work site: "Stop Work: Earthquake Retrofit Needed."

Since then, the Communications Czar wrote an article about the situation, which appeared in the Cole Valley Improvement Association quarterly newsletter. The article got the attention of the new owner, who contacted the Czar and came by to talk things over.

"I grew up in this neighborhood," he whined, "and I don't want to be known this way."

"That's precisely the way I want you to be known," the Czar responded, "Until you straighten up this mess."

The owner has now submitted plans for re-modeling the haunted house, and hopes to have them approved "over the counter." The DHSOS dismissed those hopes as wishful thinking.

Meanwhile, the Communications Czar has been advised that if the situation isn't corrected soon, he should try to get the house declared a "nuisance."

Remodels, Disclosures, and Permits

Some members of the DHSOS are considering home improvement projects, including the Communications Czar and Procurer of Venues. A discussion ensued about the value of getting permits.

The PREZ and Procurer of Venues are proud of doing work in the past without permits, but both were not as sure they will do so in the future, as laws have changed and prospective home buyers are not notified if work has been done without a permit.

The PREZ in Chicago

During a recent business trip to Chicago, the PREZ visited Shaw's Crab House, a favorite hangout of the DHSOS, heard a new bar pick-up line ("Hey, are those space pants? ... 'cause your ass is out of this world"), and experienced every imaginable type of weather; including rain, snow, and hail.

Knee Update

The Archivist gave a positive update on the progress of his recently replaced knee. Eight weeks after surgery, he's working, walking without pain, and riding a bicycle. This news was met with unanimous and enthusiastic hurrahs. The Archivist said he plans to walk into Drakesbad this year, though it might be just from the ranger station.

Baseball Movies

In honor of the start of the baseball season, the DHSOS recalled some of the best baseball movies of all times. Among those mentioned:

- **Bull Durham** (Kevin Costner and Susan Sarandon)

Best sex scene: On the kitchen table

Best line: "Well, I believe in the soul, the cock, the pussy, the small of a woman's back, the hanging curve ball, high fiber, good scotch, that the novels of Susan Sontag are self-indulgent, overrated crap. I believe Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone. I believe there ought to be a constitutional amendment outlawing Astroturf and the designated hitter. I believe in the sweet spot, soft-core pornography, opening your presents Christmas morning rather than Christmas Eve and I believe in long, slow, deep, soft, wet kisses that last three days."

- **Mr. Baseball** (Tom Selleck)

Best line: "I don't believe this! What's next? Is somebody going to tell me how to take a crap?"

- **Bad News Bears** (Walter Matthau and Tatum O'Neal)

Least politically-correct line: "What do you expect? All we got on this team are a bunch of Jews, spicks, niggers, pansies, and a booger eating moron."

- **A League of Their Own** (Tom Hanks, Geena Davis, Madonna)

Best insult of an umpire: "Did anyone ever tell you, you look like a penis with a little hat on?"

- **Bang the Drum Slowly** (Robert De Niro)

Most surprising role: De Niro as a dumb country boy from Georgia who is dying of Hodgkin's Disease.

- **Pride of the Yankees** (Gary Cooper)

Best farewell speech: "Today, I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth."

Worst baseball movie of all times: **Damn Yankees**, starring Tab Hunter.

Katharine's License

We found out that the favorite daughter of the Communications Czar has changed her mind, gotten her driver's license, and reneged on the deal to split the insurance savings with her dad.

That led to a discussion of the DHSOS' first cars, which ranged from an MG with a broken transmission (the PREZ) to a 1934 Ford that he wishes he still had (Procurer of Venues).

And that reminded the Archivist of Knowledge that Allan McCrary has invited the DHSOS back to Vacaville to see his newest old cars. The P of V wanted to know if Allan was going to again duck having dinner with us as he did last time.

Off to Europe

The PREZ and Mrs. PREZ plan to leave for their European adventure April 11. While there, they intend to tour the Porsche factory, visit three small villages that have the same last name as the PREZ, see a relative in Berlin, explore Paris, and stay with a friend in southern France.

"How did you get the Mrs. to agree to a trip that includes touring the Porsche factory and three towns with your last name," the AgendaMeister asked?

"We are staying in a very expensive hotel in Paris," replied the PREZ, "with a fabulous view of Notre Dame." Lee gave him the recommendation on how to spend money.

Beck's Car

The presidential son recently called the PREZ with a car problem: it seems that his car (an ancient BMW) was making a loud growling noise when the ignition was turned on, losing a quart of oil every few days, and the windshield wipers weren't working.

"How many problems do you think there were," the PREZ asked?

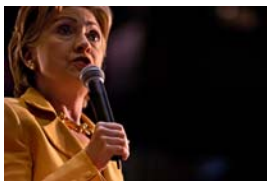
The AgendaMeister correctly answered that there were two problems.

1. The oil leak turned out to be a loose clamp on an oil hose, which was solved by replacing an inexpensive clamp.
2. The growling noise and broken windshield wipers were a single problem – a burned out windshield motor, which was solved by installing an expensive new wiper motor.

Beck Covered Hillary

The presidential son photographed Hillary Clinton when she came to speak in South Bend. Here are a couple of his photos, and there are others at:

<http://www.sportsshooter.com/beckdiefenbach/hillary/index.html>



Politics, Economics, and Other Uncomfortable Topics

The Communications Czar is generally opposed to government interference in citizen lives, and he brought up another example – the Federal Reserve's recent efforts to bail out Bear Sterns. He stated his objections to use of public funds for that purpose, and sent the following "telling" remark, made by the Fed's Chairman Ben Bernanke:

Asked about the quality of the collateral, Mr. Bernanke said at today's hearing: "I can say that the assets are entirely investment grade, they are entirely current and performing." The investment advisor hired by the Fed, BlackRock Inc., is "reasonably confident that we would be able to recover the full amount" if the assets are disposed of on a "measured" basis rather than immediately, Mr. Bernanke said.

The Communication Czar's translation: taxpayer money has been spent to save Bear Stearns. The Fed is confident they'll get that money back. I am not.

On a similar subject, the Procurer of Venues, fueled by a few martinis, offered a lengthy and complex explanation of why the federal budget can not accommodate national health care, which for the most part was totally incoherent to the DHSOS. So he later sent this explanation:

The Financial Report of the United States Government is required by law to be issued each year by the Office of Management and Budget using GAAP accounting principles (accrual accounting). It is audited by the General Accounting Office before it is issued. When it is issued there is no press release, no press conference, no media reports and no fanfare. Why? Because it would scare the hell out of any reasonably intelligent citizen. The President talks from a much different set of budget numbers, figures that are based on cash flow analysis. All Presidents have done so, and our elected representatives let them get by with it, but they won't let a business or corporations get by with it.

A Blue Dog Democrat, Congressman Jim Cooper, wrote a very dull book about this. I read every dull word. Consider the 2005 year. The President reported an annual deficit of \$318.5 billion, not the \$760 billion in the accrual report. America's debt and future obligations was not the \$8.3 trillion as reported, but after adding in the unfunded future obligation of Social Security and Medicare, it stood at \$49 trillion (\$8 trillion of this was the result of the new prescription drug plan). America borrowed \$550 billion during the 2005 year and still incurred a deficit. America paid out \$327 billion in interest to service the debt on money previously borrowed. For perspective, that is almost twice what we spent on the war that year. The cost of the war over the last five years is just now reaching \$1 trillion. The GAO auditor's letter for 2005 said he was unable to render an opinion about the report because of "material weaknesses" in the budget process, but the letter contained phrases

such as “broken business model” and “unsustainable trends”. Of course, all of these numbers have gotten bigger since 2005, not even considering the recent problems of Freddie Mae, Freddie Mac and Bear Stearns. The Republicans and the Democrats are both responsible for this fucking mess. BTW, a working citizen’s share of the USA’s future obligation stood at about \$400,000 after 2005. And Beck needs a newer car.

So now the big question is, how much is a national health care program going to cost us? My guess is it will end up being 3 to 4 times what the prescription drug plan costs.

Enjoy your day.....Tyroonie

The other DHSOS members merely rolled their eyes at the Czar and Procurer.

Lee at the Post Office

The Procurer of Venues confessed that one of his favorite weekend pastimes is to bait his fellow citizens at the post office. It seems that Misty often has packages to mail on Saturdays and Lee obliges by taking them to the West Portal branch, which typically has long lines and few open windows.

While standing in line, Lee sometimes makes remarks to those in line with him such as, “Well, look at that, there are 14 people in line and just two open windows ... I wonder if national health care would work like that?” After a few such remarks, he typically gets others to chime in, and by the time he reaches the window he has a regular chorus going. One wonders what the other patrons and postal employees say about him after he leaves.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the DHSOS will take place Thursday, July 17.

Adjournment

It had been a good night with an appropriate mix of fine food, strong drink, and noble friends. We paid the check (we all agreed that Firenze by Night Ristorante was a good deal), issued hearty handshakes all around, and walked out into the clear night air.

That’s it for now, Man.

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