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

Officers

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

Minutes of Meeting

House of Prime Rib

Thursday February 18, 2010

Assembling at the Bar

A meeting of the Dashiell Hammett Society of Studs (DHSOS) was held February 18, 2010 at House of Prime Rib in San Francisco.

It was a tribute to manly conversation, excellent red meat, and good friends.

The Studs met in the bar and greeted each other with firm handshakes and masculine remarks. We took seats, ordered drinks, and got down to business.

ListMan reminded us this is the beginning of the 12th year for the DHSOS, a fact we found impressive and a little hard to believe. The inaugural DHSOS meeting, conducted at John's Grill in the summer of 1998, seems like a lifetime ago. That was a more innocent time: before Y2K and 9/11 and before most of us qualified for AARP.

What happened the past 12 years? Here's one opinion from a random blog:

We were prosperous, then we elected the village idiot, then we were attacked by terrorists, then we attacked a country that had nothing to do with the attack on us. We elected the first black president, then we bailed out the big banks, then we had the worst recession since the Great Depression.

Tall Stools, Round Tables, Sports on TV

The House of Prime Rib (HOPR) has a great bar with substantial drinks, tall stools, round tables, and sports on TV. Sitting here, you don't feel like you are missing out on a thing.

We were fortunate to be served by Sophie, who is adequately attractive and experienced enough to know that men our age like attention.

House of Prime Rib

The DHSOS had previously met at the House of Prime Rib on July 12, 2001. Since then, this "oldie-timely" place has become chic, and at least on this night there was more blonde than gray hair.

The restaurant itself is big; sprawling over five rooms; each with banquettes, tables,

and fireplaces. We walked through three rooms on our way to our table -- each stuffed with well-dressed and attractive people enjoying drinks and prime rib.

We were escorted to our table by an employee who has worked at HOPR for 52 years. He looked dapper in a dark suit and white shirt, with a stars-and-stripes tie and lapel pin. No jeans for that gent… but I'm getting ahead of myself.

Our hard-working PoV had secured the only round table in the joint, in the middle of the largest dining room. As usual, we were the center of attention.

This is a man's man's type of restaurant. They've been doing this since 1949 and they have survived recessions, red meat alarms, and shifting restaurant trends. Their menu isn't wasted on pages of poultry, seafood, and veggies -- there are basically two choices: meat or fish.

There are five meat choices:

- House of Prime Rib Cut: a hearty portion of juicy, tender beef.
- The English Cut: thinner slices for better flavor.
- King Henry VIII Cut: an extra-generous, thick cut of prime beef, for king size appetites.
- The City Cut: a smaller cut for lighter appetites.
- Children's Prime Rib Dinner (complete with milk and ice cream).

Entrees come with mashed or baked potatoes, Yorkshire pudding, horseradish, and salad. The prime rib is served tableside from large aluminum carts which are wheeled through the dining room.

"Great memories are made here! This is the type of place that you will never forget. It has all of the charm and ambiance that an old school prime rib joint should."

Fred M (too fat to surf), on Yelp

Man-Talk at the Bar

The conversation at the bar was about colonoscopies, computer viruses, ibuprofen, martinis, and baseball. (Do you think our wives talk about this stuff when they get together?)

The PoV reported that his father-in-law (an honorary DHSOS member) has upgraded to high-speed DSL. We welcomed John to the Internet Age and toasted his continued good health.

ListMan reported that his personal computer was attacked by a virus, and he shared his experience trying to resolve the situation. He took his infected computer to a Best Buy store and let the Geek Squad clean and restore the hard drive. Apparently there is little competition in that business, because the Geek Squad told ListMan they would have to keep his computer for up to 10 days. The Studs shuddered at the thought of being without a computer for 10 days!

We discussed the use of ibuprofen – a miracle drug for people over 50. All DHSOS officers admitted using it to enhance our active lives, with the PoV the heaviest consumer – before and after exercise.

A discussion of future DHSOS meetings indicated continued interest in meeting on Thursday evenings, and also some interest in an occasional Saturday or Sunday. Notes was asked to contact tour guide Don Herron to schedule a weekend tour of San Francisco Dashiell Hammett haunts.

ListMan is fresh off of doing the "colonoscopy mambo" (second time around) and he shared his experience. He reported the preparations were unpleasant, but in the end the procedure itself was pain free. At this point, all DHSOS officers butt Notes have had their second colonoscopy.

The talk of colonoscopies provoked Duh Prez to re-tell the tale of his first procedure, and how he deceived the receptionist and drove himself home. We toasted his bravado, but ListMan was not impressed.

Quoting Herb Caen

ListMan was impressed, however, by the martini Sophie placed in front of him. He raised his glass, proposed a toast to San Francisco columnist Herb Caen, and recited a favorite Herb Caen quote:

> *"Martinis are like women's breasts; one is not enough, and three is too many."*
>
> *-Herb Caen*

Call to Order

At that point Duh Prez called the meeting to order, raised his glass, and proposed another toast. He has thoroughly enjoyed the last 12 years of "great company" and is looking forward to the next 12. That brought a hearty chorus of "hear, hear", and the DHSOS drank to Duh Prez and to ourselves for 12 fabulous years together.

"The" Wedding

DHSOS officers were briefed on plans for the major social event of 2010 – the wedding of the perfect daughter and Mr. Andrew Rutter.

Plans for "the" wedding are well underway. The event will be held October 22, at Fort Mason, in the City by the Bay. According to Duh Prez, the event will be "classical San Francisco".

The wedding itself will be held outdoors on the lawn, overlooking San Francisco Bay.

The dinner will be in the dining room which seats 170, or a small portion of Duh Prez's closest friends. He promised an open bar, good food, and choice seating for the DHSOS.

Duh Prez recognizes that a full bar is a necessity for the DHSOS and, as such, that has been arranged in the central bar room with a view of the bay with Irish Coffee as the post dinner specialty. The Procurer of Venues will be excited to learn that dancing will occur in the ballroom following dinner.

Hope Springs Eternal

The DHSOS loves to talk about baseball, especially in the spring, and we enjoy making baseball predictions. This is a group of Giants' supporters (well, except the Czar, who is a Dodgers' fan, and ListMan, who vacillates between the Giants and the A's).

Last year, the Giants won 88 games (out of 162). It was their first winning season in several years, and since then they have retained their key players and added a couple of hitters. So, how many games will they win this season?

Our predictions:

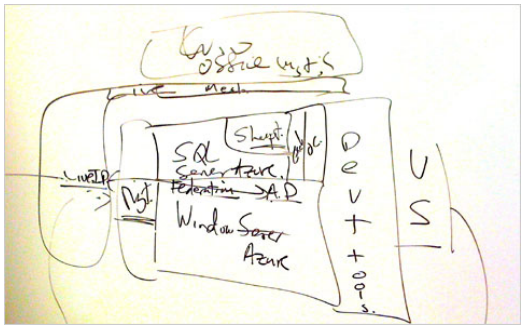
Duh Prez	96
PoV	92
Notes	90
Czar	89
ListMan[1]	85

The Czar bet DHSOS friend, Sam McClure, that the Giants won't win 90 games.

- If the Czar loses, he will replace his Facebook photo with one wearing a Giants cap for a year.
- If Sam loses, he will replace his Facebook photo with one wearing a Dodgers cap for a year.

[1] ListMan said the Giants should "pray for 85."

Tech Corner: Cloud Computing



The above diagram by Steve Ballmer, Microsoft's chief executive, depicts Microsoft's cloud computing strategy.

ListMan brought up the subject of "cloud computing," and the Czar, an excellent tech advisor to the DHSOS, patiently explained it to us. It basically means having most of your computer software reside somewhere other than your desktop, and he believes it is the future of personal computing.

This emerging computing technology uses the internet and remote servers to maintain data and applications, and allows consumers and businesses to use applications without installing them on site. It allows access to personal files at any computer with internet access.

The advantage of cloud computing is that you buy and maintain less hardware and software and there is less chance of problems and viruses at the user site.

Within a few years, the Czar forecast, most people will use cloud computing for at least some of their personal computing.

Microsoft's cloud computing system is growing up

(AP) -- Microsoft Corp. leads its industry in part because a vast army of outside computer programmers design software that only runs on its Windows operating system. Now, the company is fighting to keep those programmers working with its tools as technology undergoes a massive shift.

Microsoft recently told a gathering of software developers that **Windows Azure**, its system for building software that runs over the Internet, will come out of test mode in January. In February, the software maker will begin charging for use of Azure.

Moving forward with its so-called "cloud computing" plans will help Microsoft compete with companies such as Amazon.com Inc. and Google Inc.

- Amazon has built a set of Web-based tools including data storage and raw computing power that is popular among startups.

- Google is challenging Microsoft with e-mail, word processing, spreadsheet and other software that runs in a Web browser instead of on a PC.

The new tools also put Microsoft firmly ahead of companies such as IBM Corp. and Oracle Corp., said Gartner Inc. technology analyst Ray Valdez.

Over the past several years, "software over the Internet" has gained momentum. People pay subscription fees or look at advertising in exchange for the right to access software through a Web browser instead of buying it to install on their computers.

Touring Colleges in the Snow

The Czar and Miss Katharine, an honorary DHSOS daughter, recently returned from a college scouting trip to Minnesota where they inspected Carleton College in Northfield (south of Minneapolis), and Macalester College, in St. Paul.

The Czar reported that Northfield's welcoming sign reads "Cows, Colleges, and Contentment," and the town's major industry is "Malt-o-Meal[2]." Despite that (and the 2-3 feet of snow on the ground), Miss K liked Carleton, and it has now risen near the top of her college choices.

On the other hand, Macalester did not come out high on Miss K's list. It is an urban campus, "fitted" in the middle of St. Paul, and it had few redeeming qualities.

[2] He reported the smell of malt-o-meal cooking in the air the morning they toured the campus.

And so the search for the perfect college for the perfect daughter continues.

Advising the Youth

The DHSOS is involved in the lives of several young people about to make life decisions, and ListMan surveyed our vast experience to determine the field of study we would recommend:

Officer	Recommendation
Duh Prez	Business Administration
PoV	Accounting
ListMan	Business Administration
Notes	Health Care
Czar	Accounting

Boondoggle and VP Sighting

Duh Prez recently returned from a boondoggle/business trip to Colorado, where he and five business associates spent three days discussing business on Beaver Creek's ski slopes.

The skiing was great, the business meetings were successful, and he came within a few feet of the VP (Joe Biden). Security was everywhere, but no one bothered Duh Prez.

Using Facebook to your Advantage

With an assist from Miss K, the PoV has developed a home page on Facebook. So far, though, he hasn't figured out a way to use it to "his advantage."

There were several suggestions from the DHSOS, including:

- Build and communicate with a "community" of friends and associates.
- Find former classmates, workmates, and friends.
- Post pictures and share experiences.
- Use this forum to put out "the word."

Those suggestions were rejected, as was the recommendation that the PoV run for San Francisco mayor, so the PoV continues to search for Facebook meaning.

"I'm going to do what every San Franciscan does who goes to Heaven. I'll look around and say, 'It's not bad, but it ain't San Francisco.'"

-- Herb Caen

Getting to Know Your Fellow Stud: How Many Pairs of Jeans Do Your Own?

It started as a simple question that ListMan posed to the studs: "How many pairs of jeans do you own?"

Notes surprised the group by reporting he has eight pairs; Czar and ListMan each have five, Duh Prez has three, and the PoV**…** well that's where the controversy began.

Before he answered[3], the PoV exclaimed, “All of you people look like heck when you wear jeans in public. No man over 60 should ever wear jeans in public.”

That caused a stir, since the other four studs wear jeans in public, and none of us think we look like heck.

This turned out to be a topic the DHSOS could get its hands around. We discussed the pros and cons of wearing jeans, and as the quality of the conversation declined the volume increased. I don’t remember resolving the issue, but it created quite a discussion.

After the meeting the PoV sent an amended list of occasions when it would be “acceptable” to wear jeans after 60:

I have reconsidered the jeans over age 60 issue, and I stand corrected. There are times when leaving the house in jeans is appropriate.

IF THEY:

- are also wearing cowboy boots and hat.

- will be riding a horse.

- are going to a barbeque, rodeo, hayride or amusement park.

- plan to do real work, or go fishing.

- will be someplace where there are cows.

- are attending a costume party, or hanging out with farmers.

- are taking the little lady for a ride on the Harley.

- claim Nebraska or Oklahoma as their home state.

- just don’t give a damn how they look.

The presidential son (and honorary DHSOS member) responded:

What really struck me was how Lee's list of appropriate circumstances was not about when jeans look correct on a man, but rather his apparent belief in the purpose of jeans. If I asked Lee what he believed the modern purpose of jeans is, he would likely reply something along the lines of: jeans are meant to provide durable pants for a man's work.

Rather than limiting the function of jeans to this simple list, I think we should all agree that some time has passed since Lee wore a cowboy hat, worked with cows, rode a horse, or done "real" work. In the same passage of time, the types of jeans available have multiplied.

Now I don't expect each of you to immediately go buy multiple pairs of jeans. At the aforementioned rate of style adoption for older generations, I can only assume I will be changing Lee's adult diapers when he purchases his first pair of nice jeans.

And ListMan weighed in:

Today is Casual Friday. I wore my slightly faded blue jeans (1 of my 5 pair), hiking boots, blue soft material belt, and hooded rain jacket. I was totally in style. I even threw out a couple of "hey, man" when I saw people at work. I believe the jean/age discussion is off base. It is actually more of a waist size/age ratio (I haven't figured it out yet) that should be the criteria.

Later man.

Adjournment

It had been a good night with an appropriate mix of fine food, good drink, and noble friends.

We paid the check, issued hearty handshakes all around, and walked out into the foggy night air.

That’s it for now, man.

[3] The PoV has one pair of jeans, which he wears only in the early mornings at Drakesbad.