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

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Minutes of Meeting

Specks Twelve Adler Museum/Tosca Café/Caffé Trieste

Tuesday, April 1, 2014

DHSOS is a San Francisco-based literary society dedicated to camaraderie, good food, and strong drink, and influenced by the life and contributions of Dashiell Hammett.

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A Damp North Beach Evening

The DHSOS in raincoats (Feb. 2005).

California has been hurting for rain this year, which has the farmers scared and Governor Moonbeam telling us to take shorter showers. But it was raining tonight! These spring showers won't end the drought, but they lifted our spirits and brought out the raincoats.

As the PoV said in his invitation, tonight's venues were a bit of a rerun. We had been to Specs before, but last time we were hidden away in the back. We had been to Tosca before, too, but not since they dusted and washed down the place and started serving food. And we had been to Caffe Trieste before, but until tonight we had not been greeted at the door by a nutcase.

Da Burd

Da Burd spent da night in da trunk.

Our mascot, the jewel-encrusted gold sculpture from *The Maltese Falcon*, was unable to join us for dinner. DUH PREZ brought Da Burd, but he was so engrossed in the conversation he fuhrgot all about him and wound up leaving him in da trunk.

Specs

We arrived at Specs at 6:00 PM. DUH PREZ was first, and he parked in a yellow zone right in front of the joint. Notes and the Czar were the last to drag in.

This dive bar, formally called Specs Twelve Adler Museum Café, was opened in 1968 in an alley off Columbus Avenue. Over the years, it has been home to a menagerie of

misfits, from strippers and poets to longshoremen and merchant marines. Tonight, it was home to the DHSOS.

The interior of Specs is dark and moody, and there are artifacts from the Northwest scattered about. Last time the DHSOS was at Specs we were accused of being with the FBI because we wore shirts with collars. Tonight we sat at the bar and were given total respect.

Call to Order

DUH PREZ called the meeting to order at 6:07 PM. We ordered drinks and got down to business.

Bull Semen

Trooper, the champion bull.

This wasn't on the agenda, but it was such a good subject we started our evening with it.

It seems that Notes has a relative in Idaho (Russell Fehringer) who owns a bull that was recently named national champion at a stock show in Texas. Trooper, the bull, is a 2,500-pound stud, dark red in color, long-bodied, straight-backed, with super hind legs. Trooper's coat showed well because the owner's niece, Morgan, and her little sister, Abbey, bathed, brushed, and blew dry Trooper's hair every day.

"Most bulls have brittle short hair like pig hair," said Morgan. "We got it to the point it was softer and shinier than mine. With the amount of conditioner and high-quality shampoo we used, we got it to the point it was salon-quality hair."

Trooper's owner wants to keep Trooper going for a long time, and he intends to freeze Trooper's semen and use it to breed cattle all over the world. Ten small containers of Trooper's semen are worth $2,500.

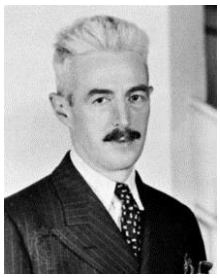
"It's pretty much a pot of gold," said Morgan, looking into the freezer tank.

Teen Angst

The PoV recently travelled to Dripping Springs, Texas to see his twin grand-nephews, who are now teenagers. Being twins, one might think they would mature at the same rate, but the PoV reported that while one is still a nice, agreeable boy, the other is going through puberty and has acquired a case of teen angst accompanied by raging hormones, an argumentative personality, and an inability to tolerate his parents (or any adults, for that matter).

Fortunately, most teens and their parents survive this phase, and at some point the teenage dolt becomes pleasant again.

That led to a discussion of whether DHSOS officers had gone through teen angst. Most admitted to it, accompanied (in some cases) by feelings that parents are stupid, angry discussions about hair length and the war in Vietnam, drunken winter beer parties, and an "eviction" following a criminal act.



"The problem with putting two and two together is that sometimes you get four, and sometimes you get twenty-two."

-- Dashiell Hammett

Tosca

This was our first time at Tosca Café since its re-opening last October 10, and we were curious how it had changed. Owner Ken Friedman and chef April Bloomfield combined to turn this legendary watering hole into a hip, cool destination restaurant. We thought they did a pretty good job!

It's a small space. It's always been long and narrow, but now a kitchen has been added, which takes up room in the back. Walking past the bar, which was filled with young, well-heeled drinkers, one gets the feeling that this place, like Trooper's semen, is pretty much a pot of gold! Bartenders mix ridiculously-expensive cocktails as fast as they can, and there's a line for more. The dining area is small and loud, but well laid-out and well-staffed. Wine bottles are displayed on shelves that occupy one entire wall, and the staff slides a wooden ladder along a metal rail to locate, climb, and retrieve bottles.

We were greeted by Deva, the hostess, who happily accepted a small bribe from the PoV to seat us at the only round table, and by Jordan and Jessica, our wait staff. They were adequate, but not shrewd, because they didn't kiss up to us like most wait staff. It's possible they were intimidated by our good looks and our raincoats.

The menu is limited, but it includes a decent selection of appetizers, a couple of salads, and four or five main course offerings. The grilled polenta was excellent, and there were no complaints about the lamb ribs, pasta, and cod.

Recent Outings

If there is a better way to spend an evening than eating and drinking with manly friends in the best City in the world, we haven't found it. The DHSOS has recently had some stellar outings, and we toasted Notes, the Czar, and the PoV for organizing them.

- On March 20, Allan McCrary joined us as we enjoyed dinner at Osteria before an inspiring lecture about Dashiell Hammett at the JCC.

- On March 26, the Czar treated the DHSOS to breakfast at Sally's Restaurant, followed by an excellent tour of Anchor Brewing Company.

Leland Yee, Shrimp Boy, and Other Thugs

Leland Yee and "Shrimp Boy" Chow.

The DHSOS was abuzz about the recent FBI sting of several local notables; including State Senator Leland Yee, former Board of Education president Keith Jackson, and China Town kingpin "Shrimp Boy" Chow.

We love the "Shrimp Boy" nickname, which apparently came from his grandmother in Hong Kong, who called him that because of his small stature. It rivals other excellent gangster nicknames; like "Bugs" (George Moran), "Scarface" (Alphonse Capone), and "Vinny the Chin" (Vincent Gigante).

What handles would the DHSOS carry if we were gangsters? Some possibilities (from actual gangster nicknames):

- "Music Man" Monk
- "The Tank" Tyree
- "Lefty" Fehringer
- "The Builder" D_____
- "Artful Dodger" Noakes

March Madness

DUH PREZ wanted to talk about the NCAA basketball tournament, even though it wasn't on the agenda. ListMan allowed the subject to be introduced, but it turned out that DUH PREZ only wanted to brag about his alma mater making it to the Elite Eight (while none of the schools of interest to the other Studs even made it to the dance of 64). Other than that, he had nothing to contribute.

Picking up the pieces, the PoV and ListMan reported on the status of their "brackets" – both picked Florida to make the Final 4, and both were still in the running. Meanwhile, the Michigan Wolverducks, along with all of our other favorites, have cleaned out their lockers and started thinking about next year.

The Presidential Explorer

DUH PREZ's broken down Explorer.

Everyone knows DUH PREZ is thrifty. That's a given. And it's probably why he continues to own his 1997 Ford Explorer, despite its 144,483 miles, rusty bumper, and failing engine.

The last time he drove the Explorer, the check engine light came on as he and the Mrs. were headed to a play. He had to stop and let the motor cool down, twice. He suspected a failed water pump, and anticipated a good-sized bill to fix it. His question of the DHSOS was should he continue to pour money into an old car? He wrestled with the alternatives: Sell it and rent a car when needed? Give it to Miss K? Trade it in for a third Porsche?

Note: Late breaking news – The Explorer had a water pump organ transplant, is alive and well, and is available to rent.

On a Roll

Miss K's championship Ultimate Frisbee team.

Miss K, the brilliant daughter of the DHSOS, is on a roll:

- She is doing great at Carleton College, where she is a senior. She will graduate this June.
- Eclipse, one of Carleton's three Ultimate Frisbee teams, recently won an invitational tournament in Georgia.
- She was accepted at the San Francisco Cooking School, which she will enter shortly after graduation.

Her father, who says she gets it from her mother, is understandably proud of her, and he bragged about her ability to see the big picture and line up future options. The DHSOS responded by toasting her accomplishments and ordering another bottle of wine.

Baseball Rule Changes

Matt Holliday slides into Marco Scutaro (10/15/12).

Photo by Beck Diefenbach

ListMan posed the following question to the DHSOS: If you could, what MLB rule would you change?

- The PoV would outlaw sliding beyond a base, as Matt Holliday did during the 2012 playoffs, injuring Marco Scutaro. Stiff penalties would be assessed to any player who broke the rule.

- Harkening back to the days when Barry Bonds dominated the National League, DUH PREZ thinks intentional walks should be discouraged. He would institute a rule that would give a batter first base the first time he is walked, second base for a second walk, third base for a third walk, and home plate for a fourth walk.

- The Czar would get rid of the Designated Hitter in the American League, and in all inter-league games.

- ListMan and Notes would speed up the game by introducing a "pitch clock" that would start when the pitcher gets the ball and the umpire signals "ready." Batters would not be allowed to step out of the batter's box after the signal, and pitchers would have to throw the next pitch before the clock expires. If the pitcher doesn't throw within the time limit, the batter would be awarded a ball.

Which Giants Must Do Better?

After two World Series championships in three years, last year's Giants didn't fare well, ending in third place and out of the playoffs, with a record of 76-86. We're expecting more this year. So which five players must exceed last year's season for the Giants to succeed? Here is what we came up with:

	5	4	3	2	1
DUH PREZ	Posey	Cain	Lincecum	Sandoval	Pence
Notes	Vogelsong	Hudson	Lincecum	Cain	Pagan
Czar	Arias	Sandoval	Posey	Lincecum	Vogelsong
ListMan	Pagan	Affelt	Sandoval	Lincecum	Cain
PoV	Sandoval	Belt	Cain	Lincecum	Vogelsong

How Will the Giants Do?

Our predictions for the Giants this season:

	Wins	Losses	Final Standing
DUH PREZ	96	66	1
Notes	90	72	2
Czar	86	76	2
ListMan	88	74	2
PoV	90	72	2

We will review these at the end of the season, to see who was closest. First prize is DUH PREZ's Explorer.

Caffe Trieste

Espresso pioneer "Papa" Gianni

Caffè Trieste is a legendary coffee house in San Francisco's North Beach, opened in 1956 by Giovanni Giotta (aka "Papa" Gianni). It was a gathering place for the beat generations in the 1960's, and for artists and musicians since. And, tonight, it was a gathering place for the DHSOS.

We almost didn't get in, as the door was stuck, or locked, or jammed somehow. We fiddled with it, couldn't get it open, and almost gave up – but a clean-cut young man came to our rescue, opened the door from the inside, and let us in.

At that point, the dude started a 15-minute tirade about what distinguished men we are, how successful we have been, and how he would like to be successful like us. He spewed out a bunch of stuff about his higher power, and it started to get a little awkward until the PoV told him we had "secret" stuff to talk about, and he went away. It ended well, with handshakes all around.

What Would You Do?

During a night of thorny questions, we had one more to answer. This one had to do with the missing Malaysian Airlines plane: (1) What happened? and (2) What would you do if you were on a plane that was hijacked?

Some of the DHSOS think the airplane was taken into the ocean by one or both of the pilots. The rest think there was a mechanical malfunction, don't know, or don't care.

So, what would we do if a plane we were on was commandeered and turned off course? Our answers:

- **Gather passengers and storm the cockpit.**
- **Call for help from a phone on the plane.**
- **Do something … I couldn't just sit there.**
- **Have sex with someone on the plane.**
- **I don't care, I'm tired.**

Adjournment

It had been a terrific evening with an appropriate mix of good food, strong drinks, and noble friends.

We walked out into the damp and chilly North Beach air, issued firm handshakes all around, and made our way off to our warm and cheery homes.

That's it for now, man.