

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

Officers

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

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Minutes of Meeting

Sam's Grill

Friday, December 6, 2019

**Atmospheric Evening**

An "atmospheric river" storm front, packing intense downpours and gusty winds, was poised off the California coast, ready to sock it to San Francisco and the Bay Area. Forecasters said the storm would roll through the Bay Area on Friday with up to three inches falling in the hills and coastal mountains by the time the cold front moved through late Saturday.

With that weather forecast the DHSOS assembled for our fifth meeting of the year at Sam's Grill, one of the oldest restaurants in the City, and one of our favorites. The weather outside was frightful, but inside Sam's was cozy and delightful.

**Sam's Grill**



According to its literature, Sam's Grill is the fifth-oldest restaurant in the U.S., opened in 1867, shortly after the California gold rush. It

was founded by Michael Bolan Moraghan, who ran a seafood restaurant and shop at the California Market (on California Street, between Montgomery and Kearny). He called his restaurant *M.B. Moraghan's*. A native of Ireland and oysterman, he drew customers to his stall with hand-selected oysters. At about the same time, Sam Zenovich, an immigrant from Croatia, started a local restaurant called the *Reception Café*, which was a hangout of boxing and race fans including John L. Sullivan, James Corbett, and Jack Dempsey.

Zenovich bought Moraghan's restaurant in 1922 and his regular customers followed him to his new establishment, which he called Samuel Zenovich Restaurant, but which most people just called *Sam's*. Frank Seput (another Croatian) bought *Sam's* when Zenovich died in 1937, and he changed the name to *Sam's Grill and Seafood Restaurant*. The restaurant maintained its home at the California Market until 1946, when it moved to its current address on Bush Street.

In 2014, the restaurant was sold to Peter Quartaroli, who has been in the San Francisco restaurant business his whole life, including stints at *Original Joe's*, *Bardelli's*, and *Sam's Grill*.

Today, Sam's is staffed by friendly managers, an affable goateed bartender, and a team of experienced waiters.

Sam's has everything the DHSOS looks for in an eatery: it was around when Dashiell Hammett lived in San Francisco, the waiters

show a proper amount of respect, and their private booths allow us to our highly-confidential business without interference.

This was the fourth time the DHSOS had officially met at Sam's (previous meetings took place in 2003, 2008, and 2014).

### **Da Burd**



Da Burd joined us for the evening, emerging from his wooden casket and roosting in the middle of our table. He still had a slight amount of damage on his left wing from a recent flight. Our waiter chose to ignore him, perhaps being intimidated by his presence.

### **Call to Order**

As is his custom, DUH PREZ called the meeting to order at 6:51 pm by banging a dinner knife on the side of his water glass. We ordered a bottle of California merlot and got down to business.

Our waiter brought wine and took our dinner orders. DUH PREZ ordered Lobster Thermidor – his first ever.

### **Sourdough**

The AgendaMeister pulled out his phone and opened the list of topics for tonight's meeting. "Now, that's a proper amount of bread," he commented after the waiter deposited a half loaf of sourdough on our table. It was good old-fashioned California sourdough, with a hard, chewy crust.

### **SF Car Show**



The annual San Francisco Auto Show at Moscone Center had just ended (to mixed reviews). Most attendees enjoyed the variety of new and classic cars, but some complained that BMW, Mercedes, and Tesla weren't represented. We were quizzed about a group outing to a future show. There was interest, and the car show was added to the list of possible future excursions.

### **Drakesbad**

The Communications Czar provided an update on our 2020 reservations at Drakesbad. As our faithful readers know, there has been a considerable amount of change the past year, including a new concessionaire, new management, and the contract termination of Billie, the long-time co-manager and reservation agent.

The Czar worked with members of the new concessionaire's management team and was able to secure reservations for us for next August. He also reported that the new management team is aware that some long-time Drakesbad customers were unhappy with their latest stay, and the concessionaire intends to do better next year, including moving one of their senior managers nearby to keep an eye on the situation.

We lifted our glasses in a toast to the Czar, Billie, and Drakesbad.

### **Wedding Planning**

Katharine, a favorite DHSOS daughter, recently became engaged, and she and her fiancé are in the midst of looking for a wedding location. The Czar reported that they are looking in Napa and Sonoma and are targeting October/November 2020. We raised our glasses in a toast to Katherine and Hunter and wished them well in their planning.

## 2020 Travel Plans

The DHSOS is known for travel, and the AgendaMeister quizzed us about our plans for 2020. The Czar has his sights set on Greece, Hawaii, or Mexico, and will work around the afore-mentioned wedding. DUH PREZ will visit Paris and then float down a river in France next May with college friends. The AgendaMeister is considering a trip to Iowa in August and Scotland and Ireland in the Fall. And the Archivist of Knowledge is planning a summer European trip, followed by a stop in Slovakia in late August.

## Elite Football

“Why aren’t they still elite?” the AgendaMeister rhetorically asked the group, as he introduced a new subject. He then asked why the college football teams we tend to favor (Michigan for DUH PREZ, USC for the Czar, and Nebraska for the Archivist) are no longer “elite” teams.

Michigan, with a 9-3 record did well this year, and they will cap their season by playing Alabama in the Citrus Bowl. DUH PREZ insisted they are still an “elite” team, but he feels that a ninth consecutive loss (this one lopsided) to Ohio State is not OK.

USC, which finished 8-4 started well, but lost its first- and second-string quarterbacks, and their running game has been diminished the past few seasons. But 8-4 is still a good season, and the Trojans will play Iowa in the Holiday Bowl.

The Cornhuskers of Nebraska will not play in a bowl game this season, the Archivist reported,

and they haven’t been invited to a bowl since 2016. Their 5-7 record was the third consecutive losing season, and their fans are getting restless. “They shouldn’t have changed conferences,” he proclaimed. “They can’t seem to compete with Ohio State, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Iowa.”

## Fighting Robo Calls



We are all experiencing unwanted phone calls, and the Archivist wondered what remedies can reduce these intrusive contacts. The Czar recommended using “Nomorobo”, which uses a database of known robo call phone numbers to screen incoming phone calls. And the Czar also suggested entering your known contacts (name, phones, email) into your PC or phone’s contacts and not answering calls from any other phone numbers.

## Roaring New Year

DUH PREZ announced the theme for his New Year extravaganza will be “The Roaring 20s”, which he explained plays off the fact that next year will begin a new Roaring 20s. Attendees, including all DHSOS officers, will be asked to dress in period costume, participate in gambling, and consume “illegal” booze.

To help inform officers, here are a few expressions from the 1920s:

**Icy mitt:** You receive the “icy mitt” when you express feelings for someone, and said feelings are not reciprocated. It’s kind of like the love-related cold shoulder.

**Bluenose:** A wet blanket or someone who puts a damper on the mood or festivities.

**Iron your shoelaces:** If someone leaves the room to go “iron their shoelaces,” it means they’re headed to the restroom.

**Berries:** Something cool or desirable, similar to “the bee’s knees.”

**Wurp:** This meant something similar to “bluenose”—a buzzkill-type person.

**Know your onions:** A 1920s slang term for being knowledgeable about a particular subject.

**Don’t take any wooden nickels:** If you want to tell a friend to not do anything stupid, but if you want to do it in a cool, 1920s slang way, tell them not to take any wooden nickels.

## Next Meeting

The next DHSOS meeting will be Thursday March 12, 2020. The AgendaMeister will be the Acting PoV and in charge of picking a place for the meeting.

## Adjournment

This was an outstanding evening at an excellent venue with an appropriate mix of strong drink, manly food, stimulating conversation, and noble friends.

We exhausted our agenda, paid our check, secured Da Burd in his coffin, and assembled on the sidewalk outside Sam’s Grill. Sheets of rain chased late commuters and homeless off the streets and into doorways and bars. But we are a group of tough hombres, and we turned into the wind, exchanged hearty fist bumps and piled into our cars (and BART) and made our way

home. It was another stellar night out with special friends!

That’s it for now, man.

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