

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

Officers

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

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Minutes of Meeting

Thursday, March 23, 2023

Bix

**Stool Less at Bix**



It was good to be together again! There is something about this age and these times that makes you want to be with friends, and there are no closer friends than the officers of the DHSOS! It was the quarterly meeting of the Society, and we had a lot on our minds. Da Czar had picked Bix -- a solid choice!

The DHSOS had met at Bix four previous times, and each time we remember why we go back (it's cool, like us). As we stood stool less at the bar, Duh Prez informed us that the building Bix is in (on Gold Street) was once a gold assay office, with teller windows and a vault. Now, it's a jazz-oriented restaurant with live music and good food. It also has an excellent wait staff, but more about that later.

Since the hip crowd that populated every bar stool refused to give up their seats, the maître d escorted us to our upstairs table and our waiter brought us a round of drinks. We dug into a seafood appetizer and our agenda.

**Freshly Shorn Locks**



By coincidence, the DHSOS had all just had haircuts, and we were looking like a set of new whitewalls. Handsome is another way of putting it.

**Call to Order**

Shortly after being seated Duh Prez called the meeting to order by banging his butter knife on the side of his water glass. We were official.

**Da Burd**



Da Burd joined us for the evening, escorted by DUH PREZ. He emerged from his wooden nest and perched on the table, keeping an eye on everything and everyone who approached.

### Is That the Maltese Falcon?

Our waiter appeared. He noticed da Burd and asked if it was the Maltese Falcon from the movie, and was it from John's Grill?

Yes! Finally, a waiter with knowledge and taste! We congratulated him, told him about the DHSOS, and da Czar offered him a DHSOS business card. From then on he was even more respectful to us, leaving us alone to do our business and bowing when he walked past our table.

### Fixer-Uppers

We all have house improvement projects underway, and all are going well. DUH PREZ has repaired the damage to his Healdsburg house that was caused by a recent storm. Da Czar is finished with his kitchen remodel (and very happy with it). Notes has hired and has a start date for prep work for his long-awaited sunroom, and most of the work on ListMan's back yard has been finished. It looks great now, he reported. He also mentioned that the recent "cyclone bomb" storm blew over the construction porta-potty in front of his house. But never fear -- he was able to tip it back upright and slide it back onto his property.

### Driverless Cars



Two companies (Waymo, owned by Google and Cruise, owned by General Motors) have been allowed to drive around San Francisco without drivers. Notes reported that it's a little creepy to see them in the lane next to him or dropping off passengers. And he reported an even creepier encounter when one pulled up to a stop sign just as he was about to walk across the intersection.

### Film Noir

ListMan requested an update on the recent Film Noir Festival, this year held at the Grand Theater in Oakland. Notes reported that the theater was beautiful and (host) Eddie Mueller's introductions were as good as ever. But the commute, which usually took place during rush hour, was tough and attendance was down.

### New Baseball Rules

MLB introduced four new rules this year, which the umpires, coaches and players are adjusting to during Spring Training. The DHSOS generally likes the new pitch clock rule, which should speed up the game, and most of us like the new rule that outlaws over-shifting infield players. We weren't so sure about enlarging the size of the bases (maybe to increase steals or to reduce injuries?), and the pickoff attempt rule change was a little less clear. Here's how *USA Today* described it:

*Pitchers may only disengage from the pitching rubber — either to call timeout or attempt a pickoff throw — twice per plate appearance. After a pitcher has used his two disengagements he can still attempt a pickoff, but it better be successful. If the baserunner gets back safely, a balk is assessed and the runner advances.*

### Books/Movies/TV/Music

ListMan works like a dog to come up with interesting topics for these meetings. Tonight, he wanted to know what we were doing to entertain ourselves -- what books, movies, TV shows, and music were we enjoying? Notes reported reading "24" (a book about Willie Mays), watching *Ted Lasso*, and enjoying the Oscar-nominated movie *The Fablemans*. Duh Prez reported reading a book called "Aces High", seeing the movie *The Whale* and listening to a collection of music on Spotify. Da Czar is reading "Thanks for My Rodeo" (by a famous San Francisco writer), recently saw the Oscar-nominated animated movies,

and listens to his favorite tunes downloaded to his computer. ListMan is circling back and reading classics like “The Great Gatsby” and “East of Eden,” and listening to classic 60s rock legends like The Who and Jimi Hendrix.

### **Atmospheric Rivers and Rain Leaks**

As intense “atmospheric rivers” batter California and recent gale-force winds topple trees, the DHSOS has hunkered down. DUH PREZ had some damage to his Healdsburg place, Notes and da Czar had rain leaks in their cars, and ListMan has a rain leak in the back of his house he can’t identify. But otherwise, we have survived the storms rather well. In an act of generosity, DUH PREZ offered to have dinner at ListMan’s house in return for inspecting the leak.

### **Sergio Returns**



Veteran right-hander Sergio Romo, a three-time World Series champion with the San Francisco Giants, has agreed to a minor-league contract to return to the Giants for one game. Romo, a popular player with fans and teammates, will make one last appearance at Oracle Park during the team's Bay Bridge series with the Oakland Athletics Monday night, March 17. He is expected to take a bow, exit the game to a standing ovation, then hang up his spikes.

The DHSOS toasted Sergio and commended him and the Giants for arranging this honor. We all remember the glory of 2010, 2012, and 2014!

### **Nobody Wants to Wear a Tie!**

At this point the evening became a little muddled because: (1) the table of birthday-celebrating ladies behind us was ramping up, and (2) the martinis and wine were starting to sink in. I’m not sure I heard everything right from here on. There was something about DUH PREZ taking his house guests to dinner at the Olympic Club, where he is a member, and I think he resented having to dine in the downstairs restaurant, because “no one wants to wear a tie anymore!”

### **Hunter’s Party**



The subject of Hunter’s Party (*Whiskies of the World*) arose, but there was some confusion whether the April 8 date would work for us, and whether the invite includes just the DHSOS, or the DHSOS and spouses, or ??? Da Czar offered to get further explanation.

### **Health Update**

The DHSOS is on a good health roll these days, with no major issues. Da Czar is nearly recovered from hip replacement, after using a walker for a week and a cane for a couple of weeks. He is still doing p.t. for a while longer, but he has seen his surgeon for what could be a final appointment.

### **How Much Does Your Wife Know?**



This was a loaded topic, and there was squirming around the table. But it turned out to be a rhetorical question, which meant that if there was a disaster at your house (flooding, a gas leak, an earthquake) – would your significant other know what to do – and would she do it? We generally agreed that she would not, although we all consider our significant others to be wise and competent adults, and we agreed that it would be a good idea to have someone else close at hand who knew what to do.

That led to a discussion of earthquake insurance and earthquake preparedness. ListMan has earthquake insurance, but the rest do not, and he has emergency supplies, including food, water and to-go bags. Notes has an earthquake kit under his bed, with water, shoes, and a saw (to cut his way out if the room collapses). DUH PREZ is the most prepared, and he furnished photographic evidence of the food, water, and booze he has ready in his garage in the event the “big one” hits. Now we know where to go!

### **Gray Eagle/Drakesbad**

We have sent our checks to reserve rooms at Gray Eagle for the next two visits (2023 and 2024), and we discussed the pros and cons of it versus Drakesbad. We thanked Da Czar for the books he gave us for Christmas that describe hiking options near Gray Eagle.

### **Hearty Good Night**

It was time to go home. We had drinks and a meal at one of our favorite joints, and we had a darn good evening together! And did I mention that our waiter actually knew who Da Burd was and what movie he was in? So we paid up, said good night to our waiter, and gathered on Gold Street. We noticed it had rained while we dined, and the air smelled clean and fresh. We said good night, issued hearty fist bumps all around, and wandered off into the cool San Francisco evening. No atmospheric river tonight!

It had been another good night in an interesting part of our favorite city with very special friends!

That's it for now, man.

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