Dashiell Hammett Society of Studs
San Francisco International Headquarters

Officers

President	Bill Diefenbach
Communications Czar	Geoff Noakes
Procurer of Venues	Lee Tyree
AgendaMeister	Ken Monk
Archivist of Knowledge	Dale Fehringer

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Minutes of Meeting

Wednesday, March 22, 2006

Style Meets Style at BIX

The March dinner and business meeting of the Dashiell Hammett Society of Studs was held on Wednesday, March 22 at BIX Restaurant and Lounge, located in the heart of San Francisco's Barbary Coast. BIX is all about style, as is the DHSOS, and we fit the place like a well-worn glove. All Studs were present for this evening of superb libations and cookery, live jazz, and engaging conversation.

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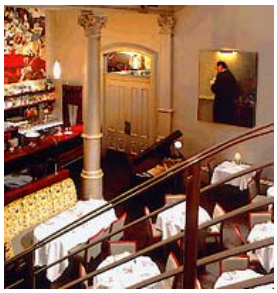
Dashiell Would Have Worn His Tux

BIX was an excellent choice for this meeting of the DHSOS. The Procurer of Venues described it as "sophisticated with an air of mystery and intrigue," which is also an apt description of Dashiell (and of the members of the DHSOS). Although BIX was not around when Dashiell was alive, he definitely would have frequented BIX it had been, and he would have probably worn his tuxedo when he did.

BIX has been described as an "exceptionally stylish supper club," a "civilized speakeasy," and a "sophisticated saloon." It's our kind of place. It is housed in a "soaring two-story interior distinguished by a gently curving mahogany bar, fluted columns with ornate capitals, stunning original art, plush banquettes, cozy booths, starched linens, glittering glasses, and polished flatware."



The ambiance in BIX is 1930's and 1940's – stylish and fashionable, but not trendy or noisy. The clientele ranges from local movers and shakers to power brokers and savvy travelers. On March 22, 2006, it also included the DHSOS.

Our wives might go to BIX, which nearly persuaded us not to, but they wouldn't like the dark and narrow alley it is on, and they wouldn't fit in as well as we did. And they would almost certainly complain about the proximity to San Francisco's strip club epicenter.

BIX has round tables, a requirement for our egalitarian group, and they have large booths that accommodated us nicely and provided privacy for our business discussions. The table in our booth was nearly round, with just a bit of the circle missing.

How BIX Became BIX

BIX was started and is managed by Doug "Bix" Biederbeck, who is also involved with Florio Restaurant and MarketBar, at the Ferry Building. Doug was an English major at the University of Oregon who apparently decided waiting tables wasn't fulfilling his lifetime ambition, so he moved to SF and started a restaurant. He named it after Leon "Bix" Beiderbecke, a famous jazz trumpeter in the 1920's.

The original "Bix" Beiderbecke was one of the great jazz musicians of the 1920's. He also was a drinker, and he drank himself to an early grave with illegal Prohibition-era liquor. His hard drinking and beautiful tone on the cornet made him a legend among musicians during his life.

Coronet: a small crown worn by nobility.

Cornet: a brass instrument similar to the trumpet, but more compact.

The juxtaposition of "Bix" Beiderbecke, Dashiell Hammett, and the DHSOS was not lost on our group. All are class acts who like their "likker." But the DHSOS take better care of themselves.

Superb Libations

On the subject of likker, the DHSOS enjoyed a couple of snorts at BIX's bar. The drinks were good, and the conversation was easy. Bar stools were available, the bartender was attentive, and the other patrons were easy on the eyes. The men were in suits (Dashiell would have approved), and the women were in dresses, showing plenty of cleavage.

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*BIX is a rather sophisticated place, styled in the art deco mode. There are no pictures of Bix, nor is there any mention of **THE** Bix. The live music is modern jazz. The 18th century building which houses the restaurant has been designated as a Historical Landmark and is located on a narrow alley in what used to be San Francisco's Barbary Coast section.*

-- bixbeiderbecke.com

We talked about books. Lee wants his "blue San Francisco" book back, and the PREZ reminded everyone that borrowed books are to be returned at the next DHSOS meeting.

Geoff gave a report on his trip to Barcelona, offering high praise for the Gaudi architecture, especially La Sagrada Familia (the unfinished cathedral) and Casa Batllo, where he had dinner. He recounted his evenings strolling on La Rambla, the public walking street, with dozens of florists, parakeet vendors, and scantily-clad ladies. He claimed he was propositioned one evening on La Rambla, which he refused. Everyone wanted to know what was on the menu.

It's a pasture and a pond."

-- Lee Tyree, on the Tyree Farm Sesquicentennial Celebration

Lee gave an update on the Tyree Farm Sesquicentennial Celebration, which is scheduled for May 14. It's "coming along," he said, but Studs were cautioned not to expect too much. "It's a pasture and a pond," he kept saying, "and osage orange trees."

Battle of Electronic Diaries

Geoff, Bill, and Ken conducted a battle of electronic diaries. Each pulled out the stops in their attempt to persuade the group theirs is best.

Note: Dale and Lee refrained. They still use hard copy diaries, which they continually defend as more reliable and easier to use (despite all evidence to the contrary).

- Bill's Blackberry is cool. He uses it as his cell phone, and he has trained his thumbs to convey e-mail to and from his office at lightening speeds.
- Ken's Palm Pilot is highly functional and is great at keeping track of what he's supposed to be doing.
- Geoff blew everyone else away with his Treo when he displayed a slide show of recent group events, including photos of his beautiful daughter.

Investing Advice

Being a forward-looking group, the DHSOS held a discussion of which investment options are best, and how this group can retire in the style to which their wives would like to be accustomed.

Geoff reiterated his investments in Pensco, citing a 12% return over the past year.

Lee said he did even better than that, and told of annual "adjustments" to his investments that have produced high rates of return.

Note: The Procurer of Venues has since shared this information with Society members.

College Hoops

This being "March Madness," the DHSOS discussed college basketball and the excitement surrounding the tournaments. Bill mentioned that Michigan is still in the NIT tournament. (Note: Michigan wound up #2 in the NIT, which makes them the 63rd best college team in the nation).

Is Misty Southern?

All of a sudden, we were talking about whether Misty was "southern" or not. No one is quite sure how this subject came up. Ken may have raised it (he is the Agendameister, after all). It was mentioned that she generally doesn't have an accent, and that she is pretty sophisticated (which some in the group apparently don't associate with Southerners). It was insightfully pointed out by Geoff that she frequently uses the term "y'all," and that sparked the conclusion that she is southern, after all.

A Sad Golf Story

At this point, Bill and Geoff went to the restroom together, which is rather atypical for the Studs. While they were gone, Lee told about the deterioration of his golf game: a sad tale of missed putts and an elevated handicap. His audience nodded in sympathy and there was even a misty eye or two.

Call to Order: 8:02 PM

In an unusual turn of events, the DHSOS went through drinks and discussions at the bar, climbed the stairs to our nearly round table, ordered wine, and continued our dialogue without ever calling the meeting to order. Finally, at 8:02 PM the gavel went down. The AgendaMeister whipped out the official DHSOS agenda and the meeting began.

Sanctions for Lee's Attire?

The group talked about whether to sanction Lee for wearing a blue suit with his tuxedo shirt to the recent Mardi Gras party. In his defense, he said it had been a long and tiring day entertaining Misty's friends, and he was in a rush when he changed clothes to go the party. He put on the proper cufflinks and studs, and his Mardi Gras vest and bowtie, but grabbed the wrong jacket and pants from his closet. "It wasn't my fault," he defended himself. "I was in a hurry, and the blue suit was right next to my tux. No one even noticed."

"It wasn't my fault. I was in a hurry, and the blue suit was right next to my tux."

-- Lee, defending himself.

Was Misty upset? She didn't even notice, according to Lee. A week later when she learned the truth she tried to act like she was angry, but that fell on deaf ears. The Studs agreed that was unfair and censured Misty for an "unwarranted after-mad."

A Near Presidential Hole-in-One

Bill reported nearly sinking a hole-in-one using Ken's driver. "I constantly almost make a hole-in-one," he reported.

That led to a lengthy discussion of golfing exploits by various members of the Society, none of whom had made a hole-in-one, and to another round of anguish by Lee, who again complained that his golf game has gone to hell.

Income Tax Deadline

The deadline for filing 2005 Federal and State income taxes is quickly approaching, and the Studs discussed their experiences with filling out and sending in their forms. Bill won the award for most tax returns completed, as he filed a total of 10 Federal and State tax returns for himself, his wife, his deceased mother-in-law, his two grown children, and several strangers.

Cable vs. Satellite TV

The PREZ gave a brief update on the ongoing discussion of satellite vs. cable TV. Thus far, he is very pleased with his satellite service, and he promised additional updates at future meetings.

Rogue E-mail Attachments

Lee continues to be plagued by "rogue" e-mail attachments, despite Geoff's advice. In the latest episode, he unintentionally sent several naughty photos to a juvenile relative of another DHSOS member, and he is very frustrated and embarrassed by these continuing incidents. He is now seeking professional help to eliminate this problem and he promised to keep the DHSOS informed. Geoff suspects user error.

This led to a discussion of temporary Internet files and how they can be deleted from personal computers. A long and involved banter ensued, with no resolution. Geoff promised to follow-up after the meeting with further information.

Note: Thanks to the Communications Czar for sending out procedures to delete temporary Internet addresses.

Indulging Patty's Indulgences

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the Archivist of Knowledge indulging his wife by allowing her to re-paint and re-decorate their house. While members of the Society agreed Dale's house needed sprucing up, they are concerned that their wives will find out about these

frivolous expenditures, and they will be next. Ken indicated that his bride had already gotten word of it and had begun similar activities. Sanctions were not issued, but the offending member was chastised.

Note: The deluge has already begun. The Agendameister is now under siege, and the PREZ has been approached. DHSOS members are cautioned to take cover.

Climbing Mt. Lassen

Plans have begun for the annual sojourn to Lake Shasta and Drakesbad. This year's activities will include climbing Mt. Lassen, and there was some concern about the length and difficulty of the trek. Geoff reported that a group of third-graders recently completed it in three hours, so the DHSOS decided we should be able to do it in a day.

Announcements

- The 100-year anniversary of the San Francisco earthquake and firestorm is quickly approaching. The PREZ reminded everyone a celebration will be held near Lotta's fountain from 4:30 - 5:30 AM on April 18. All Studs except Ken plan to participate.

- Bill reminded the DHSOS of Fleet Week, and an October 7 ride on the Jeremiah O'Brien to watch the Blue Angels. The Diefenbach's are in, and BIll invited the rest of the Society to join them.

Flipping the Bird

Geoff successfully defended his DHSOS honor by refuting Lee's claim that the Buzzard (as it had become known in the Noakes household) had not been prominently displayed.

The "Bird" sat peacefully next to our table all night and was quietly transferred from Geoff to Ken at the conclusion of the meeting. Ken reports that after an initial perching in the living room, the bird has now moved to a location that is more logical and offers greater recognition in the back room.

Note: DHSOS members are to return all borrowed books at the next meeting!

-- By order of the PREZ

Adjournment

At this point, the agenda was complete and the group was exhausted. Lee and Dale needed to get up early the next day to travel, and the other members had to get up early to go to work. The DHSOS adjourned at 9:30 PM and made their way home. It was another excellent evening with good friends.

The next meeting of the DHSOS will take place at the Cliff House on Thursday, June 22.