

**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
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Minutes of Meeting

Gold Dust Lounge and John's Grill

Wednesday, April 27, 2011

An Evening with Friends

"I haven't laughed so much over anything since the hogs ate my kid brother."

— Dashiell Hammett

On this dusky April evening three days after Easter the DHSOS gathered in the heart of San Francisco to grace the time-worn doors of an ancient watering hole. Once sufficiently plied with alcohol, we strolled to dinner at a revered old-time eatery. It was a delightful evening filled with laughter, strong drink, good food, and excellent friends.

Gold Dust Lounge



This is not everyone's idea of the ideal watering hole, but it fits the DHSOS like a glove. The Gold Dust Lounge has all the ingredients we need: stout drinks, a storied history, and an ample proportion of babes.

The Gold Dust Lounge is a reminder of a time long past. Founded in 1933, this illustrious saloon is a San Francisco landmark, and although it has occasionally been criticized as being a tourist trap, it is also a cool hangout for locals. They start serving drinks at 7 AM, which says something about the bar and the people who frequent it.



The mural on the ceiling (semi-clad women and cavorting cherubs) was used in the opening scene of Hitchcock's *The Birds*. There's rumored to be a trapdoor that once housed a pole for topless dancers to slide into the laps of happy drinkers during the '50s, when Bing Crosby owned the joint.

Red velvet banquettes, gilt-colored walls, and ornate chandeliers give the place the aura of an old fashioned whorehouse. Large-screen televisions allow patrons to keep track of favorite sporting events and make the place look more like a modern whorehouse.

The highlight of our stay (for those who noticed) was the lanky blond seated at the table next to us. She was a babe, and she reminded us of Dashiell's description of Miss Wonderly in *The Maltese Falcon*:

"She was tall and pliantly slender, without angularity anywhere. Her body was erect and high-breasted, her legs long, her hands and feet narrow. White teeth glistened in the crescent her timid smile made."

Call to Order

Our wait-person brought a round of martinis, filled to the brim. Not one iota of capacity had been squandered by olives, which were delivered in a separate shot glass. As the wait-person handed a martini to DUH PREZ a few drops lopped over the side. Rather than reaching for the glass, he cupped his hands under it to catch the precious drops. It was a proud moment for everyone except the wait-person. After licking his hands, DUH PREZ called the meeting to order by tapping his cocktail pick against his martini glass. It was 6:44 PM and we were in session.

Banter at the Bar

Typically, our most enlightening discussions occur at the bar. During that stage we are animated and alcohol-induced, but not sedated by food and hour. Tonight was no exception.

We eased into the evening by discussing t-shirt sizes, as ListMan has graduated to an XL and he would like all future t-shirt gifts in that size. Notes and DUH PREZ are L's, the Czar is an XL, and the PoV is an XXL.

The subject of venues came up when ListMan politely asked the PoV if we were repeating restaurants because we had exhausted all available locations. In response the PoV launched into what can only be referred to as a Tyree-tirade that included venue criteria, appropriate location, degree of effort, lack of appreciation, and even a little self-pity. He offered to trade responsibilities with other officers, but in return received only silence and empty stares. For now, responsibilities will remain static.

For our readers' benefit, we repeat our restaurant criteria:

The DHSOS prefers to dine at establishments in which Dashiell dined (or would likely have dined had the establishment been in business during his time in San Francisco) and in which our spouses would not set foot.

Taking Da Burd to Roost

It is precisely two blocks from the Gold Dust Lounge to John's Grill. Strolling those two blocks affords a peek at a microcosm of San Francisco: cable cars, souvenir shops, upscale restaurants and stores, coffee shops, homeless people, and street musicians.

"He went to John's Grill, asked the waiter to hurry his order of chops, baked potato, and sliced tomatoes, ate hurriedly, and was smoking a cigarette with his coffee when a thick-set youngish man with a plaid cap set askew above pale eyes and a tough cheery face came into the Grill and to his table."

-- Dashiell Hammett, in The Maltese Falcon.

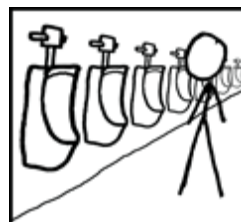
John's Grill



John's Grill is the home of the Maltese Falcon, and in many respects the home of the DHSOS. Now, I don't mean home as in a place you can go to sleep if your spouse kicks you out, but rather a home where you can go to feel comfortable. The DHSOS has dined at the Grill several times, and (unlike some other places) we have never had to explain Da Burd and we've never had to apologize for the intensity of our discussions. These guys get us.

Urinal Protocol

Using a public urinal should be a piece of cake; it's easy, quick, and doesn't involve doors or toilet paper. But there are considerations.



Foremost is the choice of urinal. Most guys are familiar with the International Choice of Urinal Protocol

(ICUP), which says that the first guy in picks an end urinal and every subsequent guy chooses the urinal which puts him furthest from anyone else. If available, at least one buffer urinal should be left between guys.

Next is the subject of interaction. Urinal protocol dictates that men generally do not converse while using a urinal. However, in situations when a buffer urinal is not possible and adjacent urinals must be used, men should engage in mindless, inane, random conversation with others - a phenomenon known as urinal talk. Urinal talk should not lead to urinating on the shoes of one's neighbors.

Another consideration is eye contact. Eyes should remain straight ahead in a zombie-like stare, and men should finish with only a brief glance downward during the final shake.

Similarly, while placing a hand on the wall above the urinal to steady one's self is acceptable (especially when drunk); placing one's hand on another's shoulder is not cool.

Finally, men should always wash their hands after using the urinal (despite the fact that many do not). But touching places that have been previously touched by unwashed males is to be avoided. That problem can be solved by grabbing a handful of towels, wadding them up, and using them to operate the flush handle, water faucet, soap dispenser, and door knob. After opening the door, prop it open with one foot, pivot, and toss the wadded-up towels "basketball-style" into the garbage.

Drakesbad

DHSOS members recently received postcards from Lassen Volcanic National Park notifying them that changes have been approved to Lassen Park that affect Drakesbad. That announcement incurred a great deal of wailing and gnashing of teeth from some members of the DHSOS. The changes include restoration of the Warner Valley fen through permanently filling ditches with soil and native material and removal of Dream Lake Dam and allowing

the area to revert to a riparian/wetland complex.

What to do about it? That's a key question, and a portion of the DHSOS wrestled with potential solutions, discussed options, and then ordered another round of drinks. The rest of the DHSOS continued to keep an eye on the lanky blond at the next table.

Furnace Flues and Walt's Crawl Space

There were a couple of rather morbid agenda items that involved faulty furnace flues and crawl spaces.

Suffice it to say that we agreed we all should check our furnace flues and keep our crawl spaces and attics clean.

'Nuff said.

Trips and Birthdays

This year is shaping into one of job changes, major birthdays, and big trips. We discussed the upcoming major events that affect the Society and agreed that it is all good. 'Though we are all aging, we are doing it gracefully and doing it together.

Our National Pastime

With the days of summer upon us, the DHSOS talked baseball.

Da Giants

Like a long-married husband who just got some, the DHSOS is relishing the pleasure the San Francisco Giants brought us last season. So, when we were asked which member of this season's team annoys us, we were hesitant. But, when pressed, a few names were tossed out; including Miguel Tejada, Brian Wilson, Nate Schierholtz, and Jonathan Sanchez. If that poll were taken today, following the Giants team slump and a shaky road trip, there would likely be a more fervent response.

ListMan claims to have uttered that the Giants should bat Mike Fontenot in the number three slot, which they are doing.

Da Dodgers

There were questions about why one of the most storied teams in professional sports recently imploded. Here's how the Associated Press explained it:

Major League Baseball is taking the extraordinary step of assuming control of the Los Angeles Dodgers, a team increasingly paralyzed by its owners' bitter divorce. Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig told team owner Frank McCourt that he will appoint a trustee to oversee all aspects of the business and the day-to-day operations of the club.

The Dodgers have been consumed by infighting since Jamie McCourt (Frank's wife) filed for divorce in October 2009, one week after her husband fired her as the team's chief executive. Frank accused Jamie of having an affair with her bodyguard-driver and performing poorly at work.

Before



After



Proposals

ListMan asked everyone to describe their marriage proposal – was it down on one knee, on a beach at sunset, in a forest grove with an orchestra playing in the background? Not so much with the DHSOS. Here, in no particular order, is how we remember our proposals:

- ♥ In a hotel room
- ♥ After grace at a family meal
- ♥ At lunch after announcing an impending geographic re-location
- ♥ At dinner after a series of break-ups
- ♥ It just kinda happened

Adjournment

It had been a delightful, tradition-filled evening with an appropriate mix of fine food, good drink, and noble friends.

This meeting of the DHSOS was adjourned at 9:30 PM with a blow of the gavel on the table. We paid the check, issued hearty handshakes all around, and walked out into the muggy night air.

That's it for now, man.

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