

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

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Minutes of Meeting

Little Shamrock/Villa Romana

Thursday, July 25, 2013

**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 (Small) Break from Tradition**

Traditionally, the DHSOS is notified about the time and location of meetings at the last minute, and then only when an officer complains. That's been working for 15 years. But things change. For this meeting the PoV summoned the DHSOS to meet with this missive:

"HELLO Studs-

Tradition. The DHSOS is all about tradition. Always has been. Always will be. But on occasion a little break from tradition is a good thing. So I am going to announce our next venue a full week ahead of the event. This is not the start of a trend. This is not precedent setting. Not at all. It is just a little break from tradition.

Actually, I did not pick these venues. They were strongly suggested to me by an aspiring Stud. The Prez's number one boy child, a Stud wannabe from an early age, leaned on me to accept these venues for a DHSOS meeting. Surly he must recognize that we will use this as an evaluation tool in determining whether he will ever be ready

for Studdom any time in the near future. He must know that if anything goes wrong (martinis are too dry, the twist is not fresh, it is a short pour), anything at all, it will be a reflection on him and could set his membership back years, even decades. But he persisted. So here goes.

We will meet for our first martini at 6pm (or shortly after) in the Little Shamrock, 807 Lincoln Ave. The Little Shamrock holds the distinction of being the forth oldest saloon in the city. Actually, it is a dive bar, but it is a good dive bar.

But the real distinction of the Little Shamrock is not that it is old, it is that John Lescroart tended bar there when he was a struggling musician. Who, you ask??? Less what??? Really!!! Anyone who reads crime novels knows Lescroart. Lescroart has written about 20 best-selling crime thrillers. His protagonist is Dismas Hardy, who would have made a great member of the DHSOS. What makes his novels especially good is that they are all set in San Francisco, naming people, places and locations we all know, and he is very accurate. He always mentions the Little Shamrock, but sometimes only in passing. His books have been so successful that he now lives in the primo town of Davis, the high end section. You can see a picture of Lescroart hanging on the wall in the Little Shamrock when we visit.

The reason we have not graced the Little Shamrock with our presence before is the issue of dinner. None of the dinner possibilities in the neighborhood have ever caused me to say, ah ha, this is a good place for the DHSOS. I have been to all of them, too. My favorite is Happy Donuts, which is not exactly a DHSOS kind of venue. But young D\_\_\_\_\_ has convinced me that I have misjudged Villa Romana, which he, and his bride to be, thinks is Stud worthy. So we shall see. There is no round table, a serious drawback. However, the proprietor, Antonio Accardo, has offered me "the special table in the back," very secluded, that is used only for weddings, funerals and other grieving kinds of occasions. So we have dinner reservations for 7:30pm at Villa Romana, 731 Irving Street. It is a short walk from Little Shamrock, so you only need to park your car once.

### Little Shamrock



*The DHSOS in front of Little Shamrock*

The DHSOS started the evening at Little Shamrock, at the suggestion of the Presidential Son (aka the "Beneficiary of the Perfect Presidential Genes" by DUH PREZ). The place is a dive bar, and the DHSOS expects high standards from the dive bars it visits. We demand, for example, inexpensive, generous, high-quality drinks. Unfortunately, the drinks were sub-par at Little Shamrock. They were pricey (ding!), they were less than generous (ding!), they were sometimes served in inappropriate glasses (ding!), and the AgendaMeister

even received a drink that was stirred with a spoon that had previously been in horseradish (ding! ding! ding! ding!).

The Czar summarized his drinks: "These are without a doubt the worst martinis I have ever had."

But to be fair, the Little Shamrock is a beer bar at heart, not a mixed drink bar, and certainly not a cosmo bar.



*Val's place at the bar is reserved.*

Another oddity about Little Shamrock: The best seat in the house (center bar stool) was occupied by a coffee mug, a stack of baseball cards, four remote controls, and a cardboard sign that read: "Val's Seat." When the DHSOS tried to sit there, the bartender told us that we could sit wherever we wanted, but when Val arrived we would want to move.

So we sat elsewhere, sipped our drinks, and waited for Val, whom we envisioned as a big, burly hunk of a barfly.

When Val finally arrived, SHE (!!!) took her appointed seat, ordered a drink, turned on her smart phone, and began texting. This was all a little perplexing for the DHSOS!

*"I had never shot a woman before. I felt queer about it."*  
*- Dashiell Hammett in "The Gutting of Couffignal"*

Little Shamrock is a dive bar with a past. It is the Sunset District's oldest business, serving drinks in the same location since 1893, when Antone Herzo and his wife opened the pub to serve the thirsty workmen who were creating the Midwinter Fair in Golden Gate Park.

There are many stories about Little Shamrock. Here are a couple:

- "Before Tony Herzo Jr. sold the Little Shamrock in 1969 his famous bean pot, which he never washed, was always ready for the athletes from the park. The thick crust on that pot only enhanced the flavor of the food.
- "In the 1960s Tony was getting on in years, and he had bartenders serve his customers drinks. But Tony would come down stairs from his home above the Shamrock every two hours on the dot, down a shot, and then go back upstairs.
- "Enda Barkley owned the business for about a decade. He was a serious and quiet man, but being a good Irishman he tolerated a fair amount of silly drunkenness from his customers. Every night at closing time his patience would end and he would yell at the barflies: "All right you bunch of bloody luses... last call for alcohol!"

### **Villa Romana**



*Tony Jr., Tony Sr., and Tony really Jr.*

At the recommendation of the Presidential Son, the DHSOS dined at Villa Romana, in San Francisco's Inner Sunset. This is a

family-owned joint, and the family was all over the DHSOS. Tony Sr. cooked for us and brought us free samples of caprese, pizza, and other treats. Mrs. Tony Sr., being somewhat less outgoing than the Tony's, made lasagna for us and graced us with a couple of reluctant appearances. Tony Jr. managed the front-end of the restaurant and gave us hearty good-byes on our way out. Tony really Jr. did not appear, as it was past his bed time.

We ordered a carafe of cheap Chianti wine to start the evening.

Our waitperson, Susan, was funny, efficient, and shared stories with us. We liked Susan! She started the evening by asking about Da Burd (always a nice touch), and inquiring whether we were "Masons or something like that?" No, we aren't Masons, we told her, although our Society is very special, and Da Burd is a falcon. She seemed relieved, somehow, and told us that her mother was a Playboy Bunny at the Playboy Club in Chicago. We weren't sure how that related to anything, but we liked it, and we re-filled our glasses with cheap Chianti wine and raised them in a toast to Susan.

### **Da Burd**

Our mascot, the jewel-encrusted gold sculpture from *The Maltese Falcon*, joined us for dinner. DUH PREZ wrestled him from his carrying case and perched him majestically in the center of our table, where he quietly kept an eye on the proceedings. Eventually, a pizza stand found its way around Da Burd, which made it seem as though Da Burd was in a cage.

### **Call to Order**

DUH PREZ rapped a spoon on his glass of cheap Chianti wine and called the meeting to order at 7:47 PM.

We had a private room to ourselves, Tony Sr. was making special Italian treats for us, and Susan buzzed about our table,

refreshing drinks and eavesdropping. Life was good!

The AgendaMeister was ready, and he sprang into action. His topics had been carefully prepared and thoroughly vetted.

### **Another One Bites the Dust**

Miss Vicki, one of the reigning DHSOS queens, has retired! It took her awhile, but she made it, and now all of the DHSOS spouses have stopped working. We raised our glasses of cheap Chianti wine in a salute to the last of the working wives. The AgendaMeister reported that Vicki went in to work twice the first week after her retirement and had one more office visit scheduled for the second week after retirement.

### **Event of the Millenium**

In the past, the DHSOS has occasionally written about the Presidential Son, so our faithful readers know that we have high hopes for him. He appears to have a DHSOS future (should he be interested), and members of the Society are quietly grooming him.

This year has been a big one for the Son: he has become a world-renowned photographer, he became engaged to a lovely young lady, and they bought a house in San Francisco. We raised our glasses of cheap Chianti wine to their luminous future and discussed the upcoming Event of the Millenium (their wedding), which will be next October at Ft. Mason (where he and the future Mrs. first met).

The attention paid to the Son does not in any way diminish the immense pride the DHSOS takes in the two DHSOS daughters, who are wonderful and successful offspring and the pride of the DHSOS. We talked about how well all three of them are doing, the positive influence the DHSOS has had on them, and we raised our nearly empty glasses of cheap Chianti wine in a heartfelt toast to them.

### **Drakesbad**



Drakesbad is a sacred retreat for the DHSOS, and each year we carefully plan our journey there. This year there are several changes (the DHSOS doesn't particularly like changes), and we discussed those and planned what we would do while there. But mostly, we talked about the drinks schedule. Here's what we agreed to:

Tuesday: Pina Coladas

Wednesday: Sangria

Thursday: Mint Juleps/Cosmopolitans

Friday: Margaritas

Saturday: Gin and Tonic

### **Miss K Learns the Ropes**

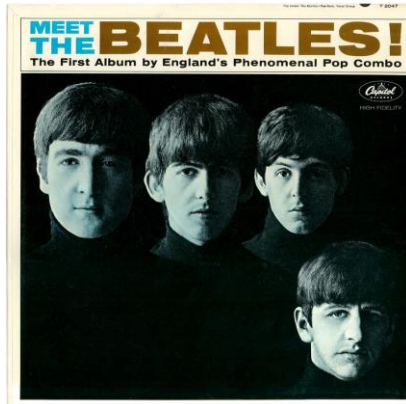
The Czar's daughter has had a terrific summer, including a good-paying job and the opportunity to spend time around the DHSOS. We relished this good news, congratulated her father (who said she gets it from her mother), wished her well, and smiled as we realized that the world really is her oyster!

### **Labor Day Party**

The traditional DHSOS Labor Day Party (usually held at the AgendaMeister's house), is being re-located this year to the Wine Country. The change of venue was brought about because the new Bay Bridge is scheduled to open that weekend (which will snarl Bay Area traffic), and (totally secondarily) because DUH PREZ screwed up and booked the Dry Creek house over Labor Day Weekend.



## Meet the Beatles



"If you guys want to feel great – listen to the album 'Meet the Beatles!'" The AgendaMeister offered that tip to the rest of the DHSOS. He had recently done so, and he found it to be exhilarating – such great music and such wonderful memories.

He sang a few lines for us, and while his singing didn't make us feel good, we had to admit it made us want to listen to the Beatles again. The six songs on Side One of "Meet the Beatles" are:

- I Want to Hold Your Hand
- I Saw Her Standing There
- This Boy
- It won't Be Long
- All I've Got to Do
- All My Lovin'

## Carlos Danger



Anthony Weiner (The "Repeater Peter Tweeter") uses the handle Carlos Danger when he tweaks his peter tweets. No kidding -- Carlos Danger.

Weiner explained in an interview with Univision that he had chosen Carlos Danger because it was "a joke in my personal life between me and one person" -- which is the most he's said about his nom de plume.

Well, Anthony (or Carlos) and his nom de plume intrigued and disgusted the DHSOS. We discussed what our Twitter non de plumes would be.

The Archivist of Knowledge decided he would be known as "Farley" (after the comic strip by Phil Frank), the AgendaMeister would use the handle "the Monkster." The PoV would be "Tank." DUH PREZ would be "DUH PREZ" (duh!). The Communications Czar is already on Twitter as @geoffnoakes.

## Toasting the PoV

The DHSOS enjoyed the evening's venues and we used the last drops of our cheap Chianti wine to toast the PoV for researching and securing them.

## Adjournment

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

We walked out into the heavy Inner Sunset fog, issued hearty handshakes all around, and made our way off into the cool and windy evening.

That's it for now, man.

