

Society for columnists formed at workshop

About 20 columnists attended what is believed to be the first national workshop for columnists which was held on June 5-7 at the Hilton Inn in Virginia Beach, Va.

The workshop, which had the support of the *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot* and *Ledger-Star*, was designed for columnists-at-large; featured writers who write about every subject.

Virginian-Pilot columnist Lawrence Maddy, workshop coordinator, said the meeting was so successful a second workshop is planned for Louisville, Ky.—May 14-16—next year. Richard Des Ruisseaux, columnist for the *Louisville Times*, will be workshop chairman.

At the workshop, the columnists discussed a variety of topics ranging from what to do on a rainy day when there's nothing in the drawer to uses of humor and pathos in writing.

The columnists attending also agreed to exchange columns on a regular basis, through the mails.

Speakers during the three-day work session included Huntington Cairns and James Kern Feibleman.

Cairns, the former moderator of the network radio program "Invitation to Learning" (with Allen Tate and Mark Van Doren) discussed his late friend, H. L. Mencken.

Cairns, editor of the book "H. L. Mencken—The American Scene," described the former Baltimore column writer and editor as the most influential journalist of the century.

"He was once interviewed and asked if he hated everything," Cairns recalled. "Mencken replied that it was inaccurate to say he hated everything. 'I am strongly in favor of common sense, common honesty and common decency. This makes me forever ineligible for any office of trust or profit in the Republic,' he replied."

Dr. Feibleman, the former chairman of the Tulane University philosophy department, and an author, gave a humorous talk. He deplored his introduction as the "country's leading philosopher."

"Indeed, I object to being introduced as a philosopher at all," he said. "It is just the sort of thing to ruin you socially. Just refer to me as a fellow who writes books or something," he suggested.

Maddy said the working sessions of the workshop were mostly discussions of everyday problems faced by columnists.

"We seldom see or talk with other columnists to compare notes. It's very difficult to find best reporters with much interest in what a general columnist is doing. Most of the fellows seemed to feel they learned something," he said.

A National Society of Columnists was formed by those attending. Membership is open to all columnists in the nation.

Persons interested in joining the society and attending the Louisville workshop should write Richard Des Ruisseaux, workshop chairman, in care of the *Louisville Times*, 525 W. Broadway, Louisville, Ky. 40202.



Richard Des Ruisseaux

Columnists attending had their expenses paid by their respective newspapers.

The columnists included: Steve Mitchell, *Palm Beach Post*; Richard Des Ruisseaux, *Louisville Times*; Bob Getz, *Wichita Eagle*; James F. Dent, *Charleston (W.Va.) Gazette*; Doug Nye, *Columbia Record*; Bob Batz, *Dayton News*; D. L. Stewart, *Dayton Journal-Herald*; John Lacy, *Hartford Courant*.

Louis Spilman, *Waynesboro (Va.) News-Virginian*; Bob Terrell, *Asheville Citizen-Times*; John Anders, *Dallas Morning News*; Larry Cheek, *Fayetteville (N.C.) Times*; Don Schellie, *Tucson Citizen*; Steve Clark, *Richmond News-Leader*; Joe West, *Times-Herald*; Larry Bonko, *Ledger-Star*, and Guy Friddell and Lawrence Maddy, *Virginian-Pilot*.

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Odessa editor quits

Odessa (Tex.) American city editor John Sliney resigned from the newspaper effective June 17.

Sliney recently was indicted on charges of attempting to bribe a political candidate.

He has been with the newspaper for more than 18 years. He became city editor in 1970.

The city editor has been one of the key figures in the paper's struggle with Fictor County Dist. Atty. John Green. The feud began in August 1976 when the American printed a story saying Green had gone on a Las Vegas trip with an ex-convict who paid for the journey.

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