

CIVILITY PROJECT WORKSHOP

The Civility Project workshop was led by Doug Oplinger, replacing Larry Vuilemin. Oplinger is retired from the Akron Beacon Journal editorial board. His focus was on what journalists can do to promote civility. He identified four major stresses in our lives: 1) People are in economic crisis, which drives the way they talk; 2) National leadership is challenging long held beliefs, focusing on fear and eroding trust; 3) People are inundated with “made up” information and communities are then engaging around this information; 4) Responses need to be constantly changing to stories now posted around the clock. Oplinger further pointed out that media in an effort to be objective has pulled away from its readers. Media no longer responds by taking readers’ concerns to the politicians, but is now taking politicians stands to the readers. The focus of media needs to change and should be on identifying important issues, determining why these issues are important, and focusing on possible solutions. Once these solutions are identified voters then can compare them to the position of the candidates.