

## From the President's Pen...

When we launched the Institute back in 1998, very few people were talking about the importance of civility, particularly within the governing process. But if you do a Google search for "civility in government" now, you are rewarded with nearly 6 million results in less than twelve seconds – and the Institute for Civility in Government is at the very top of the list!

The work of the Institute has been credited by some with helping to start the civility discussion on Capitol Hill, and we are grateful to have been able to do that. It would not have been possible without your support. That said, **2011 is the year that has probably seen the greatest increase in concern and conversation** about civility within our governing processes and within our communities at large. **We have fielded inquiries not only from around the country, but from around the world!** We have been guest bloggers and have made presentations in **Florida, New Mexico, Texas, Virginia** and **Washington DC**. We have spoken to community groups, faith groups, university staff, the League of Women Voters, the American Legion Auxiliary, and leaders in corporate America. We've also begun collecting true life civility stories for use in a second book.

Even with all of this activity many challenges remain, and some folks wonder why the problem of angry civic discourse is not solved. There are a few short answers. First, we did not get here overnight, and we aren't going to get to a better place overnight either. But the growing concern and conversation are actually a help in moving us toward

a greater civility. You cannot solve a problem until people know the problem exists. Awareness of the need to do something about civility is growing steadily.

Secondly, no one can shift a culture by themselves. It will take all of us – a full blown grassroots movement – to affect change. So while we deeply appreciate your support, we encourage you to keep asking others to be a part of the Institute, too. It is as the Institute continues to grow that we will have a greater impact on our culture and communities. And grow we must, for there are forces working against civility as much as there are people who are working for it.

**We are heading into the next year stronger than ever, with a full agenda ahead of us. If you are an active member, watch the website and your mailbox for information on an upcoming vote about our Articles of Incorporation and our by-laws. The changes being recommended by the Board of Directors will enable us to begin establishing affiliate chapters of the Institute at the local and regional levels all over the country.**

We already have plans for two Student Legislative Conferences for 2012, and there are more in the works. We have invitations to speak in communities both near and far. And we are working hard to make the most of every resource and opportunity that comes our way.

**There is little doubt that we are heading into a campaign year that will be hard fought.** Because of your support, the Institute is steadily growing in numbers and influence. **Together, we are making a difference!**

*Cassandra Dahnke,*  
Co-founder and President

*page turners...*

## **Saving Civility** **52 Ways to Tame Rude, Crude & Attitude for a Polite Planet**

If this is December, that means that January and the New Year resolutions that come with it are just around the corner. If you are concerned about maintaining civility in the midst of the election year ahead, this book may be just the thing for you!

In *Saving Civility*, Sara Hacala has taken a much broader perspective than simply civility within the governing process, although skills that apply to political discourse and civic participation can certainly be found here. Like many of us, she is concerned about civility in every aspect of life. Her book offers 52 ways to maintain and foster civility, so if you take the challenge you have one chapter, and thus one resolution, for every week of the year. An easy read, each chapter is short and full of quotes – so the book can serve as an easy reminder, source of encouragement, and/or discussion piece about behavior we should all already know and practice.

It is interesting that the author chose to begin in the same place we did in our book, *Reclaiming Civility in the Public Square*. We call it “Know Yourself”. She calls it “Know Who You Are.” Either way, the message is clear that civility begins with us.

Hacala goes on to cover familiar territory, including listening well, driving gently, dressing appropriately, and even remembering to smile. And yes – sometimes it is just that simple.

Although she covers a much broader range of behaviors than the Institute normally addresses, Hacala ends on the same note that we did in our book, and consistently do through the Institute – that is, A Call to Action. Hacala emphasizes that a culture will not change by itself. It will take the intentionality of all of us to foster a greater civility within our communities and our nation.

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**About the Author:** Sara Hacala is a graduate of the Protocol School of Washington. She provides training in business etiquette, manners and civility.

**Saving Civility** is published by SkyLight Paths Publishing, Woodstock, Vermont, 2011.

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### ***Year End Giving***

Please consider the Institute when making your end-of-year donations. Your generous financial contributions make our student trips, congressional student forums, and community outreach a reality. Thank you!

All contributions to the Institute are tax deductible to the fullest intent of the law. The Institute does not sell or trade any membership information.

Membership and contributions may be made via PayPal on the website [www.instituteforcivility.org](http://www.instituteforcivility.org) or mailed to:

the Institute for Civility in Government  
P.O. Box 41804  
Houston, Texas 77241-1804

## *Welcome New Members!*

Cheryl Barker  
Anjana Bhatt  
Martina Carroll-Garrison  
Ashley Coone  
Janice Dolley  
Michele Gawor  
Cindy Gray  
Becky Heins  
Ana Vicky Holmes  
Madeline Holzem  
Michael Ignatowski  
Carole Kaptur  
Mary Kohlasch  
Valerie Sanchez  
Kathryn Smith  
Sue Snauwaert  
Jeffrey Thompson  
Tina Wiggins  
Michele Yovanovich  
Sandy Zablackas

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## *Where We've Been....*

September 27 – Civility Training Workshop for Philips Electronics in Williamsburg, Virginia  
September 28 – Speaking at League of Women Voters in San Marcos, Texas  
October 9 – Speaking at Westminster PC(USA), Adult Sunday School Class, Austin, Texas  
November 8 – Civility Training at Florida Gulf Coast University, Fort Meyers, Florida  
November 12 – Speaking at Coffee Party, Austin, Texas

## *Where We are Going....*

February 17-19 – St. Philip Women's Retreat – Livingston, Texas  
March 22-23 – Tye Preston Memorial Library Round Table & Civility Training, Canyon Lake, Texas  
May 4-9 – Texas City High School Student Legislative Conference to Washington, DC

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## *Send it Back!*

At a recent speaking engagement, someone from the audience asked me what can be done about all of the negative campaign literature that is delivered to our doors. I responded with the first thing that came to my mind: "Send it back!"

And so the Institute is launching a campaign to "Send it Back!" Like any other product you are not satisfied with, why not return the offending material to the campaign that has sent it to you? **Please note: this is not about the candidates themselves or the political parties.** It is about the negative nature of campaigns – a negativity that is destructive to dialogue and wise decision making processes. What constitutes a negative ad? People will answer that question differently, but we suspect that at the very least, most of you will recognize good old fashioned mud-slinging when you see it.

So if you get a negative ad in the mail, please put it in an envelope along with a note that says something like this:

**"I do not accept negative campaign ads. I am sending this back.  
I look forward to receiving a positive campaign message from you soon."**

Put a stamp on it and send it back to the campaign that sent it to you. If a campaign receives enough of these back in the mail, they will eventually get the message, and we should start receiving the more positive campaigns that we long for. More positive campaigns pave the way for more civil governance. We hope that you will spend a stamp for civility, and ask others to join in this campaign as well. And let us hear from you! Let us know when you "Send it Back!"

the Institute for Civility in Government  
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Houston, Texas 77241-1804

CURRENT RESIDENT OR



*May the good times and treasures  
of the present become the golden  
memories of tomorrow.  
And may the year ahead be full of  
contentment and joy.*

*Seasons Greetings*

### *See this dot?!*

This dot is your guide to your membership in the Institute, and will be a part of each newsletter you receive.

😊 **Green** - your membership is current. Thank you!

😐 **Yellow** - Your annual fees are due. Please send \$25 to the Institute to maintain your support and to continue receiving newsletters, emails, and invitations to special events.

😞 **Red** - Past due! Sorry, but unless you renew your membership, we will be unable to keep you on our mailing list.

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Yearly membership is \$10 for students or \$25 for nonstudents. Memberships may be paid via Pay Pal on the Institute's website at [www.instituteforcivility.org](http://www.instituteforcivility.org) or by mail to PO Box 41804, Houston TX 77241-1804.