

SOLIVITA

DEMOCRATIC CLUB Beacon

NOVEMBER 2023

SolivitaDemocrats.org



Brian Fillette, president — President@SolivitaDemocrats.org

Ellis Moose, editor — Beacon@SolivitaDemocrats.org

President's Letter

Murder Mystery Dinner Theater

Our 1920s themed **Murder Mystery Dinner Theater** event at the Ballroom on Thursday October 26 was a “roaring” success! Thanks to all who joined us! Special thanks to the event ideator and lead organizer **Ways & Means Chair Valerie Williams** and to the volunteers who generously gave their time and efforts to prepare for and help at the event. In no particular order: Audrey Paisley, Bob Baumann, Brenda Davis, Brian Fillette, Carlton Fisher, Dave Jorio, Diane Jorio, Dorothy Schwartz, Eileen Bertuglia, Ellis Moose, Joan Sprain, Julia Wood Sibblis, Kathy Gambino, Pam Dalsimer, Patty Whittle, Robert Napolitano, Rochelle Quinn.



Pres. Brian Fillette



MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 9 and at SolivitaDemocrats.org

Please join us at our next membership meeting on Wednesday, November 8 in the Ballroom (or Zoom) featuring guest speaker **Kathie Sutherland**, President of the Polk Clean Energy Alliance (PCEA), Secretary of the Polk Democratic Environmental Caucus, and former Chair of the Polk DEC. PCEA is an environmental non-profit corporation dedicated to educating the community on how to increase energy efficiency, reduce energy costs, and reduce greenhouse gases.

Be sure to RSVP for our **Annual Membership Appreciation Dinner** event coming to the Ballroom on Wednesday December 13. See page 2 for full info from Membership Chair Kate Kohout.

President's Letter, continued on next page

WEDNESDAY
November 8th

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

In the BALLROOM
And on ZOOM

Doors Open at 6:30PM
Meeting at 7:00PM

Featuring Speaker

KATHIE SUTHERLAND



President of the Polk Clean Energy Alliance (PCEA),
Secretary of the Polk Democratic Environmental Caucus,
and former Chair of the Polk DEC.

“Climate Action Now”

Membership Appreciation Coming December 13th

REPRESENTATIVES

Our elected representatives need your input

Let them know your positions on issues!

Sen. Rick Scott (R)

United States Senate
Phone: 202-224-5274

Sen. Marco Rubio (R)

United States Senate
Phone: 202-224-3041

Rep. Darren Soto (D)

US District 9 Office
804 Bryan Street
Kissimmee, FL 34741
Phone: 202-225-9889

Gov. Ron DeSantis (R)

The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.,
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001
Website: www.flgov.com

State Rep. Sam Killebrew (R)

FL House District 48 Office:
Phone: 850-717-5041
Email: sam.killebrew@myfloridahouse.gov

State Sen. Colleen Burton (R)

District 12 Office
100 South Kentucky Avenue
Suite 260
Lakeland, FL 33801
Email: Colleen.Burton.web@flsenate.gov

MEDIA

The Orlando Sentinel

Editorial Dept.
633 N. Orange Avenue
Orlando, FL 32801

The Lakeland Ledger

Editorial Dept.
P.O. Box 408
Lakeland, FL 33802

SDC Beacon Newsletter

c/o Ellis Moose
217 Sorrento Road
Poinciana, FL 34759-4065
Beacon@SolivitaDemocrats.org

President's Letter, continued from previous page

And if you haven't yet, please support these two important 2024 Florida ballot initiatives. More signed petitions are needed to have a chance at giving voters a voice. **ACT NOW!**

1. Amendment to Limit Government Interference with Abortion.

From the ballot summary: No law shall prohibit, penalize, delay, or restrict abortion before viability or when necessary to protect the patient's health, as determined by the patient's healthcare provider.

Get the petition from:

<https://floridiansprotectingfreedom.com/petition/>

2. Right to Clean and Healthy Waters

From the ballot summary: This amendment creates a fundamental right to clean and healthy waters. The amendment may be used to sue State executive agencies for harm or threatened harm to Florida's waters, which include aquatic ecosystems.

Get the petition from <https://www.floridarighttocleanwater.org/>

Note: Petition forms must be completed individually and returned via US Mail to the address indicated on the forms. Nearly 900,000 signatures are needed by end of 2023 to qualify for the Florida ballot in 2024.

Thanks for all that you do, and most of all, thank you for being who you are.

Brian Fillette, President, Solivita Democratic Club

president@solivitademocrats.org

Visit our Website <https://solivitademocrats.org/>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/solivitademocraticclub>

Nextdoor <https://nextdoor.com/g/qikq82agv/>

Membership Appreciation Dinner

By Kate Kohout, SDC Membership Chair

Come celebrate with the largest Democratic Club in Polk County!

Current and new SDC members are cordially invited to our Annual Membership Appreciation dinner event on Wednesday, December 13 in the Ballroom.

Doors open 5:30pm, Dinner served 6pm, Meeting begins 7pm.

On the menu: Wraps (Italian, Turkey, Vegetarian), Chicken Wings, Salad, Chips and Cookies.

There is no cost to Club members for this dinner event and you will have the opportunity to start or renew your Annual Membership for 2024 at the discounted rate of \$12. This discounted rate offer is valid for the month of December 2023 only.

Please RSVP via email to Kate Kohout ksquared1987@yahoo.com by Wednesday, December 6 to reserve your place.

We're thankful for our SDC members, all they've done throughout the year, and most of all for who they are!

REGISTRATIONS

Voter Registrations have dropped!

Reg. Voters as of Nov. 1, 2023

Pct 411:	7/5/22	11/1/23	+/-
Dems	1535	1578	+43
Rep	1539	1647	+108
NPA	938	*995	+57
Total	4,069	4,294	+225

Pct 412:	7/5/22	11/1/23	+/-
Dems	4,102	3,327	-775
Rep	1,297	1,276	-21
NPA	3200	*2,663	-537
Total	8,710	7,416	-1,294

Pct 425:	7/5/22	11/1/23	+/-
Dems	959	940	-19
Rep	868	892	+24
NPA	671	*652	-19
Total	2,536	2,523	-13

Polk:	7/21/2	11/1/23	+/-
Dems	149,497	131,127	-18,370
Rep	172,220	171,939	-281
NPA	126,391	*114,082	-12,309
Total	456,568	427,353	-29,215

Florida:	7/21/22	10/1/23	+/-
Dems	4,955,022	4,556,560	-398,462
Rep	5,217,343	5,183,078	-34,265
NPA	3,887,406	*3,710,193	-177,213
Total:	14,256,184	13,752,205	-503,979

Note: *NPAs do not include minor party registrations that are not shown here. Florida numbers lag Polk Co. by 31 days.

WEBSITES

Websites of interest:

POLITICS:

- www.FlaDems.com
- www.FISenate.gov/topics/ppaca
- www.PolkDemocrats.org
- www.PolkElections.com
- www.Democrats.org
- www.ProgressFlorida.org
- www.DemocraticGovernors.org
- www.BestOfTheLeft.com
- www.NPR.org
- www.Snopes.com
- www.FactCheck.org
- www.PolitiFact.com

2024 HOA BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION

In accordance with the Association's Bylaws and Florida Statute 720, the Association's Annual Meeting of the Membership has been scheduled as follows: 10:00 AM, Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2024 in the Solivita Starlite Ballroom, 384 Village Drive. Members will vote to fill two open Board of Director positions, each with a two-year term. In accordance with the procedure for director nomination, the candidates must give the Association written notice of their intent to run for the office, along with a completed candidate certification form signed by the candidate, no later than Thursday, November 16, 2023.

No candidate nominations may be accepted from the floor at an Annual Members Meeting. All candidates must meet the eligibility requirements as stated in Florida Statute 720 at the time of the deadline for submitting the notice of intent to be a candidate.

Members will also vote on the seven proposed amendments to our governing documents

Lita Epstein, one of our own SDC members, is running for the Solivita HOA Board

As a resident of Solivita since 2005, she has worked on many projects to further the development of the community including:

Save Our Solivita (2008/2009): helped to organize and participate in this working group to oppose the incorporation of the city of Poinciana and prevent Solivita from becoming a cash cow for the property taxes of the city.

Beginning in Sept. 2015, she worked diligently to prevent the amenities purchase for \$73 million, including serving on the CDD beginning in 2016 and becoming chair in 2018 to prevent the closing of the contract to purchase the amenities for \$73 million.

Organized the campaign in 2018 of five CDD members called the **Price is Too High** to help fight the purchase of the amenities for \$73 million. Won by more than 67% of the vote.

Organized and continue to coordinate the Southport Connector Alternative Routes (SCAR), to seek an alternative to the plan for building a Great Wall of Poinciana outside our gates.

Filed a Title VI complaint to slow the process for the Southport Connector and seek federal investigation of its planning.

Served on the Poinciana CDD for 7 years, including five as Chair.

Professional Training and Experience:

Served on HOA boards, including as President, in 4 states.

Served Community Planning boards or Committees in 4 states, including the Polk County's Planning Commission and Board of Adjustments.

Business owner and author with 50 books on the market primarily in the areas of business and personal finance.

EDITORIAL



REFLECTIONS ON VIOLENCE, MURDER AND WAR

By Joe Tobin, SDC Member and Beacon Contributor



What a troubling month October was! One day there was normality.

The next day the world was stunned when media coverage broke the news that Hamas surprise-attacked Israel, leaving a path of destruction, death, trauma and homelessness. In reflection, Israel's weaponry left much of Gazans' territory in shambles and utter misery among the population. Two weeks later, the deadly mass shootings in Lewiston, Maine occurred. During this time, most of the national daily shootings and murders barely made the front pages. No doubt, the nation was shocked for the moment because of these two incidents.

Oh! if only we could resurrect those hippies of the '60s, smoke pot and make love — all would be well in the world. But it's not going to happen in our lifetimes. No new-born child receives a lifetime guarantee that life on earth will be peaches and cream. Even children learn to avoid the bullies in the schoolyard.

In glancing through the latest issue of *National Geographic*, there was a picture of orcas hunting down a seal in the Antarctic's now free-flowing waters. That picture further cemented my belief that the animal world has two categories: the hunters and the prey. Once the feeding kill is over, the animals relax, procreate, raise offspring and start the process over.

The behavioral wiring of humans is more complicated, as modern science attests. Realistically, who can predict with accuracy the next move of any move a person at any given time? As one of my favorite philosophers of yesteryear, the Shadow, said so eloquently, "*Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men?*" Throughout the centuries there have always been and always will be a Bonaparte, a Hitler, or a Stalin driving populations to death. The United States has had its share of sadistic killers, cult leaders, such as Jim Jones, and organized crime like the Ku Klux Klan or Mafia.

The great writers of literature were all familiar with violence and warfare during their lifetimes. Shakespeare had the McBeth and Iago; the Bible includes the murderous desires of Cain, David, Judith and Herod; the Greek classic lore includes the revengeful slayings of the gods as well as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; and, modern writers fill volumes of fictional and non-fictional pages relating to war, such as Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*. Thanks to the demands of the he public, the theme of crime pays the household bills for so many writers and movie makers. Oh, the contradictions of us humans!

On a positive side, good programs currently in force in various states have helped reduce sectors of crime; laws addressing violence against women and safe houses for women who need them; reportage of child sexual abuse is legally mandated for designated individuals; schools and colleges have taken measures to shield students against the rifle assaults in the schools and colleges across the country; and many houses of worship have beefed up their securities, especially during services. No place or event is safe — shopping centers, parades, music festivals, theaters and so on. Americans still have a lot to learn and implement.

There still remains the issue of deadly war around the globe. While the United States and China are in sparring mode at this time, thankfully neither side is moving up the stakes for

Joe Tobin, continued on next page.

SDC BOARD

Brian Fillette, President
President@SolivitaDemocrats.org
 704-641-2978

Ellis Moose, Vice President/
 Beacon Editor/Webmaster
Beacon@SolivitaDemocrats.org
 863-852-7294

Rochelle Quinn, Treasurer
RQuinn777@gmail.com
 863-496-5313

Joan Sprain, Secretary
Joan.Sprain@AOL.com
 651-261-9166

Kate Kohout,
 Membership Chair
KateKohout@yahoo.com
 863-496-0481

Valerie Williams,
 Ways and Means Chair
vpowell65@aol.com
 631-455-4036

Dorothy Schwartz,
 Publicity Chair
SchwartzAPN@aol.com
 732-207-3358

Diane Jorio,
 Hospitality Chair
DDJorio@live.com
 443-262-1053

The Board of Directors meets the first Tuesday of each month via ZOOM.

Precinct Captains:

Leonard Guminski, Pct. 425
MariaDLenG145@yahoo.com
 586-321-4711

Celeste Williams, Pct. 411
CelestynWilliams1@gmail.com
 407-924-1766

Alan Harris, Pct. 411
AMHarris1212@yahoo.com
 407-718-2525
 Solivita west of Marigold Ave.

Could Be You (2 Female, 2 Male),
 Pct. 412
 Solivita Bella Viana, Venezia
 and portions of Poinciana

Ellis Moose, At Large
Beacon@SolivitaDemocrats.org
 863-852-7294

Joe Tobin, continued from previous page.

instant war. My hope is that any leaders across the globe will do a cost analysis of the destruction that will bring to their countries. I hope that by the time of this article's publication, the temperature of the various pro-and con-groups that are showing support for Israel or Palestine will be reduced. The savagery of Hamas must be stopped, *period!* Unfortunately it will take years to rebuild the destroyed cities of Gaza and for the population to deal the heavy traumas that arise from violence and war. The Israelis also will be coping with the same needs. Hopefully, the international community will come to some positive arrangements.

The battles in Ukraine and Israel are rapidly illustrating how devastating is the conduct of modern war. No matter what we think of war, the *defense* of a country always remains a top priority. Future wars will require lots of techies as well as boots on the ground. In America, cars and guns still remain the weapons that kill and maim people. During the pre-Halloween days I watched an old Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde movie. A couple of days later, I drove to Publix. On route, I stopped to let cars crossing from Cypress Parkway onto County Club Drive. Why not? Since the law requires me not to block intersections and I could not move anyway. But, many of my fellow drivers blocked the passage. I thought, "How many Jeckylls and Hydes live and drive in Poinciana?" A little bit of kindness goes a long way towards easing tensions among our fellow human beings.

Note: *Special thanks to all those who made the Mystery Dinner a great fun night. The Ballroom decorations were beautifully done.*

—Joe

Happy Thanksgiving to all!



"You're not going to their Thanksgiving dinner dressed like that, are you?"

FLORIDA 'TICS

Dear Democrats,

We were busy in October all across our state!

FDP released a joint statement of solidarity with Chair Fried, House Democratic Leader Fentrice Driskell, and Senate Democratic Leader Lauren Book.

Florida Dems welcomed First Lady Dr. Jill Biden to Florida, when she visited military families at the Patrick Space Force Base, and joined Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz for a Cancer Survivorship Summit.

Secretary Pete Buttigieg visited Miami-Dade recently and stopped by the Port of Miami and toured the Brightline to promote the Administration’s investment in transportation infrastructure.

Also, Chair Fried hosted a virtual vigil — a night of reflection and remembrance alongside Co-President of the American Muslim Democratic Caucus Annisa Karim, President of the Florida Jewish American Democratic Caucus Rabbi Mark Winer, and State Senator Shevrin Jones.



Nikki Fried
Chair, FDP

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER is...



- 11/5 Daylight Savings Ends
- 11/5-11 National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week
- 11/6 International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict
- 11/7 National Cancer Awareness Day
- 11/10 U.S. Marine Corps Birthday
- 11/11 **Veterans Day**
- 11/18 Mickey & Minnie Mouse’s Birthday
- 11/19-25 Separation of Church & State Week
- 11/22 What Do You Love About America? Day
- 11/23 **Thanksgiving**
Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade
National Dog Show Broadcast
- 11/24 **Black Friday**
- 11/25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
- 11/28 National Day of Giving



Find more fun November holidays at: <https://nationaltoday.com/november-holidays/>

FLORIDA TICS

State leaders pass on Biden's solar panel assistance

By Skyler Swisher Orlando Sentinel

Florida leaders passed on a chance to secure up to \$400 million in federal money to help low-income households install solar panels, disregarding an initiative by the Biden administration to promote clean energy in disadvantaged communities.

Florida is among a handful of states that didn't apply for the federal government's \$7 billion "Solar for All" competition.

Gov. Ron DeSantis and his Republican allies are hurting Floridians by not seeking federal money that could help lower energy bills, U.S. Rep. Darren Soto said.

"This is more money Gov. DeSantis and the Republican supermajority left on the table," the Central Florida Democrat said. "All this is doing is hurting poor people."

While the state is not applying for solar funding, a coalition of nonprofit organizations is trying to tap into the program, said Yoca Arditi-Rocha, executive director of the CLEO Institute, a climate change advocacy group.

"We are hopeful the dollars and funding will still come," she said, adding that the coalition includes the Nature Conservancy, United Solar Neighbors and the Solar and Energy Loan Fund. "That said, it was frustrating not to see our state jumping on that opportunity. We are the Sunshine State, after all." The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency expects to make 60 awards that will span from \$25 million to \$400 million to states, local governments, Native American tribes and nonprofit groups. The program aims to reduce household electricity costs by at least 20%.

DeSantis' office referred questions about why Florida didn't apply to Agriculture Commissioner Wilton Simpson, an independently elected constitutional officer. Simpson's department oversees the state's Office of Energy. An agency spokesman did not respond to a request for comment.

Florida was one of six states that did not seek the money. Others were Idaho, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota and South Dakota, according to the EPA.

Solar for All is part of President Joe Biden's Inflation Reduction Act, which created a \$27 billion greenhouse gas reduction fund.

On the campaign trail, DeSantis has pledged to unravel Biden's green energy agenda if elected president, slamming the Inflation Reduction Act and what he called "a concerted effort to ramp up the fear when it comes to things like global warming and climate change."

His energy agenda includes ending Biden's subsidies for electric cars, while pushing policies that he says would ramp up domestic oil production.

"The subsidies are going to drive inflation higher," DeSantis said at an event in September. "It's not going to help with interest rates, and it is certainly not going to help with our unsustainable debt levels."

But Holly Bullard, chief strategy and development officer with the Florida Policy Institute, said Floridians are concerned about climate change and rising utility costs.

"The fact that the Sunshine State is one of only six state governments not to apply for funding is an egregious missed opportunity," she said.

Florida Politics, continued from previous page.

State leaders pass on Biden's solar panel assistance, cont.

A state application would have boosted Florida's chances of getting federal funding. Eleven Florida nonprofits are seeking Solar for All funding, along with Alachua County.

"It could be additional funding if the state had applied. ... We are seeing this as part of a trend. A lot of folks have alleged the governor is caring more about the presidential campaign than Florida families," Rep. Darren Soto said.

Earlier this year, DeSantis vetoed seed money needed to set up a \$346 million rebate program to help Floridians buy energy-efficient appliances and other energy-saving upgrades for their homes, another Biden initiative.

If Florida doesn't apply for the funding in time, it will be reallocated to other states, according to the U.S. Department of Energy's guidelines.

DeSantis faced criticism for vetoing another bipartisan bill that supporters said could have saved \$277 million over 15 years by adding electric cars to state fleets.

The governor's office hasn't provided a detailed explanation for the vetoes.

Asked about the energy rebate veto, a DeSantis spokesman said the governor "reviews every bill and appropriation that comes across his desk and uses his authority under the Florida Constitution to veto bills that he believes are bad public policy."

Florida also was one of four states that declined \$3 million grants to create plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, which are needed to draw down additional federal funding, according to the EPA.

DeSantis' administration has accepted some other sources of environmental funding from the federal government, such as a nearly \$3.8 million award to promote tree canopies in cities.

The Biden administration also announced it will fund 16 projects to fight climate change in Florida totaling nearly \$79 million. Those funds come from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act.

Congressman Darren Soto published the above article in Sunday's *Orlando Sentinel* calling out Ron DeSantis and State Reps for passing on solar panel assistance funds from Joe Biden's *Inflation Reduction Act*

http://digitaledition.orlandosentinel.com/infinity/article_share.aspx?guid=eedd6427-c0e0-4a89-a820-b833af2fea2c

Seems not the first time DeSantis has taken a hostile or inactive stance on clean energy initiatives. And also seems at odds with the vast majority of Floridians who support state and federal action to address impacts of climate change

<https://www.axios.com/local/tampa-bay/2023/10/30/floridians-climate-change-survey>

Murder Mystery Theater Dinner Photos — Find these and many more at SolivitaDemocrats.org



Print out this Membership Application for your friends and bring them to our next meeting!



A chartered club of the Polk County Florida Democratic Executive Committee

Membership Application Form

Annual Membership dues are \$15/person

Please make checks payable to: **Solivita Democratic Club**

Mail to:

**SDC Treasurer
586 Villa Park Rd.
Poinciana, FL 34759**

Date: _____ New Member Renewing Member

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Full Time Solivita Resident? (Check one) Yes No

I am registered as: Democrat NPA (No Party Affiliation) Other Party Republican

I am NOT registered to vote in Polk County, Florida



Membership Includes

Monthly Beacon Newsletter — Informative Meetings — Fun Events

Meetings are held at 7 pm, on the 2nd Wednesday of each month
in the Solivita Starlite Ballroom and online via Zoom.

Visit Solivitademocrats.org for additional information.