

SOLIVITA

DEMOCRATIC CLUB Beacon

FEBRUARY 2024
SolivitaDemocrats.org

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

Brian Fillette, president — President@SolivitaDemocrats.org

Ellis Moose, editor — Beacon@SolivitaDemocrats.org

President's Letter

Blueberry Shortcake sale, February meeting, and Game Day returns!

Lots going on — let's get right to it SDC!

Visit our table at the Mardi Gras Street Party on Tuesday, February 13 starting at 5pm. We'll be selling delicious single-serve Blueberry Shortcakes for \$5 each. Be sure to get yours while supplies last!

We're excited to announce that **Game Day at The Palms** returns on Sunday, April 14 from Noon to 3pm!

What is Game Day? It's a popular SDC sponsored event last held in October 2022. Bring your own favorite table games to play with friends (Board games, Card games, Domino games, Mahjong). Or learn to play a new game with new friends. Lunch, snacks, beverages, and fun included!

We'll be holding a **SDC member Game Day advance ticket sale** immediately prior to our next meeting in the Ballroom on Wednesday, February 14 from 6:15pm-7pm. **Tickets are \$20 for SDC members.** (\$25 for non-members). Game Day tickets will go on sale for all Solivita residents starting on Friday, March 1 at Mosaics from 10am-12pm. Future ticket sale dates and locations to be announced, subject to availability.

Our February 14 meeting will feature guest speaker **Lori Edwards**. Lori has served as Polk County's Supervisor of Elections for more than 20 years, conducting more than 200 elections. Let's show Lori some love on Valentine's Day as she runs for re-election this year!



Pres. Brian Fillette



Also, a reminder that we'll be conducting SDC Officer and Director elections at our March meeting for the positions of Secretary, Hospitality, Membership, and Outreach Chair. We are currently seeking candidates for the position of **Secretary**. Responsibilities include: records minutes for all meetings of the Club and Board of Directors; sends new and renewing Club member welcome and thank you letters via e-mail; ability to use Microsoft Word or equivalent, E-mail, and Zoom.

If interested contact me, any SDC Officer, or Board member.

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/>

WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 14th
LORI EDWARDS
POLK COUNTY SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS
In the Starlite Ballroom

Doors Open at 6:15PM

Meeting at 7:00PM

EDITORIAL

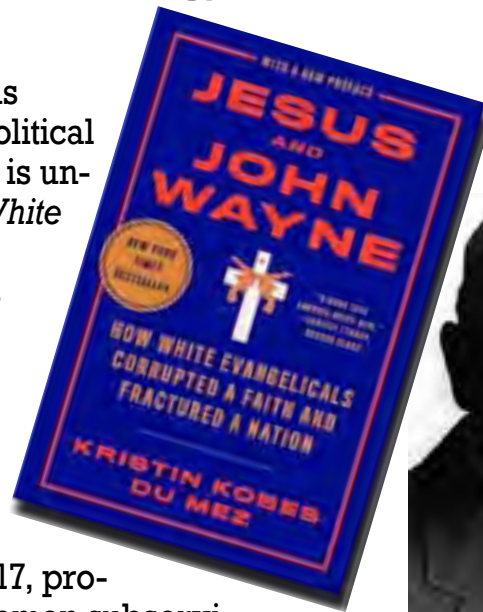
For Power and Glory (mostly the power!)

David Maish, SDC Member, is a retired United Methodist Clergy who has lived in Solivita since 2005.



I was naive.... Over the last several years I was vaguely aware of the growing cultural and political influence of White Evangelical Christians. That is until I recently read “*Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation.*” Author Kristin Kobes Du Mez reviews how white male dominance evolved over the last hundred years.

Theodore Roosevelt, around the Spanish-American War, physically and in action embodied heroic American manhood and became president in 1901. Billy Sunday, who around the U.S. entrance into World War I in 1917, proclaimed the patriarchy of the household with women subservient to men. Billy Graham, around WWII, pushed Christian Nationalism, and was aided by John Wayne’s friend, country singer Stuart Hamblen. This blending of sacred and secular through modern media grew exponentially by promotion through Christian book stores, radio and television evangelism.



The Reverend Graham helped Eisenhower get elected in 1952 and supported the peacetime expansion of the military industrial complex. Graham helped launch the first National Prayer Breakfast, with assistance by members of “The Fellowship,” a secretive group that wielded tremendous power by connecting religious, political, and business leaders to advance their mutual interest.

The Brown decision which ended public school segregation gave birth to Christian academies, and later to home schooling which pushed evangelical indoctrination. Opposition to the Vietnam War and the rise of feminism both challenged white male heroism. However, John Wayne greatest hit movies and his pronouncements modeled masculine strength, aggression, and redemptive violence mostly of valiant white men against nonwhite populations.

The 1987 repeal of the Federal Communication Commission’s Fairness Doctrine enabled blurring the line between news and entertainment which unleashed Rush Limbaugh and Fox News.

Phyllis Schlafly’s Eagle Forum helped unite diverse conservative women in opposition to the 1973 Equal Rights Amendment. Her influence preceded Bill Gothard’s popular seminars and James Dobson’s full blown media empire whose budget would eventually surpass \$100 million. Beverly LeHaye’s Concerned Citizens for America grew in influence and Tim LaHaye founded the Council for National Policy, an influential and secretive organization that served as a conservative policy incubator and helped nudge the Republican Party to the Right.

David Maish, continued on next page.

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

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David Maish, continued from previous page

Jerry Falwell launched the Moral Majority to promote Goldwater's run for the presidency. Falwell clothed his gospel in military metaphors which fit with the military community of his church. Ronald Reagan as governor had supported ERA, legalized therapeutic abortions, etc. but running for president he switched on those and focused on anticommunism, Christian nationalism, and the nostalgia for a mythical American past. He was tough on street crimes and threats of black men but not so much on domestic violence, sexual assault or child abuse.



Jerry Falwell, Sr., was an American Independent Baptist pastor, televangelist, and conservative activist. He is shown above at an "I Love America" rally in 1980.

Southern Baptists, the largest Protestant denomination, shifted further to the right by disallowing their female pastors, hardening their taking the Bible literally and inerrancy of Scripture to justify some of their political stances. Oliver North in the Iran Contra Affair broke the law for the greater good, was the featured speaker at that year's Southern Baptist Convention. North also helped cement the ties of the Evangelicals with the NRA.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and Communism the evangelicals needed a new enemy. They found it in Islamism, attacking The Clintons and The Obamas. Author De Mez gives specifics on the contribution of these and many other individuals and organizations that laid the foundation for the political divide which we are experiencing now. Since writing her book in 2020, Trump has mesmerized the Evangelical Christians, hoping to get reelected and promising to take total control of our government and end democracy.

Heaven help us!

REGISTRATIONS

FL Voter Registrations down by 905,775!
Reg. Voters as of Dec. 31, 2023

Pct 411: 7/5/22	12/31/23	+/-
Dems 1535	1580	+45
Rep 1539	1663	+124
NPA 938	*1000	+62
Total 4,069	4,321	+252

Note: Registration numbers will change when Solivitas who live in Bella Viana and Venezia are moved from Pct. 425 back to Pct. 411 as they were prior to the 2020 redistricting.

Pct 412: 7/5/22	12/31/23	+/-
Dems 4,102	3,348	-754
Rep 1,297	1,291	-6
NPA 3200	*2,685	-515
Total 8,710	7,494	-1,216

Pct 425: 7/5/22	12/31/23	+/-
Dems 959	937	-22
Rep 868	904	+36
NPA 671	*653	-18
Total 2,536	2,536	0

Polk: 7/21/22	12/31/23	+/-
Dems 149,497	132,618	-16,879
Rep 172,220	173,592	+1,372
NPA 126,391	*115,898	-10,493
Total 456,568	432,948	-23,620

Florida: 7/21/22	12/31/23	+/-
Dems 4,955,022	4,364,147	-590,875
Rep 5,217,343	5,141,848	-75,495
NPA 3,887,406	*3,528,807	-358,599
Total: 14,256,184	13,350,409	-905,775

Note: *NPAs do not include minor party registrations that are not shown here.



2024 HOA BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION

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. Feb 2-9 - Election by electronic or paper ballot.

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

Candidate photos and Biographies are available at <https://www.solivitahoa.com/std.php?IID=1678489500&l-SubmenuID=143826>

Rep. Darren Soto helped distribute food at St. Rose of Lima Food Pantry in January



Congressman Soto met St. Rose's new pastor, Rev. Jean Desir, and thanked the St. Rose Pantry team for their generous and vital community service. Generous volunteers come every week to the 70-year-old building to organize and distribute needed food for local families. DUO has raised over \$500,000 for the pantry.



Volunteers, many from Solivita, fed over 80,000 people during the first 15 months of the pandemic.



Ida Meringolo, Do Unto Others Initiative discussed the need for the new Lima Center with Rep. Soto.

FLORIDA 'TICS

Dear Democrats,

This month we flipped a seat from red to blue and elected Tom Keen to represent State House District 35!

This did not happen without Florida Democrats from all across the state coming together to knock doors, make calls, and send text messages to voters all the way until polls closed.

Huge shoutout to Leader Fentrice Driskell and the House Victory team, as well as Congressman Maxwell Frost and his team for leading the charge in the air and on the ground to make this victory possible.

Florida Democrats proved what is possible when you have a well-funded and well-organized campaign with the support of the party apparatus, and reminded the nation once again that Florida is worth fighting for.

This year we have some huge battles ahead of us, but it is clear now more than ever that when we work together – there is nothing wrong with this state that can't be fixed by what's right in it.

This weekend, Democrats throughout the state participated in the first Voter Registration Day of Action of 2024! We will be holding monthly days of action to uplift the important work being done to engage voters.



Nikki Fried
Chair, FDP



Thank you, and as always – one team, one dream!

CALENDAR

**FEBRUARY is...
Black History Month**

- 2/10 Chinese Lunar New Year's Day
- 2/11 Armed Forces Day
- 2/11 Super Bowl Sunday
- 2/12 NAACP Day
- 2/13 Mardi Gras Parade in Solivita
- 2/14 **Lori Edwards Appreciation Day! / SDC Membership Meeting**
- 2/14 **Valentine's Day**
- 2/14 Ash Wednesday — Beginning of Lent
- 2/19 **Presidents' Day (No, NOT you, Donald!)**
- 2/20 National No Politics Day
- 2/23 World Peace and Understanding Day
- 2/26 Black Lives Matter Day
- 2/29 Leap Day!



Find more fun February holidays at: <https://nationaltoday.com/february-holidays/>

Democrats Flip Florida House District 35 from Republicans - The Election DeSantis delayed

FLORIDA 'TICS

Matthew Isbell - MCIMAPS, Jan 17, 2024

On Monday, January 15, I wrote about the special election for House District 35, a swing seat that was holding a special election in the Orlando area on the next day.

As I discussed in my initial article, HD35, which covers eastern Orange and Osceola Counties, is a swingish seat that has slowly moved more democratic with time. It backed Joe Biden by 5 points in 2020, but then moved heavily to the right in 2022.

While Biden won the seat, DeSantis and Rubio both took the district by 12 and 8 points respectively. When incumbent Republican Fred Hawkins resigned to take a post at a state college, the special became an instant focus for both parties.

Back in July, when the special election date was announced, I posited that the late vote (January being pretty deep into the cycle) was specifically picked because it was AFTER the Iowa caucuses. Another special election in a redder seat was scheduled for December.



DeSantis, by my logic, did not want the risk of a flipped seat undermining his electability argument to caucus voters. Now, since July, the DeSantis campaign became a nightmare, and heading into Monday's caucuses the HD35 election was the last of their concerns. DeSantis instead spent all his time in Iowa. What did it get him? Losing to Trump by 30 points and taking zero counties!

Iowa aside, that DeSantis worry about HD35 proved to be correct, because last night Democrat Tom Keen FLIPPED HD35 for the Democrats.

Florida Politics, continued on next page.

Florida Politics, continued from previous page.



Is Tom Keene's win indicative of a change in voters' opinions of Florida Republicans and their governing style!?

Election Day Hour by Hour						
Hour	GOP	DEM	NPA	Total	D Marg	D Marg %
8pm Report	182	93	90	315	-89	-28.25%
9pm Report	381	197	86	664	-184	-27.71%
10pm Report	645	327	145	1,117	-318	-28.47%
11pm Report	938	516	234	1,688	-422	-25.00%
12pm Report	1,305	702	311	2,318	-603	-26.01%
1pm Report	1,666	930	382	2,978	-736	-24.71%
2pm Report	2,000	1,128	496	3,624	-872	-24.06%
3pm Report	2,323	1,346	603	4,272	-977	-22.87%
4pm Report	2,682	1,568	717	4,977	-1,124	-22.58%
5pm Report	3,208	1,854	845	5,907	-1,354	-22.92%
6pm Report	3,727	2,207	1,009	6,943	-1,520	-21.89%
7pm Report	4,248	2,621	1,187	8,056	-1,627	-20.20%

Combined Early/Mail Vote in HD35 Special					
Method	GOP	DEM	NPA	Total	D v R
Vote by Mail	3,766	4,340	1,764	9,870	574
In-Person Early	1,764	1,853	603	4,219	89
Election Day	4,248	2,621	1,187	8,056	-1,627
Total	9,778	8,814	3,553	22,145	-964

Method	GOP	DEM	NPA
Vote by Mail	38.16%	43.77%	17.87%
In-Person Early	41.81%	43.92%	14.27%
Election Day	52.35%	32.53%	14.73%
Total	44.15%	39.80%	16.04%

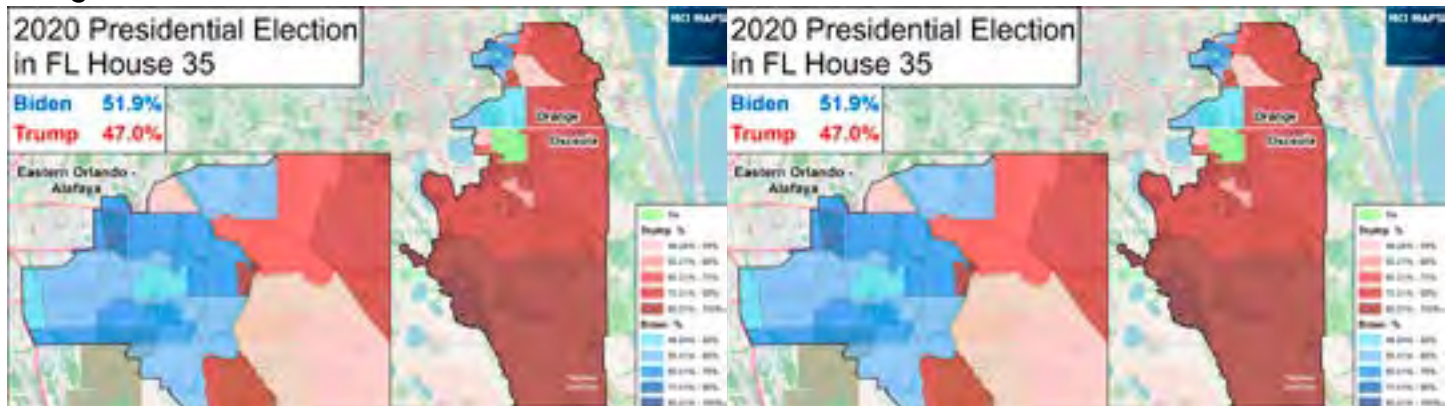
	GOP	DEM	NPA	Total	Share			
Orange	6,838	40.41%	2,721	16.10%	18,903	70.33%		
Orlando	2,940	39.09%	1,470	28.04%	882	15.87%	5,247	23.67%
Total	9,778	44.15%	8,814	39.80%	3,553	16.04%	22,145	

The entire special election has been a contentious and expensive affair. I recommend reading Issue #149 for details; but both parties spent over \$1 million on the race and the campaign had plenty of controversies.

Heading into election day, Democrats held a modest lead in early and absentee voting, leading by around 4% of votes cast and 600+ raw votes. The worry for team blue was how red election day might be. I discussed this in my preview. The data showed that both parties had plenty of "supervoters" left to show up; so it was not a guarantee that election day would be deep red. However, as election day votes came in, the GOP continued to eat away at the built-in democratic lead. When all votes were accounted for, the GOP's 52%-32% election day margin meant they had had a nearly 1,000 vote lead via registration.

This partisan gap in turnout, an electorate that was GOP +4, made a Democratic win very hard, but not impossible. As I discussed in my preview, the NPA vote leans democratic in this district. However, it was doubtful Keen would get enough NPAs or moderate Republicans to close such a turnout gap.

Well, that is exactly what happened, because Tom Keen won the race by 3%. A 590 vote margin!



TOPLINE: Ron's obsession with his failed presidential campaign hurt Floridians.



Florida Democrats have spent the last year making sure that voters from Iowa to New Hampshire and everywhere in between know exactly how Ron has failed the people of Florida.

Ron could have been focusing on things that actually matter to Floridians, like healthcare, human rights, and the economy, but instead, he's been an absentee governor who cares more about media hits than policy solutions.

His ridiculous obsession with the presidency has had real consequences here, from his refusal to address our property insurance and affordability crisis to the effects of his made-up culture wars.

TOPLINE: Florida Democrats are fully focused on re-electing Joe Biden and Kamala Harris.

Our priorities include ending the Republican supermajority in our legislature and fighting Ron's racist, misogynist, homophobic, and transphobic policies at every turn.

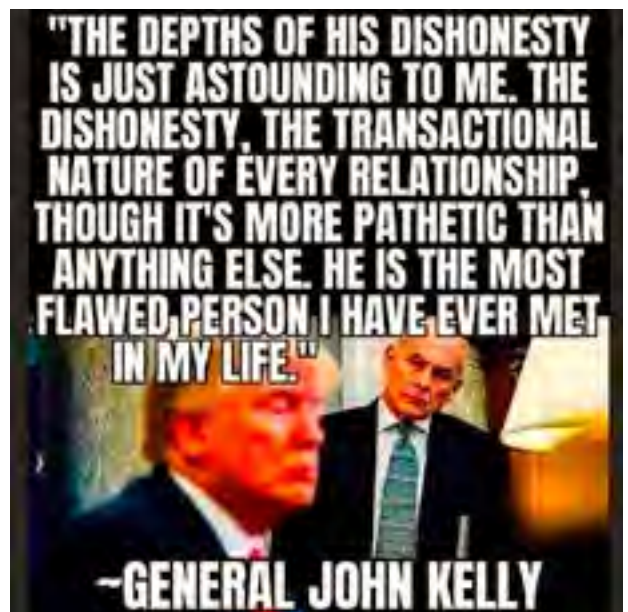
Florida Democrats will fight for reproductive rights, an end to our property insurance crisis, and economic relief for Floridians at every turn.

Donald Trump bragged about overturning *Roe v. Wade*, and paved the way for Florida Republicans to pass one of the most extreme abortion bans in the country.

Donald Trump's presidency was a complete and utter failure, and he's told us exactly what he plans to do if re-elected: pass a national abortion ban, rig the economy for his wealthy friends, and rule our country as a dictator.

In just three years, the Biden-Harris administration has lowered healthcare costs, invested in American infrastructure, and created millions of new jobs.

They've fought to protect our right to make private decisions about our health care without interference from the government, and they're committed to safeguarding democracy from extremism.



POLK COUNTY 'TICS


Lori Edwards
Supervisor of Elections

**YOUR
VOTE
MATTERS**

November 12, 2023

Dear Solivita Dems,

I'm writing today to ask for your support as I seek re-election as Polk County Supervisor of Elections. This is a contested race. A well-financed candidate is campaigning to defeat me.

We are working hard on a grassroots effort to raise awareness of all that is at stake in this race!

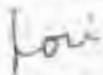
As you know, this is a challenging position that demands the extraordinary knowledge and fairness to perform under extreme pressure and scrutiny. My passion for our democratic process drives me to offer Polk's voters elections that they can have confidence in.

I'm proud of the accomplishments of our office. Our amazing team of election workers has conducted over 200 successful elections since I was first elected, and our outreach and voter education efforts have resulted in thousands of new registered voters.

I have worked hard to earn the profession's highest designation as a Certified Elections Administrator from The Election Center with Auburn University's Master's in Public Administration faculty. My 23 years of conducting fair elections here in Polk County has offered me the experience to ensure continued success.

We need to get our message out to the voters. I need your help. Please consider contributing to my campaign today.

Sincerely,



Lori Edwards

P.S. If you prefer to contribute online, please visit LoriEdwardsCampaign.com

Lori@LoriEdwardsCampaign.com
P.O. Box 2203 Auburndale, FL 33823
Paid by Lori Edwards, NPA, Supervisor of Elections

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

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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



Our president Brian Fillette, membership chair Kate Kohout and treasurer Rochelle Quinn hosted our table at the Club Expo.

We did great at the Solivita Clubs Expo in January!

The SDC welcomed 39 new members, and added 64 renewing members, who joined us at the Solivita Club Expo on Saturday, January 13 in the Ballroom.

If you haven't yet you're urged to renew your membership ASAP to continue to receive Club news and information like this Beacon newsletter, discounts to Club-sponsored events, and more.

Your \$15 annual dues also provides most of the financial resources that our Club needs for voter education, civic engagement, and contributions to help elect Democrats in Local, State, and National elections.

You can renew your membership in 1 of 4 ways:

- ✓ Go to <https://solivitademocrats.org/club-membership/> to print the membership form and mail with your check (the form is also available on the next page of this *Beacon*)
- ✓ Or submit your payment via PayPal (click the Donate button)
- ✓ Or visit us at the Farmer's Market on Monday mornings from 9:00am – 11:30am
- ✓ Or join at our monthly membership meetings in the Ballroom on the 2nd Wednesday after 6:30pm (meetings start at 7:00pm)

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.