

SALINE COUNTY



Blue Review

*The Official Newsletter of
the DPSC*

October 2nd, 2023

Friends of the Party.

Thank you to:

Good Neighbors:

Randy Haun
Beth Mathys
Gene Smith
Sally Smith
Felix Stacy
Suzy Velez
Greg White

Friends of the Party:

Melinda Hensley
Helen Neely
Diana Roberts
Steve Rittenmeyer
Janet Taylor
Judith Wimberly

Community Partners:

Tamme Adams
Helen Denison
Donna Landreth
Delois Moore
Bailey Morgan
Dustin Parsons
April Reisma
Glen Rider
Sam Stueart

Life of the Party:

Charles Bear
'Nita Brown
Gary Fults
Grace Hauser
Luke Juneau
Fred McGraw
Tanya Williams

Party Partners:

Lela Chism
Jerri DeLamar

We are just \$93/month away from sustainability! That's just 2 "Party Partner," 4 "Life of the Party," or 7 "Community Partner" donors!

Go to salinedems.com/friendoftheparty to enroll, receive a thank you in our next newsletter, and much more!

Updates: Saline County

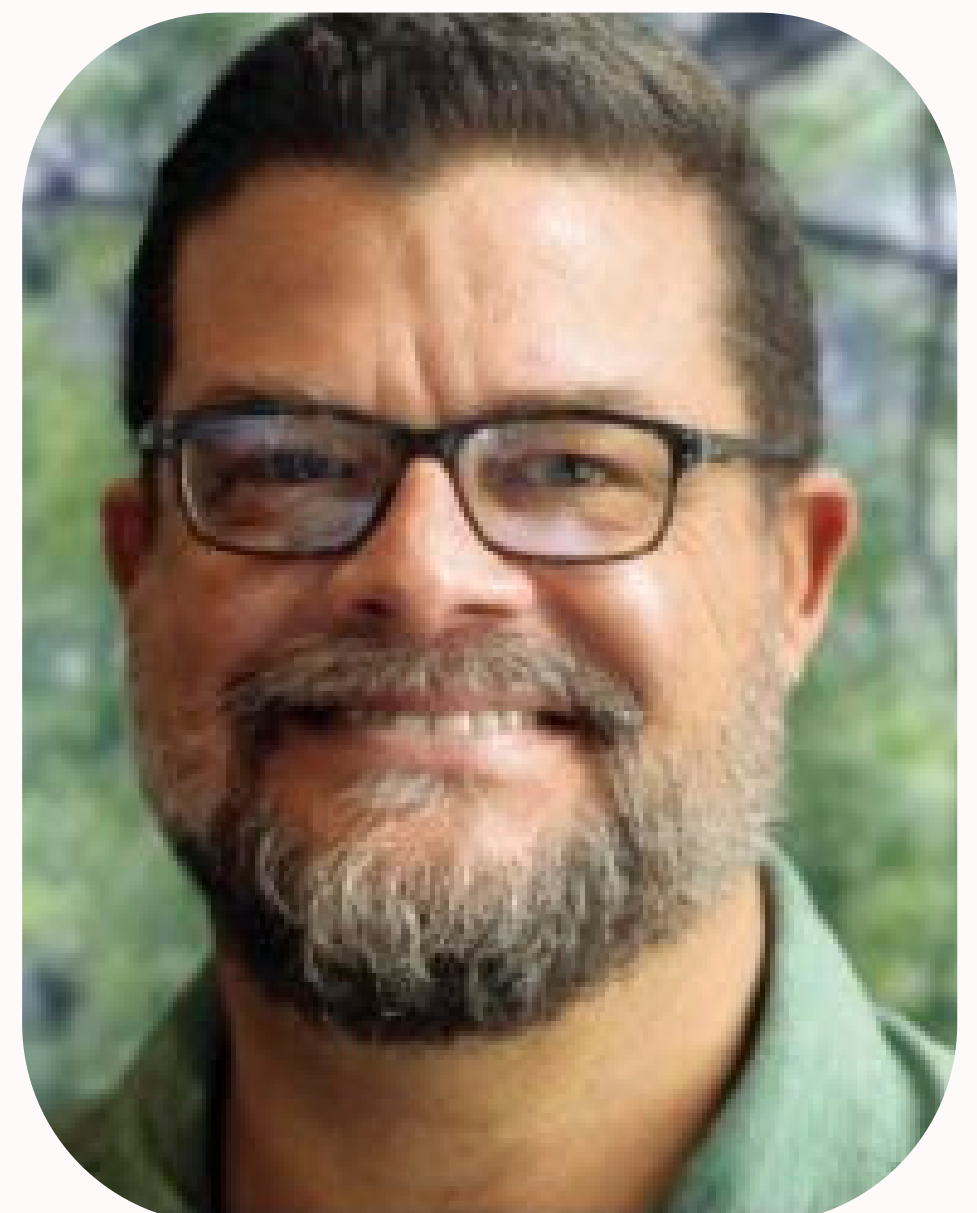
Mayor Sanders (not that Sanders):

In a special council meeting held on Thursday, Sept. 28th, the Bryant City Council considered 2 candidates to be appointed as interim Mayor of the city of Bryant, those candidates being City Clerk Mark Smith and Bryant Chamber of Commerce CEO Rhonda Sanders. After over an hour and a half in executive session, the council ultimately settled on appointing Rhonda Sanders for the position.

Notably, Sanders was a candidate for mayor in 2022 against former Mayor Allen Scott, obtaining 48.8% of the vote to Scott's 51.2%. Previously, she served 10 years on the Bryant School Board, 3 years on the board of the Bryant Chamber of Commerce, and 2 years on the Bryant City Council.

Candidate Treat:

On 9/25, Chris Treat (presently the parks director for Bryant) announced his candidacy for mayor in the 2024 election. In his campaign announcement, he stated his belief that the only solutions to the “significant challenges” faced by the city of Bryant are “unity and cooperation.” He promises to approach the job, should he be successful in his campaign, “with a ‘we over me’ and ‘team’ mindset.”



Join a Committee:

Help us be a stronger party!

Community Outreach Committee:

The DPSC has been working hard to put ourselves out into the community and let the people of Saline County know that we *are* here, and that we *are* working hard toward a better Saline County. A MASSIVE part of that effort has been put together by our Community Outreach Committee. With Felix Stacy serving as the newly appointed chair of the committee, we need more volunteers than ever to help us man booths at events, plan fundraisers, and much more. If you're interested in serving on the committee, please reach out to Felix at (501) 944-1995!

Voter Outreach Committee:

In our September meeting, we formally established the Voter Outreach Committee, to be chaired by Melinda Hensley! This committee will be dedicated to more remote, online work in support of the party. Volunteers for the Voter Outreach Committee will help Melinda in updating VAN, the Voter Access Network, to make sure that folks around Saline County have their voter registration information up-to-date, and to help collect data on where the Democratic Party's efforts should be most focused! If you're interested in serving on this committee, please reach out to Melinda at (501) 249-5010!

But wait! There's more!

There are LOTS more committees in need of volunteers; you can **absolutely** serve on more than one committee if you're interested, so don't be shy about being a part of the team! For more information on all of the committees of the Democratic Party of Saline County, go to salinedems.com/committees, then reach out to us at saline@arkdems.org for help starting/joining some!

Updates: Saline County

Ethics for Thee, Donations for Me:

State Reps Mary Bentley (District 54) and Tony Furman (District 72) each accepted \$300 donations from the Saline County Republican Women during the 2022 election cycle. However, a complaint submitted to the Arkansas Ethics Commission on August 3rd resulted in the Ethics Commission finding that the Saline County Republican Women had acted as a Political Action Committee (PAC) without being registered as such at the time.

Unfortunately, despite the Ethics Commission making the determination that SCRW had acted outside the legal scope of their organization at the time AND finding that Bentley and Furman accepted funds from an unregistered organization, the Commission has no real enforcement power, resulting in them issuing “Public letters of Caution” to both Furman and Bentley and requiring them to simply return the funds in lieu of any actual consequences for any parties involved.

Personally, I find it especially egregious that this type of financial abuse comes from the very same organization that has continuously tried accusing the LIBRARY of mismanaging funds.



WE WANT YOU!

To RUN in Saline County.

We are *still recruiting candidates* for local office here in Saline County! We're looking for folks who want to see our county improved and to provide a voice for thousands of ignored Saline County residents.

If you live in one of these districts and are interested in running, reach out to us by calling/texting (501) 420-4729, or by emailing Saline@ArkDems.org.

Justice of the Peace:

- District 1
- District 2
- District 4
- District 6
- District 8
- District 9
- District 11
- District 12
- District 13

State House:

- District 29
- District 54
- District 81
- District 92

State Senate:

- District 6

Not sure which districts you live in? Go to VoterView.ar-nova.org and check for yourself by entering your information, scrolling to the bottom of the page, and clicking "Districts**"!**

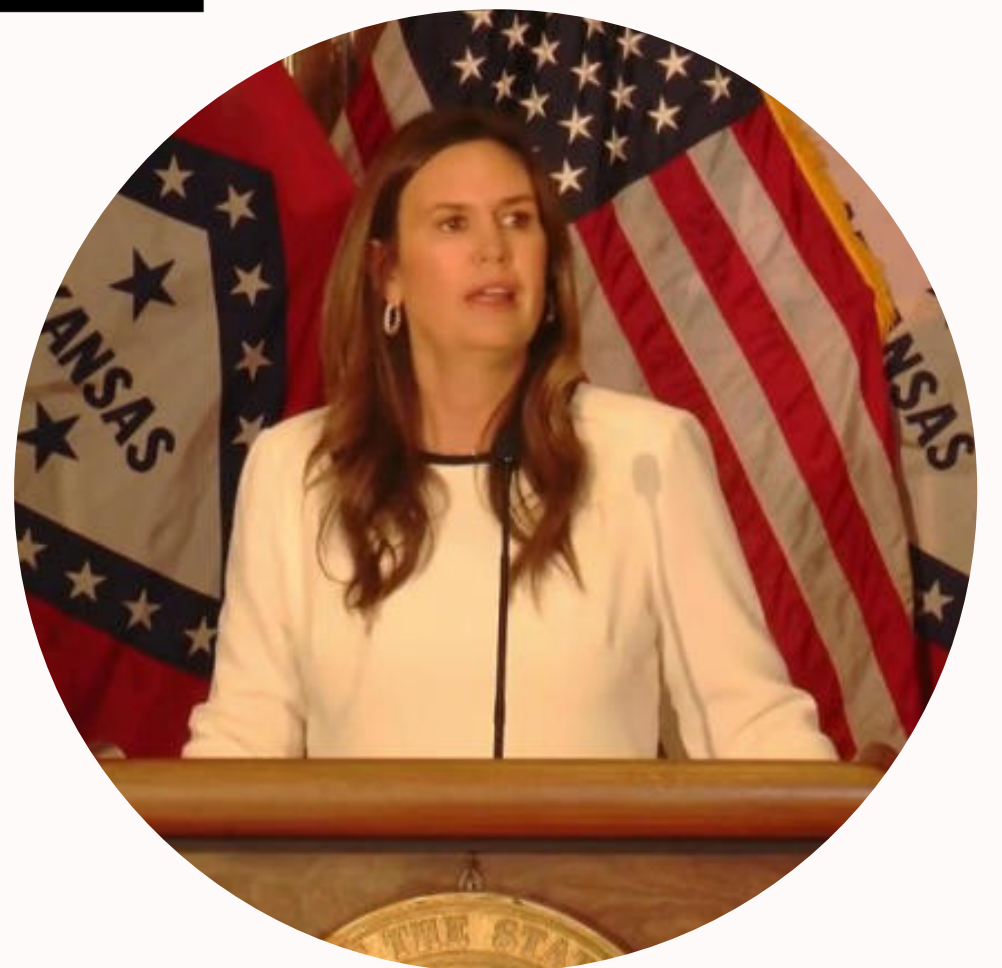
Updates:

Arkansas

So, You Want to Know About Podium-gate...:

In case you started to get too comfortable, and felt like things in the world of Republican politics couldn't possibly get any stupider, then you clearly underestimated Sarah Sanders' capacity for poor governance. For this particular section, we'll largely use the Arkansas Times' EXCELLENT timeline of the PodiumGate controversy up until September 26th.

If you'll recall, Gov. Sanders traveled to Europe in June with a number of public employees, including two agency heads, with Alexa Henning (Sanders' comms director) stating that the cost of the trip would be calculated after they returned. Matt Campbell (Blue Hog Report) filed several FOIA requests for expenditures made on this trip. For more info on their refusal to respond as required under FOIA, definitely check out past Blue Reviews and articles about the special session called earlier last month.



Matt Campbell

Now... on those FOIA responses sent to Campbell: one of them contained a record of a \$20,000 expense to Beckett Events (owned by Virginia Beckett, a GOP lobbyist during the Trump administration) on a "custom falcon podium" as having occurred on June 8th, 2023. This was made public on September 15th, per the ArkTimes article. Additionally, in response to the IMMEDIATE backlash, particularly the criticism of the MASSIVE waste of taxpayer dollars at a time of "downsizing" of the state government's spending.

Now, this gets even worse: Campbell requested documents surrounding the purchase of the podium, as the initial receipt had no reimbursement note BUT the followup documentation did. On the same day of this discovery, the Republican Party of Arkansas announced THEY would reimburse the purchase... why...?

Updates:

Arkansas

But it gets WORSE: Enter Attorney Tom Mars who finds that, while the address the podium was ordered from is in Arlington, VA, the company is listed at an address in Washington DC. Additionally, the phone numbers do not align. So... where exactly did that money go? Well, Virginia Beckett and her business partner/employee Hannah Stone (using the alias 'Salem') were found to have checked into a Paris hotel on social media... at the same time that the governor was on her state-funded trip to Europe. Both women were also found to have been subpoenaed as part of the Congressional January 6th investigation.

The Arkansas Times concludes that as of writing, it appears that \$20,000 of taxpayer funds were spent for two women who were friendly with the governor to take a trip to Paris, then attempted to cover it up by claiming it was for a podium, the discovery of which prompted the ARGOP to attempt to reimburse it in the hopes that it would just go away. Now, since this timeline was posted, the governor's office shared a photo of the podium... a podium which the Young Democrats of Arkansas have noted can be found on AliBaba and Amazon for under \$1,000. YDAR also points out the coincidental appearance of the fabled podium at the same time as an \$800 expenditure appeared on the governor's credit card.

Most recently, Attorney Tom Mars has alleged that a client of his can provide evidence that the governor's office falsified/modified public records in an attempt to obfuscate the facts surrounding this massive, seemingly unaccountable expenditure.

Fascinating stuff.



Tom Mars



Virginia Beckett



ACTUAL Photo of the Podium

Updates:

National

Trump's First Trial:

In his first of many currently upcoming, Donald Trump is set to appear for a trial in New York today, in regards to the alleged multiple instances of fraud he and his family committed through their company. Notably, this trial is NOT a criminal trial, but a civil case being brought against Trump, his sons Eric and Donald Jr., and the Trump Organization by the state of New York. The state is alleging that Trump fraudulently overvalued the properties owned by the Trump Organization to the tune of \$114-207 million on just the triplex apartment at Trump Tower alone.

New York Attorney General Letitia James is seeking \$250 million in damages, as well as a ban on the Trump family from being officers of any business in New York state, and a ban on the company engaging in business overall for five years. Previously, James alleged that Trump may have inflated his net worth by up to \$2.2 BILLION in a single year (2014), prompting some to argue that the \$250 million is a minimal amount to request in damages given the potential extent of the fraud alleged, though this appears to be offset by the request for prevention of the family from participating in business in the state going forward.



Dianne Feinstein

Remembered:

Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein died Friday, September 29th at 90 years old.

Feinstein was elected to the Senate in 1992 during the “Year of the Woman.”

Feinstein had previously served as mayor of San Francisco from 1978-1988, falling into the position after the assassination of both Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk in 1978 before ultimately winning the next election AND a bid for reelection.

Her time as mayor cemented her remarkably persistent stance on strengthening gun control laws, a stance she took with her into the Senate, resulting in her successful push for the 1994 federal assault weapons ban. She also served an incredibly important role in uncovering and revealing the torture of prisoners by the CIA after 9/11. Unfortunately, despite her remarkable record, her presence in American politics became far more controversial starting in 2018 when, at 85 years old, Feinstein ran for and won reelection for another six-year term in the Senate.

Notably, Feinstein missed 100 votes this year as a result of shingles forcing her to stay home, and she was limited in her capacity once she returned due to ongoing side effects of the illness. While her reputation in the past few years has often been challenging and controversial, her legacy as a unifying force and an effective policy maker in a bygone era of American politics ultimately lives on. Governor Gavin Newsom has appointed Laphonza Butler, president of EMILY’s List and a former advisor to Kamala Harris, as the interim Senator for that seat.



Upcoming Events

10/2/23, 6:30 P.M. - October Monthly Meeting

Join us at our headquarters at 101 S. Market St for our October monthly meeting! Social time at 6:00, meeting starts at 6:30!

10/14/23, 12-5 P.M. - Saline County Pridefest

To volunteer at our booth, please reach out to Saline@ArkDems.org!

10/14/23, 9 A.M. - 2 P.M. - Old Fashioned Day

To volunteer at our booth, please reach out to Saline@ArkDems.org!

10/27/23, 6:00 P.M. - Brews and Brats

A cookout with good food, friends, and drinks out in the (hopefully!) cool air. Join us at the home of Melissa and Gary Fults @ 1314 E Woodson Lateral Road, Hensley, AR!

Get your tickets NOW by going to ActBlue.com/donate/brewsandbrats! All proceeds from the event make it possible for us to continue working toward our goal of growing the party and being the leader that Saline County deserves!

DPSC Coffee House & Game Night ~~Postponed~~