



# The Grapevine

JANUARY 2025

Representing all Fresno County retirees and their families

www.refco1.org · INCORPORATED 1978

## Thursday, February 20 Luncheon Reservations

**ALL RESERVATIONS  
MUST BE MADE BY CHECK**

### PARDINI'S

2257 W. Shaw, Fresno, CA  
corner of W Shaw & Van Ness,  
Fresno

**Check-in: 10 a.m.**  
**Sit-down luncheon served  
at 11:30 a.m.**

#### Donations Collected for Evangel Home

Reservations: \$23 members;  
\$25 nonmembers.

Please make your check  
payable to REFCO,  
and mail to:

REFCO  
P.O. BOX 26384  
FRESNO, CA 93729-6384

Deadline for reservations is  
Monday, February 10, 2025.  
Your check must reach us  
by that date, so please mail  
it early to allow for USPS  
delivery. **Note: Your check  
will not be deposited until  
after the February 10  
deadline.**

**EXCEPT FOR FREE  
LUNCHESES PHONE  
RESERVATIONS WILL NOT  
BE ACCEPTED**

To cancel reservations:

Call Mary Ann Rogozinski at  
559-801-2171 prior to Febru-  
ary 14. If you get a voice mail,  
leave your name, phone num-  
ber, and that you are cancel-  
ing your reservation. Can-  
cellations after the deadline  
cannot be refunded.



Debbie Blankenship

## President's Message

by Debbie Blankenship, President

I hope you all had wonderful holidays. As we bid farewell to another year and welcome the promise of a fresh start, I hope this message finds you in good health and high spirits. The New Year is a time for reflection, celebration, and looking forward to the opportunities that lie ahead. My 2-year term will be ending in February, so this will be my last letter to

you all as the REFCO President.

The REFCO Annual Meeting/Luncheon will be held at Pardini's on February 20, 2025. This annual meeting is where we give updates and hold the election and installation of Board members. I encourage you all to come out to participate in the voting of Board members and hear updates from your Board. During this meeting we will also be voting on a recommended membership fee increase of \$1 a month. More information regarding this proposed increase is included in this newsletter.

Our Christmas luncheon had a great turnout. It was nice seeing so many fellow co-workers and catching up. We had a successful fundraiser for Toys for Tots and one lucky member, Lisa Renteria, won \$860 in the 50/50 raffle. I want to thank our events committee for doing such a wonderful job planning this event. There is a lot of work and many hours of volunteering that go into making this event successful. Thank

*Continued on page 3*

## 2025 REFCO Board and Officer Nominations

At the October 10, 2024 REFCO board meeting, the Nominating Committee's recommendation for board and officer positions for 2025-26 was approved as follows:

1st Vice President: James Hackett

2nd Vice President: DeAnn VonBerg

Recording Secretary: Kelly Woodard

Membership Secretary: No recommendation

Treasurer: Linda Robinson\*

Assistant Treasurer: Mary Ann Rogozinski\*

All the above officers will be starting two-year terms which expire in February 2027.

Board of Directors (terms expiring in February 2027)

Judy Lemos\*

Patrice White\*

Nichole Ohanian

Current 1st Vice President Christine Balbas will automatically become president. Current president Debbie Blankenship will occupy the official board office of Immediate Past President.

Voting will take place at the Annual Meeting during the February 20, 2025 luncheon.

\*Incumbent



**OFFICERS**

President.....Debbie Blankenship  
 1st Vice President.....Christine Balbas  
 2nd Vice President..... Irene Romero  
 Recording Secretary..... Dick Estel  
 Membership Secretary ..... Vacant  
 Treasurer..... Linda Robinson  
 Assistant Treasurer.....Mary Ann Rogozinski  
 Immediate Past President ..... Kelly Woodard

**DIRECTORS**

Dawn Gallegos, James Hackett, Judy Lemos, Karen Sebilian,  
 DeAnn VonBerg, Patrice White, Sue Wirt

**RETIREMENT BOARD** .....Laura Basua, DeAnn VonBerg (alt)

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Advocacy.....James Hackett  
 By-Laws ..... Debbie Blankenship  
 CRCEA .....Delegate: James Hackett, Alternate: Chris Balbas  
 Community Outreach ..... Patrice White  
 Employee Benefits..... Vacant  
 Events.....DeAnn VonBerg  
 Finance & Budget ..... Linda Robinson  
 Grapevine/Newsletter .....Christine Balbas  
 Health.....Charlotte Tilkes  
 Luncheon Reservations..... Mary Ann Rogozinski  
 Luncheon Master of Ceremonies .....Ken Smith  
 Membership & Awards ..... Vacant  
 Nominating..... Dick Estel  
 Parliamentarian ..... Dick Estel  
 Scholarship Liaison ..... Julie Hornback  
 Sunshine..... Dawn Gallegos  
 Webmaster..... Daniel Moore

**WHO TO CALL FOR HELP**

**RETIREMENT OFFICE** .....559-457-0681  
 Address Change, Retirement Check, Withholding Forms,  
 Beneficiary Change, Retirement Board Meetings

**EMPLOYEE BENEFITS** ..... 559-600-1810  
 County Health Insurance

**REFCO** .....559-431-5032  
 website: [refco1.org](http://refco1.org) email: [refco.emails@gmail.com](mailto:refco.emails@gmail.com)  
 mailing: P.O. Box 26384, Fresno, CA 93729-6384  
 Address Change, The Grapevine, Membership

Don Nelson .....[refco.media\\_mgr@gmail.com](mailto:refco.media_mgr@gmail.com)

**LUNCHEON RESERVATIONS**..... 559-801-2171

**THE US POST OFFICE DOES NOT TELL US YOU'VE MOVED**

New US Post Office regulations require REFCO to maintain mailing addresses that are updated no later than 90 days. To help us keep costs down, we need you to immediately notify us when you move.

**THE GRAPEVINE DISCLAIMER STATEMENT**

The information printed in "The Grapevine" is believed to be from reliable sources. However, no responsibility is assumed by "The Grapevine" for inaccuracies contained herein.

**Privacy Statement**

REFCO recognizes the need for the privacy of its members and is committed to protecting your personal information. The Officers and Directors of REFCO restrict access to information about you to those who need to know the information to provide services to you.

The information that REFCO has about you is your name, mailing address and payment of membership dues. This list of members is provided to us by the Retirement Office.

REFCO does not disclose any of this information about our members and former members to third parties. The information is limited to those who assist us with mailings such as The Grapevine Newsletter. The companies who act on our behalf are obligated to keep this information that we provide them confidential.

REFCO does not sell or share our member list.

**2025 REFCO EVENTS CALENDAR**

LUNCHEONS – **SEE MEETING NOTICE DETAILS ON PAGE 1**

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
9 BOARD MTG	13 BOARD MTG 20 LUNCHEON	13 BOARD MTG
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
10 BOARD MTG 17 LUNCHEON	8 BOARD MTG	12 BOARD MTG
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
10 BOARD MTG 17 LUNCHEON	14 BOARD MTG	4 LUNCHEON 11 BOARD MTG
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
9 BOARD MTG 16 LUNCHEON	13 BOARD MTG	4 LUNCHEON

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

**February Donations Aid Evangel Home**

*by Patrice White*

The charity for our February luncheon will be the Evangel Home. Founded in 1955, Evangel Home was among the first facilities in the nation dedicated to supporting women. They are proud of their history and grateful for those early pioneers whose vision, courage, and compassion laid the foundation for who they are today.

“Once upon a time, we chose the prickly little hedgehog as our mascot. Several traits of the hedgehog then, and now, remind us of who we strive to be at Evangel Home. Hedgehogs don’t seek out problems, but when faced with one, they pause. At Evangel Home, we do the same. Instead of reacting hastily, we stop, assess, and seek God’s guidance, proceeding only when ready. It’s encouraging to see how this approach has brought positive change and a renewed sense of God’s presence in our work.”

Some of their programs are:

- Crisis Shelter – 30 day emergency shelter. Houses up to 24 women and children, Includes meals, shelter, clothing, chapel, and counseling.
- Nine-month residential program – Teaches basic living skills and discipleship; includes parenting skills, boundary setting, finances, Bible study, and counseling; provides childcare for mothers who need it. Built for mothers with children - if you’re a mother with children, they will also have a safe place to stay at Evangel Home. Together, both mother and children will find food, shelter, and hope for today and the future. While mom is busy building a better and brighter future, the children are safe and enjoying themselves today.
- Cross Roads graduates employed or attending school full-time: Classes and services include weekly aftercare sessions and on-site housing and support. Counseling is also offered.

## Recommended REFCO Membership Fee Increase

Dear Fresno County Retirees,

We want to inform you about an important update regarding your membership with the Retired Employees of Fresno County (REFCO).

**Proposed Membership Fee Increase:** The REFCO Board is recommending a \$1 increase per month in your membership fee. This means with the additional dollar the total monthly membership fee would be \$2 a month or \$24 annually.

**Why the Increase?** Our commitment to you remains our top priority. The proposed fee adjustment will allow us to:

- Enhance our scholarship program for our retirees' family members.
- Organize more engaging and enriching events.
- Develop and implement newer technologies to provide our membership (you) with easy-to-use tools to stay informed on all REFCO activities and other issues that impact our retirement.

**Next Steps:** This recommendation will be discussed and voted on at the upcoming annual REFCO Board Meeting held at the February luncheon. We encourage all members to attend and share their thoughts. Your feedback is crucial to our decision-making process.

**Meeting Details:**

- Date: February 20, 2025
- Time: 11:30 am
- Location: Pardini's, 2257 W Shaw, Fresno, CA.

We appreciate your understanding and support as we strive to serve you better. For any questions or concerns, please contact the REFCO office at [REFCO\\_emails@gmail.com](mailto:REFCO_emails@gmail.com).

Thank you for your continued involvement and engagement with REFCO.

Sincerely,  
The REFCO Board

## President's Message

*Continued from page 1*

you to Noble Credit Union who continue to provide meeting space for the Board's monthly meetings, funds for raffle prizes and promotional gift items at our luncheons. We are grateful for their partnership and value their willingness to support REFCO on a continuing basis.

We invite you to participate in the various activities and events planned for the coming year. Let us stay connected, support each other, and cherish the friendships we have built over the years. Here's to a prosperous and joyful 2025 filled with health, happiness, and new adventures.

## Three Wishes Share Certificate\*

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Get Share Certificate rates with savings account flexibility!



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Add to your balance  
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CREDIT UNION

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559-252-5000

To open your Share Certificate, go online or visit a branch.

\*This certificate is a two-year term. The rate may be increased once during the term up to 1.00% Annual Percentage Yield. The new rate will then be in effect for the remainder of the term. An additional deposit can be made once during the term and cannot exceed the original CD deposit; total balance cannot exceed \$500,000. The one-time withdrawal can be up to a maximum of 25% of the original CD balance. Amounts withdrawn in excess of the limit are subject to standard early withdrawal penalties. Certificate balance may not drop below \$2,500 per withdrawal. Federally Insured by NCUA.

## Congratulations, New Retirees

through November 2024

RETIREE	DEPARTMENT	YRS OF SERVICE	RETIREE	DEPARTMENT	YRS OF SERVICE
David A Abate	DSS	8.7397	Donna M Lutz	Ch & Fam	6.3699
James Allison	DSS	26.4027	Carlos A Maldonado	Prob-Juv	22.2521
Rudy Anaya	Sheriff	1.1303	Michele D May	PW&P	17.5233
Beatrice Andrade	DSS	30.0658	Regina Lynn Montez	Criminal	4.9973
Julie S Apperson	Behav Hlth	23.9261	Vincent C Montgomery	Behav Hlth	15.7589
Ricardo Arroyo	Sheriff	19.2651	Victoria Montufar	Behav Hlth	10.2877
Nancy L Ayers	DA Crim	1.874	Irene M Mora	Behav Hlth	23.7671
Luis Barrera	Pub Hlth	25.137	Danny Morris	DSS	12.1668
Robert W Bash	ITSD	18.0263	Andrew F Moua	Probation	15.4137
Michael E Belloli	Sheriff	24.8548	Georgianna Murillo	Courts	14.8055
John A Brown	Facility	19.1123	Lorina M Napoles	DSS	19.2795
Frances F Calderon	Ad Svc	6.9425	Rachelle D Newton	DSS	23.5452
Joshua Calvert	Payroll Cl	17.2932	Jonnye Lea Nixon	DSS	6.8658
Carlos J Carrillo	DSS	18.9096	Balbina Ormonde	AC/TTC	26.6811
Susan B Carter	Pers Mgmt	2.0877	Michael P Ouellett	Assessor	1.6101
Kao Chang	DSS	30.3343	Angela Perez	Pub Hlth	27.074
Karin D Chiljian	Behav Hlth	14.3781	Thomas L Pimentel	DSS	16.3726
Caine Christensen	Child & Fam	10.7818	Nicole E Quintana	Prob-Juv	15.189
Catherine A Clifton	Courts	14.4986	Augustine Rayas	Sheriff	20.5039
Clark Crapo	DA Crim	26.0841	Carol Recor	VMC	11.0877
Linda M Crowl	Comm Hlth	5.0082	Alice Reyna	DSS	26.4218
Herbert A Cruz	Behav Hlth	6.2237	Sheryl L Robledo	Prob Juv	26.2333
Ted C Culpepper	Fleet	22.3945	Judy J Rogers	Pub Def	4.4755
Noel R Davidson	Pub Works	24.4384	Kristina Romans	DSS	24.5205
Diane H Davis	VMC	15.0055	Kimberly C Rutiaga	DA Crim	1.3777
Marie Dindia	Library	24.4584	Manuel Salazar	Prob	34.7534
Phillip Ferdolage	Pub Works	33.8328	Cindy Sauls	Pub Hlth	19.6732
Melissa Figueroa	Pub Hlth	22.5096	Jill K Schiavo	Library	20.6685
Carolyn Flores	Purchasing	24.2061	Viviana J Scholl	Child Supp	17.8741
Pete Garcia III	Sheriff	23.1263	Jeff L Schwartz	Library	0.4603
Richard Gates	Pub Def	1.0356	David E Secrease	Roads	21.3205
Jeri L Guerrero	Comm Hlth	22.6392	Tonya Michelle Sharp-Rivas	Behav Hlth	5.4658
Rebeca Guerrero-Silvas	ITSD	23.1232	Lynda S Sharwood	Dvlpmt Svc	21.8932
Cynthia L Hager	Behav Hlth	28.8185	Kenneth A Simms	Sheriff	25.1124
Amy Henry	Child & Fam	10.2685	Jon Sims	Sheriff	31.063
Olga Highley	Probation	33.7509	Geoffrey L Smith	Behav Hlth	6.4247
Elizabeth Hinojosa	Othr Ct Ops	7.4932	Carrie L Spurgeon	Behav Hlth	21.474
Jennifer S Hosier	Ch Fam Svc	0.442	Dolores J Stairs	Courts	21.5562
Michael F Hughes	Pub Hlth	5.0384	Daniel A Strasheim	Pub Hlth	25.2904
Thomas L Hunt	Roads	7.5781	Geoffery D Tushnet	Wlfr Frd Abd	6.2148
Claudia Jauregui	DSS	24.3864	Elizabeth Ulloa-Marroquin	DSS	8.7397
Marsha Koop	Pub Def	27.4575	Shonda J Velasquez	Behav Hlth	19.9452
Michael Koop	Sheriff	33.8426	Eulalia Witrigo	Comm Hlth	12.9698
Guadalupe Lopez	Comm Hlth	8.5068	Josephine H Zarate	Comm Hlth	8.8986
Jaime Rolando Loreda	Sheriff	24.1178			

## Bingo Bash and Luncheon Raffle Winners

### Bingo Bash Raffle Winners

The Bingo Bash proved to be lucky for many:

**50/50:** Pat Buck

**Food Drive \$50:** Pat Kirby

**Jacks in the Bag:** Rita Dresden

**REFCO:** Irene Martinez, Ellen Okada, Rebecca Renovato

**Noble CU Gift Cards:** Joan Stimmell, Kevin Fries, Ilene Morgan, Paula Rogers, Fred Moreno, Pat Buck, Kelly Woodard, Mary Helen De La Torre, Jeannie Figueroa

### October 2024 Luncheon Raffle Winners

Lots of lucky people at the Health Fair luncheon in October:

**50/50:** Liz Guzman (\$351)

**Food Drive:** Linda Robinson (\$50)

**Jacks in the Bag:** Cathy Hernandez (\$410)

**Noble CU Gift Cards:** Karen Sebilian, Alice Quijada, Jessie Ciancetti, Andrea Alvarez

**REFCO:** Teresa McCray, Karen Elaine McDowell, Hilda Sanchez, Tina Hindman, Rosemary Baltcha

**Clovis Sr Center Fruit Basket:** Victoria Hodge

**Anthem Backpack:** Liz Renteria

**Pacific Group Agencies Gift Cards:** Irene Martinez, Margaret Jack, Nancy Beltran

**Senior Helper:** Mary Smith

**Osher Bag:** Dora Aleman (Sanchez)

**Starbucks Bag:** Kelly Woodard

**Welbe T shirt:** John Esparza, Sylvia Adame, Dick Estel

**Historical Society, Kearney**

**Mansion:** Vera Guerra

**Kaiser Permanente Cooler:** James Hackett

### Luncheon Photos Available on the REFCO Website

The photos from REFCO luncheons are available on the REFCO website. Members often comment that they enjoy seeing friends and former colleagues who attend the luncheons. We will continue to post the photos after each event.



### December 2024 Luncheon Raffle Winners

The lucky winners from the Christmas luncheon are as follows:

**50/50:** Lisa Renteria (\$860)

**Toys for Tots Drive:** Debra White (\$25), Tonia Navarro (\$50)

**Noble CU Gift Cards:** Rosa Hinkley, Mila Dasalla, Gloria Cantu, Debbie Buffington, Pedro Martinez, Stan Perkins

**REFCO \$20:** Genevieve Chavoya, Rosalie Rutigliano, Sandra Torres

**Jacks In The Bag:** Judy Allen (\$10)

## Missing Grapevines

If you aren't getting your emailed copy of the Grapevine, check the spam folder on your computer. It may be there. If so, try adding REFCO Membership Team to your contacts ([iromero@refcol.org](mailto:iromero@refcol.org)). We may also have an incorrect email address for you. Please send your current email address to [REFCO.emails@gmail.com](mailto:REFCO.emails@gmail.com), and let us know that you're not getting the emailed *Grapevine*.

### Business Sponsor Membership

You can advertise your business to REFCO members by becoming a REFCO Business Sponsor Member. You'll receive a free advertisement in each issue of The Grapevine, as well as include a news article, if desired. You can also attend REFCO functions at the regular member rate. Request a Business Sponsor Membership application by emailing to [REFCO.emails@gmail.com](mailto:REFCO.emails@gmail.com). Please include information for follow-up phone contact.

## In Memoriam

The surviving spouse of a member is eligible for REFCO membership. The application is available on the REFCO website at [www.refcol.org](http://www.refcol.org).

Joyce W Brengetto  
Eva Chaparro  
Michael V Cunningham  
Rhonda Darling  
Sheryl L Dean  
Ben R Douglas  
Henry Facio  
Margie Haggerty  
Wanda Hemmitt-Patton  
Pascual Hernandez  
Donald L Hershberger  
Kim E Hull

Carolina Jimenez Hogg  
Donald Justice  
James E Lee Jr  
Patricia C Lometti  
Rene E Martz  
Rebecca Mckeithen  
Junso Ogawa  
Sam E Ohannesian  
Lay Prum  
Wilma Shuman  
Ronald Takahashi  
Catherine Talbot

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## Armadillo

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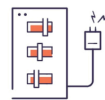
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