



The Grapevine

APRIL 2023

Representing all Fresno County retirees and their families

www.refco1.org • INCORPORATED 1978

Thursday, April 27 Luncheon Reservations

**NEW
LOCATION
Pardini's
Under
Construction**

**ALL
RESERVATIONS
MUST BE
MADE BY
CHECK**

HOTEL PICCADILLY

2305 W Shaw,
corner of W Shaw & Van Ness,
Fresno

Check-in: 10 a.m.

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

Food Drive benefiting Catholic Charities

Reservations: \$30 members;
\$32 nonmembers.

Please make your check payable
to REFCO, and mail to: REFCO,
P.O. BOX 26384 FRESNO, CA
93729-6384

**Deadline for reservations is
Saturday, April 15.** Your check
must reach us by that date, so
please mail it early to allow for
the USPS delivery.

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

To cancel reservations:

- Call Mary Ann Rogozinski at 559-801-2171 prior to April 15.
- If you get a voice mail, leave your name, phone number, and that you are canceling your reservation.
- Cancellations after deadline cannot be refunded.



Debbie Blankenship

President's Message

by Debbie Blankenship, President

By the time you receive this newsletter we will have elected new members to the REFCO Retirement Board.

I want to first take this opportunity to thank Kelly Woodard, Immediate Past President, for the last two years of her leadership. With her guidance, and the willingness of your Board, we are implementing some much-needed changes. The changes will streamline how we do business and make matters more efficient.

A little about me... I was born and raised in Decatur, Illinois and moved to Fresno in 1983. I retired in December 2016 after thirty-two years of employment with Fresno and then Madera County. I was hired with Fresno County in January 1984 as an Eligibility Worker. I worked as a Social Worker, Social Services Program Supervisor, and Program Manager. I ended my career as a Deputy Director for the Madera County Department of Social Services. I have recently married my husband, Tommy; we have been together for 27 years. I have one son and two beautiful grandchildren who are my pride and joy.

Good News! The County Retirement Board has approved a 3% COLA for us all which we will see be effective in April.

It is an honor to begin this two-year term as your REFCO President and I look forward to seeing you at our luncheons.

Remember, Covid-19 is still with us! Be safe and protect yourself.

2023 REFCO Annual Meeting and Election of Officers

The REFCO Annual Meeting was held on Thursday, February 16, 2023 at the Picadilly Inn, at the start of the February luncheon. President Kelly Woodard introduced Fresno's Retirement Administrator, Don Kendig, and FCERA Board member, Laura Basua. New retirees attending their first luncheon were also introduced.

Dick Estel, REFCO Nominating Committee chair, presented the slate of officers approved by the REFCO board, and additional nominations from the floor were called for. As no floor nominations were received, it was moved, seconded, and carried to close nominations and elect the slate of officers as presented. The new officers are listed on page 2 of this Grapevine.

Other business items presented and approved were: allowing email vote for officers in emergency situations; changing officer terms to two years (from one); allow valet parking reimbursement; expand REFCO scholarships to all State Center campuses on a rotating basis; and add references to Google Docs and other electronic documents, where appropriate, to conduct REFCO business.

The meeting was followed by lunch and the usual raffles.



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

James Hackett, Julie Hornback, Judy Lemos, Don Nelson,
 DeAnn VonBerg, Patrice White, Sue Wirt

RETIREMENT BOARD Laura Basua, Vicki Crow (alt)

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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

WHO TO CALL FOR HELP

RETIREMENT OFFICE559-457-0681
 Address Change, Retirement Check, Withholding Forms,
 Beneficiary Change, Retirement Board Meetings

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS 559-600-1810
 County Health Insurance

REFCO559-431-5032
 website: refco1.org email: refco.emails@gmail.com
 mailing: P.O. Box 26384, Fresno, CA 93729-6384
 Address Change, The Grapevine, Membership

Don Nelsonrefco.media.mgr@gmail.com

LUNCHEON RESERVATIONS..... 559-433-9703

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.

2023 REFCO EVENTS CALENDAR

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

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
12 BOARD MTG	9 BOARD MTG 16 LUNCHEON	9 BOARD MTG
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
13 BOARD MTG 27 LUNCHEON	11 BOARD MTG	8 BOARD MTG
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
13 BOARD MTG 20* LUNCHEON	10 BOARD MTG	7* LUNCHEON 14 BOARD MTG
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
12 BOARD MTG 19* LUNCHEON	9 BOARD MTG	7* LUNCHEON

Luncheons: April Luncheon will be held at 11:30 am, Hotel Piccadilly 2305 W Shaw, Fresno (near Pardini's).

* Luncheons held after April will be held at 11:30 am at Pardini's.

Spring Luncheon on April 27 Will Feature Catholic Charities

Catholic Charities has been serving low-income families throughout the eight-County Diocese of Fresno since 1968. The Food Pantry is their largest program, serving nearly 200,000 individuals every year. Only 5.6% of those visiting Catholic Charities are homeless, which means that 94.4% are families in search of help needed to put food on the table at home. Through this program, clients can receive meal boxes which consist of canned vegetables, pasta, rice, beans, cereal, spaghetti sauce, peanut butter, macaroni and cheese, bread, protein and more. The boxes contain enough food to sustain a family for approximately one week. Homeless individuals are provided travel packs containing food that can be eaten on the go and don't require an oven or stovetop for cooking.

Donations will be accepted at the REFCO Spring Luncheon of food item and/or cash. All non-expired food items are welcome.

Business Sponsor Membership

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 Refco.emails@gmail.com. Please include your name and phone number so a REFCO representative can contact you for assistance.



Congratulations to the February Luncheon Raffle Winners!

February was a lucky month for several REFCO members. We finally got a big winner in the Jacks in the Bag raffle – Larry W. Leach held the lucky ticket, allowing him to reach in the bag and draw out the pink jack for \$450! Yay Larry!



At the same luncheon, Diane Lopez won the 50/50 drawing for a \$264 prize. What an exciting day for REFCO members!

Other winners included:

Noble CU Gift Cards: Red Robin-Zahra Hamadeh; Olive Garden-Anita Garcia; Outback-Rita Rodriguez; Denny's-Kathleen Elia

REFCO: \$20 Irene Romero; \$20 Betty Mass; \$20 Isabel Good; \$20 Dick Estel

February Luncheon: Naomi House

\$471 was collected along with 116 food items.

A BIG THANK YOU, REFCO MEMBERS!

Three Wishes Share Certificate*

The best of both worlds!
Get Share Certificate rates
with savings account
flexibility!



Bump up your rate
Add to your balance
Withdraw available funds



NOBLE
CREDIT UNION

NobleCU.com
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.

Retirement Board Approves a 3% Cost of Living Increase

by Laura P. Basua
FCERA Retiree Trustee

At its regular board meeting February 1, 2023, the Fresno County Employees' Retirement Association Board of Retirement approved a 3% cost of living increase for retirees and beneficiaries in all tiers except tiers 4 and 5. This change is effective April 1, 2023.

This action was taken in accordance with Government Code section 31870.1 and, for 2022, the average annual change in the Consumer Price index for the West Region was 8.01%, rounded to 8% (the nearest ½%). Because the maximum COLA that can be granted in a given year is 3.0%, the remaining 5% was rolled into a "COLA Bank" for years when the calculated COLA is below 3%.

Retirees who retired on or after April 2, 2022 and on or before April 1, 2023 now have a COLA Bank of 5%. Retirees who retired on or after April 2, 1982 and on or before April 1, 2021 now have a COLA Bank of 6.5% (1981 is 14.5%, 1980 is 26.5%, and 1979 32.0%).

Please reach out to FCERA with any questions: 559-457-0681 or FCERA@FresnoCountyCa.gov.

REFCO Scholarship Application Update

by Karen Sebilian, Scholarship Liaison

One of the benefits of belonging to REFCO is the availability for children and grandchildren to apply for scholarships to both Fresno State University and State Center Community College District schools. We offer \$1000 scholarships annually for the Community Colleges (rotating between Fresno City, Reedley, Clovis and Madera colleges) and \$2000 scholarships for Fresno State. Students must apply each year, be a full-time student and show their relationship to a regular REFCO member (must be a child, grandchild or great-grandchild).

Applications are taken between September 1 and March 2 every year. This year, the Community Colleges receiving funds for their students are Fresno City College and Reedley College, with two scholarships per college.

Providing our members' children with access to superior educational opportunities is the greatest legacy one generation can leave to another. We are very proud of our role in assisting REFCO members and their families.

In Memoriam

Elizabeth Allen	Karen Knapp
Mary Arden	Frances Kunz
Sandra Barbano	Mary A Lee
Mary Baley	Brenda McConnell
Ellen Beedle	John E McMaster
Leslie W Bell	Angie Medina
Audrey M Brouwer	Ronald G Miller
Edward M Buffaloe	Mitchell Moore
Ismael Calderon	Zana Niblack
Arnold Christensen	Joanne C Olivera
Marjorie Conrad	Barbara Pacheco-Brown
Newell D Dodd	James Pius
James Dowling Jr.	Guadalupe Z Posada
Dorothy R Driver	Roberto Rabago
Gail V Dunsford	Joseph R Robinson
Ina East	Barbara Semien
Thomas E East	Clyde Solomon
Clemente C Eustaquio	Emmett Sparks
Thomas Fletcher	Stephen Stallard
Manuel Flores	Ayako A Sunamoto
David W Friesen	John H Swenning
Daniel Furtney	Douglas M Tatum
Henry M Garcia	Maxine Taylor
Jack German	Iris Terry
Gail Greene	Charles Thorson
John Harker	Donald M Turner
Peggy Harland	Ciriaco Vargas
Anna Heinrichs	Pat West
Keith W King	Carol Watson
Leslie Kleinhammer	Ellen E Yamada

Congratulations, New Retirees

December 2022-February 2023

* REFCO members in bold; listed alphabetically by last name

RETIREE	DEPARTMENT	YRS OF SERVICE	Helen J Marquez	District Attorney	21.4548
Kathleen Alaniz	Juvenile Probation	24.6952	Enriqueta C. Martinez	Social Services	34.3997
Tammie Denise Allen-Vital	Behavioral Health	34.3616	Pedro Martinez	Social Services	34.1123
John Bawcom	Sheriff	31.0411	Lorinada Mazza	Community Health	5.0089
Ivy Bennett	Library	33.063	Sheri L McCullough	Public Health	6.2438
Lupe Berumen	Social Services	7.4822	Alex R. Menchaca	Sheriff	28.8767
Jeffrey A. Bird	Courts	29.5256	Margaret A. Mims	Sheriff	39.373
Alicia C Bitner	Family Law	11.1233	Joann Morris	Probate	25.9288
Jeffrey S. Bixler	Computer Services	10.1068	Houtan Moshrefi	Children & Family Svcs	11.8537
Denise Braun-Frodsham	VMC	12.0822	Nicole Ohanian	Social Services	29.3186
Eilene Ann Browne	Community Health	5.5178	Diana Oliva	Sheriff	15.5671
Cynthia J. Carender	Probation	20.9315	Theresa Orosco	Child Support	28.2
Thavysab Catallo	Social Services	24.7342	Jennie J. Parry	Social Services	23.5808
Henry Gee Chong	Probation	19.5616	Mark Pinkston	Sheriff	33.6334
Christopher Curran	Sheriff	28.337	Brandi E Reid	Social Services	22.6
Timothy Donovan	District Attorney	32.3288	Laurie Kay Roberts	Community Health	7.6274
Elizabeth O. Ehigiator	Community Health	6.6219	David P. Rodriguez	Facility Services	19.2877
Michael Elliott	Courts	33.6	David Rose	Social Services	5.1342
Tracy Eilene Flick	Social Services	7.8301	Laura Rudd	Social Services	11.2877
Mary Barbara Floyd	Social Services	10.274	Eduardo Ruiz	Social Services	24.926
Renee Garcia	Behavioral Health	28.3	Laurie Ann Sahakian	Sheriff	12.006
David Garrett	ISD	17.1	Yolanda Salido	Social Services	17.063
Maria Gomez	Child Support	31.1014	Teresa L. Scheidt	FMAAA	11.9741
Leiann Gayle Green	Behavioral Health	6.9808	Richard A. Sharpe	Social Services	15.7588
Brice Gross	Agriculture	21.9343	Robert Shaw	Probation	5.9849
Jacqueline Marie Hampton	AC/TTC Admin	8.5753	Dena R. Smith	Behavioral Health	24.5425
Tamara Harper	Social Services	23.3151	Linda L Snyder	Social Services	15.5671
Daniel Dang Her	Sheriff	24.2329	John R. Thompson	CAO	14.4164
Treva A. Hill	Veterans Services	14.6055	Bryan Tucker	Sheriff	26.6027
Tina Jenkins	Behavioral Health	19.0192	Maryann K. Vargas	Community Health	10.0641
Victoria M. Johns	Social Services	12.2449	Natalia Vargas-Leanos	Community Health	18.2521
Lizbeth Lara	Courts	9.2401	Richard Vera	Probation	25.4055
Loc Le	Social Services	10.5975	Ofelia Villagomez	Social Services	10.6384
Guy M. Lee	Social Services	27.0101	Maria Villapudua-Herrera	Social Services	30.3342
Jeremy Lloyd	Probation	26.7342	Patrick Watson	Community Health	35.1779
Gloria S. Lopez	Social Services	14.7425	Shannon Alisa Welsh	Behavioral Health	10.5808
Patricia Lozano	Social Services	18.0027	Michael Wibbels	Sheriff	28.7069
Anita Macias	Social Services	21.2055	Peter R. Worthley	Social Services	30.4493
Randy Mapel	Roads	19.7836	Rick L. Xiong	Library	21.4164
Robert Marean	Sheriff	7.8496	May Ye Yang	Behavioral Health	19.0055
Aracelia "Sally" Marquez	Social Services	31.7014			

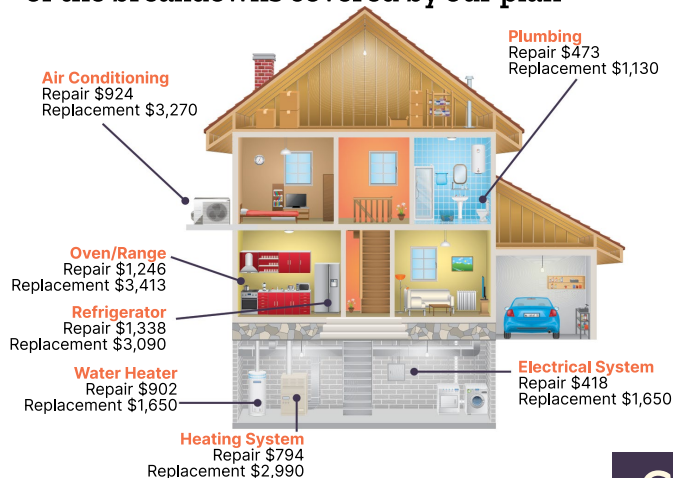
FRESNO COUNTY RETIREES OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

Hassle-Free Homeownership

Think of it like healthcare for your home!

When you're a homeowner, stuff breaking down comes with the territory. **Pacific Group Agencies, Inc.** offers a home service protection plan for when appliances and major systems break down in your home. From kitchen and laundry appliances to heating/cooling, plumbing, and electric, Armadillo covers the cost of repairs or replacements, coordinates service appointments, and ensures it's all done swiftly and hassle-free.

Average repair and replacement costs of the breakdowns covered by our plan



Our subscription perks

- 24/7 Support: Request service in less than 2 minutes at any time
- Access to our network of qualified and reputable technicians
- Quick reimbursement if you choose to use your own technicians
- Replacements when appliances or systems cannot be repaired

Something broke down, now what?

We know unexpected breakdowns happen to your appliances or systems anytime of day, so we make it super easy to request service 24/7.

When can I expect a repair professional to come?

As soon as possible. We begin processing your claim immediately and work on sending a repair professional your way ASAP (synchronized with your availability and schedule of course).

