



The Grapevine

APRIL 2025

Representing all Fresno County retirees and their families

www.refco1.org • INCORPORATED 1978

Thursday, April 17 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 Poverello House

Reservations: \$25 members;
\$27 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, April 7, 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
April 7 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.



Christine Balbas

President's Message

by Christine Balbas, President

Happy Spring, everybody! Welcome to all our new retirees, and a warm welcome back to our existing retirees. This is my first President's Message, so I'd like to introduce myself to you.

I retired from Fresno County Department of Social Services in 2014, and I've been a REFCO officer/volunteer since 2019. The past two years I have served as 1st Vice President and have also served as REFCO's delegate to the California Retired County Employees Association (CRCEA), our state association. I have also edited the Grapevine newsletter for the past couple of years.

I am married, with 4 adult children and 9 grandchildren. In addition to volunteering with REFCO, I have served as a University of California Master Gardener in Madera County, and I also serve on the Noble Credit Union Supervisory Committee. There's not a lot of free time left, but I have fun!

As you may know, we voted to increase our monthly REFCO dues at the Annual Meeting held in February 2025. The extra \$1 added to the dues will help us meet our organization's goals: keeping REFCO members informed of impacts on our resources; providing scholarships to children and grandchildren attending State Center Community Colleges and CSU, Fresno; providing members with events and community activities; subsidizing REFCO luncheons; providing raffle prizes at the luncheons; and coordinating with and supporting local charities.

What else can REFCO do for you? At the Annual Meeting, we discussed the idea of hosting additional REFCO activities: baseball games, movies, casino night, etc. Many members expressed interest in additional activities, and we want your suggestions. Send any ideas to the REFCO email address (refco.emails@gmail.com) or speak directly to a Board member.

I'm looking forward to a great year, and I hope to see many of you at the Spring luncheon on April 17.

Retirement Board Approves 3% Increase

By Laura Basua, FCERA Retiree Trustee

At its regular Board meeting February 5, 2025, the Fresno County Employees' Retirement Association ("FCERA") Board of Retirement approved a 3% cost of living increase ("COLA") for retirees and beneficiaries in all tiers except tiers 4 and 5, effective for retirements on April 1, 2025 or before.

This action was taken in accordance with Government Code section 31870.1 and, for 2024, the average annual change in the Consumer Price index for the West Region was 2.8%, rounded to 3.0% (the nearest ½%).

There are no changes to the COLA banks of Retirees. Anytime a COLA exceeds 3.0% in a given year, the excess is banked. Anytime a COLA is less than 3.0% the difference is taken from the COLA bank, if available. I will be sure to let you know anytime your COLA bank is affected.

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



OFFICERS

President.....Christine Balbas
 1st Vice President..... James Hackett
 2nd Vice President..... DeAnn VonBerg
 Recording Secretary..... Kelly Woodard
 Membership Secretary Vacant
 Treasurer..... Linda Robinson
 Assistant Treasurer.....Mary Ann Rogozinski
 Immediate Past PresidentDebbie Blankenship

DIRECTORS

Dawn Gallegos, Judy Lemos, Nicole Ohanian, Karen Sebilian,
 Patrice White, Sue Wirt

RETIREMENT BOARDLaura Basua, DeAnn VonBerg (alt)

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Advocacy.....James Hackett
 By-LawsJames Hackett
 CRCEADelegate: 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 CeremoniesKen Smith
 Membership & AwardsVacant
 Nominating.....Judy Lemos
 Parliamentarian Debbie Blankenship
 Scholarship Liaison Julie Hornback
 Sunshine..... Dawn Gallegos
 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

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

April Donations Aid Poverello House

by Patrice White

Poverello House works to enrich the lives and spirits of all who pass our way by providing meals, social services and temporary shelter. We work with partnering agencies to better assist those in need. Three meals a day are available, 365 days a year to men, women and families. Temporary shelter is offered, and various social services are offered to help improve the lives of those in need.

Poverello House has been operating in Fresno for many years – starting out as sandwiches and conversation on the street. Over the years, locations and services have changed, but the goal has remained the same: help people in need to improve their lives.

Donations of cash and/or canned goods will be collected for Poverello House at the April luncheon. Please be sure to check the expiration date on any canned foods, as we cannot donate expired foods to our organizations. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

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 (liromero@refco1.org). We may also have an incorrect email address for you. Please send your current email address to 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 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. Please include information for follow-up phone contact.

REFCO Luncheon Book Exchange Expands

The Book Exchange table at our REFCO luncheon is expanding! Beginning in April, we will accept puzzles for exchange as well. Remember to bring your books and puzzles to share with other members, so that others can enjoy them after you have finished with them. All types of books and puzzles are welcome. Our members have diverse interests, and you may find something new and interesting. Please limit the total number of books and/or puzzles that you bring to any one luncheon, since storage space is very limited.

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.

Rudy Borbon	Bruce Nichols
E D Conley	Harry R Paul
Vonnie Franks	Dorothy Randrup
Nancy Gillitzer	Phyllis A Reilly
Esperanza Hernandez	Beatrice R Sanchez
Ruth Hull	Jane Shoji
Jean Hunt	Judy A Simon
Suzanne L Jebb	Charles T Surabian
Kristi G Johnson	Doug Vagim
Mark R Johnson	Irene C Vasquez
Sandra J Mader	Whelma White
L June Margosian	Margaret Young

Oops, We Made A Mistake!

In our January 2025 *Grapevine* "In Memoriam" section, we reported that Kim E. Hull had passed away. We are happy to report that Kim is NOT deceased. Apologies to Kim and her family and friends for the confusion.

Calling All REFCO Veterans

At our July 17, 2025 luncheon, we will be recognizing our veterans. We are planning on having the Veteran's Services Officer there as well as representatives from the Central Valley Honor Flight, our community outreach organization for this luncheon. In addition, if you or someone you know would like to sing the National Anthem for this luncheon, please contact DeAnn VonBerg, Events Committee Chair at 559-978-3808 or email her at deannvonberg@gmail.com.

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Congratulations, New Retirees

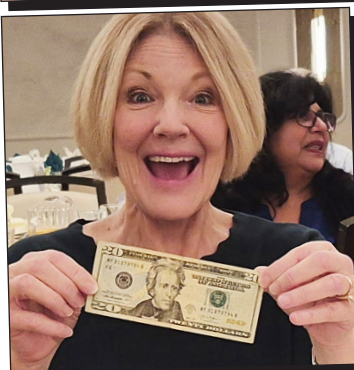
through February 2025 – *REFCO members are listed in **bold font**

RETIREE	DEPARTMENT	YRS OF SERVICE	RETIREE	DEPARTMENT	YRS OF SERVICE
Adams John R	Dvlpmt Svc	22.28	McCrea Lisa	Courts	6.7578
Allen Marcella M	DSS	30.6022	Miller Vashie	Sheriff	12.7361
Amey Jarrod Gerals	DSS	11.5753	Moreno Edward	Behav Hlth	25.5781
Anda Arthur Paul	American A	11.7315	Movsisyan Nushik Nouné	DSS	16.5699
Andrews-Avila Kristi Lee	DSS	12.6768	Navarrete Martina	DSS	25.2493
Avila Krystal M	Sheriff	10.6904	Obodoagha Elizabeth Uzoamaka	Behav Hlth	7.3918
Banks Victoria Yvonne	DSS	19.3699	Pacheco Valentin	Sheriff	6.8219
Basidiq Abeer A	DSS	17.063	Papagni Joseph	Sheriff	29.3342
Bien Charlotte	Probate	29.6877	Paquette Amanda J	Com Hlth	1.9436
Bisnett Sandra Lee	Library	25.3096	Phetvixay Connie K	DSS	14.3677
Castaneda Anna Marie	DSS	20.0165	Popovich Carolyn Elmas	Pub Health	31.9425
Chastain Valori Ann	DSS	12.211	Porter-Szakala Heidi L	Prob Juv	7.4116
Chavez David M	Facility	8.4521	Quintero Salvador	BOS	7.9014
Clack Victoria Ann	Facility	8.0438	Ramirez Marco A	Prob Juv	26.6137
Clark Stephanie	Sheriff	4.6356	Ramirez Elizabeth T	Prob Juv	26.7041
Cochran Brian	Agriculture	10.3522	Reyes Becky Lynn	Auditor	23.8595
Crocker Johnny L	Roads	26.274	Reynolds Zachary Heath	Sheriff	2.4548
DeLeon Maria M	Child Supp	26.7644	Richardson Doug M	Sheriff	22.6219
Deniston Catalina	DSS	25.1726	Rocha Daniel	Library	15.0731
Devins Frances	Sheriff	31.0194	Rogerson Theresia	Com Hlth	0.8082
Endo Cory H	Sheriff	18.3342	Rolff Chris E	NCFPD	6.4575
Estrada Yolanda	Sheriff	14.2624	Ruiz Victor	DSS	7.8
Fabela Silvia P	DSS	26.4603	Severns Ronald D	Child and Fam	7.9081
Gallegos Patricia A	Child Sv	25.5781	Smith Marilyn	DSS	25.7507
Garcia Belinda C	Sheriff	17.0411	Stasikonis Susan	Pub Health	20.2658
Garcia Sam	Civil	25.074	Thorndike William J	Child Supp	23.0081
Gomez Oralia	DSS	38.7726	Vasquez Louis	DA	4.4877
Gomez Vincent	American A	11.7315	Vital Javier I	Sheriff	31.0082
Guzman Carlos G	ADR	5.6301	Wells Cody Steven	Sheriff	7.1764
Haros Paul	Sheriff	27.7644	Wright Cammy J	DSS	13.7534
Klemin Wendy	Library	21.0215	Yarbrough Clint	Behav Hlth	26.7447
Locke Benjamin F	Library	24.5336	Young Christina	Behav Hlth	26
Manoukian Eliz	Assessor	24.4733	Zamora Celia M	DSS	15.889

February General Meeting

Congratulations!

Cash Raffle Winners



It was a lucky day for people at the Annual Meeting:

50/50: Eloise Gilbert (\$288)

Food Drive: Margaret Anderson (\$50)

Jacks In The Bag: David Chavez (\$90)

Noble CU Gift Cards: Mary Smith, Chris Balbas,
Emilia James, Gloria Jackson

REFCO: Debbie Blankenship, Vicki Ramirez,
Ed Moreno, Ysabela Ibarra, Nancy Beltran



Gift Card Winners

Jacks In The Bag Winner



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.



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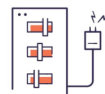
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