President’s Message

The word “government” is being used lately to dehumanize the people who work for our common good. Government employees who actually do good things such as: building flood channels to protect our homes; protecting the public from contagious diseases; dispensing justice by rules & laws; caring for our sick and elderly; providing basic necessities for low-income families; overseeing planning and development for an organized community; looking out for the mentally ill; providing shelter as a last resort for the homeless; and protecting the air and water quality for our citizens.

I worked in governmental service for 30 years and my experience with government employees is that they are people who come to this work because they want to do good things for their community. The vilification of government workers is often nothing more than a political ploy to scapegoat a group of people for partisan political purposes. We are vilified as a group to draw attention away from the abuse of power, uncaring policies, and profiteering at the expense of the taxpayers. So the next time you hear someone vilify a government program or its employees as a group, you might want to examine who is pointing a finger and for what purpose.

You may be justified in criticizing individual misdeeds, mismanagement, cheating, ineffectiveness, inefficiency or shortcomings of an individual governmental employee but not the entire group. The government is our unified effort to make a great country with actualization of our shared values such as freedom, equality, work ethic, and self-responsibility.

“Help, I’ve Fallen!”

By Dick Estel

Have you fallen in the last year? If you’re over 80, the chances are 50-50. For those over 65, it’s one in three.

This information was part of a presentation at the semi-annual California Retired County Employees Association (CRCEA) conference, held in Ventura in April. REFCO First Vice President Judy Lemos, board member Julie Hornback, and CRCEA Delegate Dick Estel attended, and shared this information in the hopes of helping our members avoid falls, which are the leading cause of loss of independence.

The speaker was Dr. Thomas Duncan, Trauma Medical Director of Ventura County Medical Center. After his 92-year-old father fell and had to move to a care facility, Dr. Duncan decided to do everything he could to promote awareness of falling and preventive measures.

He provided a couple more eye-opening statistics: In the United States, there is a fall resulting in death every 30 minutes, and one requiring an emergency room visit every fifteen seconds. The bottom line for many of us in that over 65 demographic is not “Will we fall?” but “When will we fall and how will it affect us?”

Of course, we’d like to be in that non-falling percentage, and there are steps we can take, and things to be aware of to prevent falls.

A brochure that was given to conference attendees plus the speaker’s remarks provided the following steps to prevent falls:

• Begin an exercise program to improve leg strength and balance
• Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review your medications
• Get an annual eye checkup and make sure your eyeglasses keep up with changing vision
• Watch your step – be aware of changing vision
• Beware of throw rugs on slick surfaces or folded up; toys and stuff outside, sidewalk sections lifted up by tree roots, etc.
• Make your home safer by:
  • Removing clutter and tripping hazards
  • Putting railings on stairs and adding grab bars in the bathroom
  • Make sure that lighting is good

Personal experience causes me to add one more – don’t hesitate to use a cane or walker.

Doctors and relatives had encouraged
2017 REFCO Activities Calendar

**January**
- 12: Board Mtg
- 19: Luncheon

**February**
- 9: Board Mtg

**March**
- 9: Board Mtg

**April**
- 6: Luncheon
- 13: Board Mtg

**May**
- 11: Board Mtg

**June**
- 8: Board Mtg

**July**
- 13: Board Mtg
- 20: Luncheon

**August**
- 10: Board Mtg

**September**
- 7: Bingo Bash
- 14: Board Mtg

**October**
- 12: Board Mtg
- 19: 12th Fair Lunch

**November**
- 9: Board Mtg

**December**
- 7: Christmas Party
- 13: Board Mtg
- 21: Board Mtg
- 20: Luncheon

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**Valley Animal Center to Benefit from REFCO’s July 20 Food Drive**

For our REFCO Food Drive at our July 20 Luncheon, we will be highlighting the Valley Animal Center. Located at 3934 N Hayston Ave. In Fresno, it is dedicated to providing care and shelter to dogs, puppies, cats and kittens. As a no-kill dog and cat adoption center, they provide humane educational classes and camps along with low-cost spay, neuter and vaccinations and a membership-based dog park. They house hundreds of dogs and cats each year until they are placed in loving homes. Euthanasia is never performed unless the animal is suffering from a serious illness that cannot be cured, or a painful condition that cannot be alleviated.

What is needed most in donations?
- Wet Canned Cat Food (VAC receives dry dog and cat food at a reduced price from Science Diet. So, please do not bring dry dog or dry cat food)
- Dog Training Treats
- 33 Gallon Trash Bags
- Laundry Detergent
- Anti-Bacterial Dish soap
- Hydrogen Peroxide
- Distilled Water
- Rubbering Alcohol
- White cloth towels
- Of course, 88 donations are always appreciated!

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**Directory of REFCO Officials/Volunteers**

**PO Box 26384 • Fresno CA 93729-6384**

**Website:** refco1.org

**Contact Information:**
- Phone: 559.431-5032
- Email: refco.emails@gmail.com

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**Officers**
- **President:** .................Bob Dowell
- **1st Vice President ...........Judy Lemos**
- **2nd Vice President ..........Regina Wheeler**
- **Recording Secretary ...........Dick Estel**
- **Membership Secretary .......Joy Clark**
- **Treasurer .....................Linda Robinson**
- **Asst Treasurer ................Marianne Messina**
- **Imm Past President ..........Linda Hutcheson**

**Directors**
- June Breese-McClellan
- Julie Horrback
- Don Nelson
- Diann Phelps
- Patrice White

**Retirement Bd**
- Bob Dowell
- Mary Ann Rogozinski (alt)

**Committee Chairs**
- Advocacy ....................Judy Lemos
- Benefits .....................Les Jorgensen
- By-Laws .....................Judy Lemos
- CRCEA Alternate .............Dick Estel
- CRCEA Delegate .............Vacant

**Community Outreach**
- Patrice White
- Regina Wheeler

**Finance & Budget**
- Linda Robinson

**Grapevine**
- Joy Clark

**Health**
- Annie Lee

**Legislation**
- Bob Dowell

**Luncheon Reservations**
- Marianne Messina

**Luncheon Master**
- Marianne Messina

**Webmaster**
- Daniel Moore

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**Upgraded Planned for REFCO Website**

We will be upgrading our website in the next few months. Daniel Moore, our Webmaster, will do the work, but we are forming an ad-hoc committee to determine what we want. If you are interested in being on the committee, please email Judy Lemos, our Acting Chair, at jllemos@scbglobal.net.
Congratulaties, New Retirees & New Members!

New REFCO members are bolded. *Indicates a deferred member. Listed alphabetically by last name.

Note: Missing info on some new REFCO members indicates the info could not be verified by the Grapevine deadline.

Robert Ables .........................County Clerk ..........................4.32
Jerry A Acosta .......................Building Mgmt ........................8.08*
Mary Agrin .........................ITS&D ..................................26.77
Kirby Alstrom .......................Sheriff ..................................24.40
Raymond Alvarado .................Probation ..............................28.13
Bret Armstrong .....................Sheriff ..................................23.67
Robert Beck .........................Facility Servs ..........................17.80
James Bewley .......................Sheriff ..................................28.64
Debra Blankenship .................Social Servs ..........................25.67
Elia Blanda .........................Sheriff ..................................25.77
Kenneth Bowen ......................Sheriff ..................................34.25
Eileen Brooks .........................Agriculture ...........................30.03
Billy Brunson .......................Sheriff ..................................22.40
Gracie Burns .........................Sheriff ..................................9.19*
Wanda Burrow .......................Social Servs ............................22.53
Gary Byde ............................Fresno Mosq & Vector .........26.80
Denise Campos .......................Social Servs ............................26.37
Daniel F Card ...........................Sheriff .............................1.01*
Alicia Carrasco ......................Sheriff ..................................14.30*
Juan Ceballos .......................Social Servs ............................16.15
Michael J Chernekoff ..........Reads ....................................13.63
Linda Classen .......................Sheriff ..................................10.63
Joel Cobb ..............................Sheriff ..................................20.93
Alan Collison .........................VMC ...................................11.57*
Loretta Curran ......................Auditor-Controller ...........................
Ray Davis .............................ITS&D ..................................28.32
Margaret DeLaCruz .................Social Servs ............................29.49
Rachelle D Delgado ...................Sheriff ..................................19.12
Grace Delorenzo ......................Sheriff ..................................14.30*
Jacqueline S Duty .................Bene of Jack Duty
Lydia Elizondo .......................CA Superior Ct ...................11.41*
Rosemary E Ensinas .................Social Servs ............................22.40
Michael Estrada .....................Sheriff ..................................17.95
Roman Estrada .......................Social Servs ............................22.05
Ronald Evans ...........................Sheriff .............................11.98
Jose Fajardo .........................Agriculture ..............................23.07
Tammy Fellows .......................Social Servs ............................14.97
Phillip Fernandez ....................Probation ..............................34.26
Deborah F Fisher ....................Social Security ........................10.64*
Benjamin Flores .....................Sheriff ..................................21.59
Laraine Kaye Fredrickson ...........Social Servs ............................12.83
Jerome Freitas ...........................Sheriff .............................19.42
Kathy Fries ............................CA Superior Ct ...................32.22
Joe Garcia ............................Social Servs ............................35.52
Miroslava Garcia ......................Public Hlth ............................32.61
Nancy Goehring .......................CA Superior Ct ...................22.71
Jesse Gomez .........................Security ..................................14.37
Maxine Grayson ......................Social Servs ............................14.67*
Marcia Hagele .......................Public Works ............................13.20
Cynthia Haussner ....................Sheriff ..................................15.16
Elaine Henderson .....................Public Defender ....................29.32
Carolyn Chilcote ....................Child & Family Servs
Patricia A Hinojos ....................Community Hlth ...........................
Helen Nilmeier .......................Vita Nutter ..........................20.19
Viera De Friess .......................William ...............................14.19
Chou Vang ............................Library Operation ...................20.90
Richard M Vasquez ...................Behavioral Hlth ....................20.05
John Veen ................................Library ...............................1.13*
Anthony Veloz .......................Sheriff ..................................22.61
Eileen Weed ............................ITS&D ..................................7.60*
William T Williams ...................Community Hlth ...................17.25
Kelly Woodward ......................Social Servs ............................22.28*
Ramona Wright .......................Behavioral Hlth ....................32.23

IN MEMORIAM

REFCO extends our condolences to the family and friends of the following deceased, as reported by the Retirement Office:

Robert R Anderson
Randolph Albright

Robert Bartlett of Bonnie
Lois Bedoian of Andrew
Robert Collins of Barbara
Vira De Friess of William
Hazel Gaver of Robert
Faye Harada of Jack
Flora Hay of Robert
Karen Hensler of Josephine
Frank Hoffinger of Mary K Callaghan

Ann Jernagan of Larry
Emma McFadden of Harlan
Marilyn Reed of Good
Gary Richardson of Kathy
Carlos Stockton of Norma
Patsy Williams of Odis
Leo R Zimmerman of Ruth

DEFERRED
Patricia Fawcett

The Grapevine • July 2017 3
Why Your REFCO Membership is Important

No matter where you live, no matter that you are unable to participate in the quarterly luncheons or monthly REFCO Board meetings, as a Fresno County retiree, you must be concerned about maintaining and protecting your pension benefits. I am certain that you are aware that attacks on public pensions are prevalent throughout our county, state and country.

Some REFCO members have the misconception that their dues are merely paying for this newsletter. The following is a partial list of what is being accomplished with your dues of $1.00 per month.

REFCO maintains an alliance with California Retired County Employees Association (CRCEA) that provides consulting services to protect our benefits while monitoring local, state and federal legislation that may affect our pensions.

REFCO keeps its members informed on a timely basis concerning important issues, not only through this Grapevine newsletter but our website and email.

REFCO works with active employee organizations and unions to help obtain and maintain retirement benefits for present and future retirees.

Through CRCEA, REFCO works with the other 19 (1937 Act) counties to safeguard pension benefits statewide.

Of course there are other advantages to being a member of REFCO. Dues paying members are eligible to enroll in supplemental insurance plans offered by Pacific Group Agencies, Inc. Available plans include dental, vision, pet, and various other insurance plans at reasonable costs, which can be deducted from your retiree pension payments.

Another benefit of being a member of REFCO is the Scholarship program. Members’ relatives who attend California State University, Fresno or Fresno City College may be eligible for monies to assist with their education expenses.

So, if you know any Fresno County retirees who are NOT members, please encourage them to join Retired Employees of Fresno County (REFCO) and help protect pensions for current employees and retirees.

Fallen

Continued from page 1

my grandfather to use his cane, but he just ignored them. One day he fell, hitting his head against the outside plaster wall. He was not injured, but my parents placed him in a group home. A few months later he fell while going to the bathroom at night. He ended up in the hospital emergency room, where he contracted pneumonia and died a few days later. He certainly didn’t die young – he was 100. But he was in generally good health, and if he had taken precautions, he could well have lived another year or two and stayed in his own home. I hope as I get older I can learn from his mistakes.

Business Sponsors

Got a pet?
Save at the vet! United Pet Care BETTER than pet insurance! • All pets eligible regardless of age or medical condition • GUARANTEED savings of 20–50% on every visit • Extremely affordable at less than $9/month • No deductibles or claim forms

For more information, or to sign up:

Nobles Animal Hospital
5275 E. Kings Canyon Rd.
Fresno, CA 93727

Sunshine Pet Hospital
5248 N. Highway 41
Fresno, CA 93705

Less than $9/mo

All applications will be reviewed by the REFCO Directors.

Noble CU
Where you’re worth more
Formerly Fresno County Federal Credit Union
NobleCU.com

Fresno County Federal Credit Union is now Noble Credit Union and we want to thank all Fresno County Retirees for their support through the years. Our commitment to you remains strong and the name Noble was chosen for the credit union with your example in mind.

Nobles: /noh-bals/ Of an exalted moral or mental character or excellence; a noble thought. Of an admirably high quality. Synonyms: noteworthy, good, decent, outstanding, exceptional, excellent, elevated, principled, honorable.