



UNICO NATIONAL

PASSAIC VALLEY CHAPTER

P.O. BOX 341

LITTLE FALLS, NJ 07424

PassaicValleyUNICO@gmail.com

www.PassaicValleyUNICO.org

Monthly Minutes

September 9, 2026 ~ 2nd Wednesday

<u>Date</u>	September 9, 2026 – 2 nd Wednesday
<u>Place</u>	Casa Arturo Restaurant, Little Falls
<u>Prayer</u>	6:30 pm John Barbieri
<u>Flag Salute</u>	6:30 pm John Barbieri
<u>Dinner</u>	6:30 pm
<u>Meeting</u>	8:00 pm

Members & Guests in Attendance

Members (53) at meeting	29
Guests at meeting	0
Percent % at meeting	54 %

Executive Board

Attendance at meetings	9/'26	10/'26	11/'26	12/'26	1/'27	2/'27	3/'27	4/'27	5/'27	6/'27
President: J. Benvenuti	😊									
1 st VP: Fred DeMarco	😊									
2 nd VP: Chuck Russo	😊									
Secretary: Pelonero	😊									
Treasurer: Ponchak	😊									
Sgt.At-Arms: Barbieri	😊									

Delegates at Meetings

1. Sal Benvenuti	😊
2. Pat Pelonero	😊

Board of Directors at meetings (6 past Chapter Presidents)

Carmen Criscione	2024	😊
Carmen Gaita	2018	😊
Bruce Ponchak	2016	😊
John Barbieri	2014	😊
Steve Pelonero	2010	😊
Sal Benvenuti	2006	😊



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Past Chapter Presidents in attendance at meetings

	9/'27	10/'27	11/'27	12/'27	1/'27	2/'27	3/'27	4/'27	5/'27	6/'27
Joe Agresti PNP	😊									
John Barbieri	😊									
Sal Benvenuti	😊									
Carmen Criscione	😊									
Carmen Gaita	😊									
John Morano	😊									
Steve Pelonero	😊									
Bruce Ponchak	😊									
Chuck Russo	😊									
Angelo Verrone	X									

Opening Remarks

- **Chapter President Joe Benvenuti**
 - President Joe welcomed everyone to his first meeting of the year as their newest chapter president.
 - Joe welcomed a new member who just joined and filled out our chapter member application: Robert Barraco from Little Falls. Hee will be sworn in at the next meeting that he attends
 - Joe said there would be some new ideas and fun this year
- **1st VP Fred DeMarco**
 - Fred welcomed everyone and said that he is looking forward again to the golf outing and to the possible beefsteak fundraiser
- **2nd VP Chuck Russo**
 - Chuck asked that we all remember 9-11
 - Chuck presented a "Thank You Plaque" to chapter member John Morano for his true and long-time dedication and service to both UNICO National and to our chapter. He noted that no one can match John Morano



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Secretary Minutes

Secretary: Steve Pelonero PNP

- Steve noted that the minutes are on the chapter website and were also emailed to all of the members
- Motions to accept were from:
Pat Pelonero and Carmen Gaita
All were in favor

Treasurer Report

Treasurer: Bruce Ponchak

- Bruce noted that the treasurer's report included May, June, July and August
- All scholarship recipients are being handled
- \$20,000 will be put into a CD
- Bruce noted that the projected but was sent to all members and it will be voted on at the next meeting
- Motions to accept were from:
Joyce O'Hara and John Barbieri
All were in favor

Bills and Communications: John Morano

- Thank you letters were received from two of the recipients

Chapter Budget

- N/A

Chapter Elections: Nominating chair to be appointed by Chapter President

- N/A



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Fundraising Committees

- **Community Service Day: Claudine Stefanelli**
N/A

- **Fifty-Fifty: Claudine Stefanelli**

In Claudine's absence at the meeting, Joyce O'Hara was distributing 50/50 raffle tickets. At \$10.00 a chance, the drawing will be on December 16th at the Ties Restaurant / Bar in Singac

- **Food Pantry: Carmen Gaita, Patricia Pelonero**

- Patricia noted that Roni Corrado has been working in the grant program through UNICO National with our local pantries
- Pat also noted again that the St. Annes Pantry in Little Falls is no longer there, but they did move to the Methodist Church in Totowa. They now, however, cannot take clothes anymore
- Pat asked that members try to remember to bring non-perishable items, even gift cards from ShopRite to any meeting

- **Golf Outing: Fred DeMarco**

Fred thanked everyone for helping in all aspects of the outing. He reported that there was a profit of \$16,000

- **Holiday Cheer: Joe Benvenuti, Sal Benvenuti, Carmen Gaita**

Sal reported that this committee gives 5 local families \$500 each in gift cards. The chapter budget allocates \$1,500 and the rest comes from donations from the members. The committee reaches out to the churches and the schools for local needy families

- **Italian Studies: Cav. Joe Agresti PNP**

- N/A

- **Overseas Soldier Program: Evelyn Tosi / Roni Corrado**

Evelyn Tosi reported that all is OK at this time



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- **Scholarship: Mike Russo**
 - Michael reported that he received thank you letters and that he updated the scholarship application
 - Chuck Russo reported that he was thing of another Super Bowl PPol and we could seel those changes at the Beefsteak

Non-Fundraising Committees

- **Flag Raising: Steve Pelonero PNP**

Steve reported that Little Falls reached out again this year and scheduled Monday, October 5th, at 6 pm, for our Italian Flag raising ceremony. Attendance has been very nice and looks forward to seeing more people there, where it is very visible for the cars as they ride by the front of Town Hall on Main Street. Fliers will be going out soon
- **Good & Welfare: Joe Benvenuti**
 - Joe said that chapter member Mark BiFalco was home and recovering from surgery. A gift card was sent to him with Get Well Wishes
 - Joe reported that two raffle tickets were received to be purchased from the MSU Coccia Institute. Joe said that he had already purchased one and that two were still left. Joe Agresti made a motion that our chapter purchased the other two at \$50 each and Steve Pelonero 2nd'd the motion. All were in favor
- **Italian Heritage: Angelo Verrone**
 - N/A
- **Membership: Christina Castillo, Roni Corrado**
 - Christina reported that we are now at 52 members and that with the new application that was just filled out at the meeting, next month we will be at 53.
 - Christina also reported that our chapter's average age is 68 years old
 - Christina gave birthday wishes to our September members: Michael Carruba and Roni Corrado



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- **Newsletter & Website: Steve Pelonero PNP**

Steve reported that all of our minutes and newsletters are on the chapter website at. Steve also noted that the chapter website is now at 21,670 visits, which is up 290 visits from the last meeting

- **Public Relations: Christina Castillo, Roni Corrado**

Christina thanked the Passaic Valley Today Newspaper and also the Italian Tribune for posting all of our photos. She noted that we always a lot of our chapter information in those papers.

District and National Events

- **District News**

- Joe Benvenuti noted that the district will have a chapter presidents meeting where they remind and give all the presidents, both new and 2nd year term officers a refresher course on what is required and advice for the year. Both himself and Fred DeMarco plan on attending
- Joe Benvenuti reported that the 1st quarter District meeting will be Wednesday, September 16, at the Columbia Inn, in Montville, at \$45. He will be attending and if anyone would like to go, please let him know as a head count is always required.
- Joe Agresti reported that a flier is on the table for the District Christmas dinner at the Brownstone, for our Special Need Friends. Tickets are available. Pre-Pay in advance at \$65.
- Joe Agresti also reported that the district will again have their NYC Christmas Buss ride at \$115. The bus will leave at 11:00 am and go to the Rockefeller Tree first and then to Puglia's Restaurant just off Mulberry Street.

- **National News**

- Joe Agresti reported that the Meet the National President, Brian Guarco from the Granby, CT chapter is set for October 27. Priced at \$100, it is a pay in advance dinner.
- Joe Agresti reported that November 13 and 14 is the National Eastern Region Meeting in Rhode Island. Call the UNICO National office to register.
- Joe Agresti reminded the parents of our scholarship recipients to visit the UNICO.org website to see what scholarship might be applicable to their children.
- Steve Pelonero reported that the Wayne Chapter is hosting this Friday, September 11th, a Convention Beefsteak Fundraiser. They also are having another fundraiser for \$25.00 per chance, for a Louis Vitone Pocketbook valued at \$2,000



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Old Business

- Joe Benvenuti reported that we might be getting the three town baseball field
- Tom Breitwieser is working on a Gondola for the day after Thanksgiving Christmas Float Parade

New Business

- Joe Benvenuti reported that there is no meeting scheduled yet for October, more information will follow.
- Joe reported that the November meeting is scheduled for Holy Cross Church with more information to follow
- Joe reported that in addition to the District Christmas Dinner for our Special Need Friends, our chapter is also planning a chapter only dinner. More information will follow

Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn was made at 9:06 pm, by Tom Breitwieser and Carmen Gaita
All were in favor.

Respectfully Taken by

Steve Pelonero PNP / Chapter Secretary

Meeting Attendance

The year's meeting attendance on the following two pages >>



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			Sep	Oct	Nov	De	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
	Total	Members	29	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1	Agresti	Joseph	1										1
2	Barbieri	John	1										1
3	Barone	Joseph											0
4	Barraco	Robert	1										1
5	Benvenuti	Joseph	1										1
6	Benvenuti	Salvatore	1										1
7	Bifalco	Mark											0
8	Breitwieser	Richard	1										1
9	Breitwieser	Thomas	1										1
10	Bucci	Gina	1										1
11	Capalbo	Frank	1										1
12	Capizzi	Gerard											0
13	Carbonelli	Michael											0
14	Carrubba	Michael	1										1
15	Castillo	Christina	1										1
16	Cervino	Peter											0
17	Cestone	James											0
18	Cestone	Julianna											0
19	Chomko	Jean	1										1
20	Corrado	Roni											0
21	Criscione	Carmen	1										1
22	DeLuccia	Alexa											0
23	DeLuccia	Alexander											0
24	DeMarco	Fred	1										1
25	Dransfield	Daniel											0
26	Dransfield	Grace											0
27	Eopechino	Kyle											0
28	Ermolowich	William											0
29	Gaeta	Gerardo	1										1
30	Gaita	Jessica											0
31	Gaita Jr	Carmen	1										1
32	Good	Duane	1										1
33	Klosik	Emilia	1										1
34	Kribs	Ken	1										1
35	Longo	Pete											0
36	Lynch	Peter											0
37	Morano	John	1										1
38	OHara	Joyce	1										1
39	Pelonero	Patricia	1										1



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40	Pelonero	Steven	1									1
41	Polizzotto	Philip										0
42	Ponchak	Bruce	1									1
43	Ragusso	Michaela										0
44	Ricca	Carl	1									1
45	Russo	Chuck	1									1
46	Russo	Jillian										0
47	Russo	Michael	1									1
48	Sabatino	Anthony	1									1
49	Sisti	Gisella	1									1
50	Stefanelli	Claudine										0
51	Tosi	Evelyn										0
52	Verrone	Angelo										0
53	Youngster	Henry										0

Total	Members	29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	Guests	0									
Members at	Meeting	29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Meeting	Location	CA									
Percent	at meeting	55%	0%	0%	n/a	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Guests											

x