



# UNICO NATIONAL

PASSAIC VALLEY CHAPTER  
P.O. BOX 341  
LITTLE FALLS, NJ 07424  
PassaicValleyUNICO@gmail.com  
[www.PassaicValleyUNICO.org](http://www.PassaicValleyUNICO.org)

## Monthly Minutes September 10, 2025 ~ 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday

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<b><u>Date</u></b>	September 10, 2025 ~ 2nd Wednesday
<b><u>Place</u></b>	Casa Arturo Restaurant, Little Falls, NJ
<b><u>Prayer</u></b>	6:15 pm John Morano
<b><u>Flag Salute</u></b>	6:15 pm John Morano
<b><u>Dinner</u></b>	6:30 pm Dinner
<b><u>Meeting</u></b>	8:00 pm Meeting

### **Members & Guests in Attendance**

Members (58) at meeting	24
Guests at meeting	3
Angela Sabetta, Terry DelGuidice, Anthony Sabatino	
Member % at meeting	41%

### **Executive Board**

<b><u>Attendance at meetings</u></b>		9/'25	10/'25	11/'25	12/'25	1/'26	2/'26	3/'26	4/'26	5/'26	6/'26
President:	Criscione	1									
1 <sup>st</sup> VP:	J. Benvenuti	1									
2 <sup>nd</sup> VP	Chuck Russo	1									
Secretary:	Pelonero	1									
Treasurer:	Ponchak	1									
Sgt.At-Arms:	Morano	1									

### **Delegates at Meetings**

1. Sal Benvenuti	1
2. Pat Pelonero	1

### **Board of Directors at meetings (6 past Chapter Presidents)**

Carmen Gaita	1
Bruce Ponchak	1
John Barbieri	.
Steve Pelonero	1



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### Past Chapter Presidents in attendance at meetings

	<u>9/'25</u>	<u>10/'25</u>	<u>11/'25</u>	<u>12/'25</u>	<u>1/'26</u>	<u>2/'26</u>	<u>3/'26</u>	<u>4/'26</u>	<u>5/'26</u>	<u>6/'26</u>
Joe Agresti PNP	1									
John Barbieri	.									
Sal Benvenuti	1									
Carmen Criscione	1									
Carmen Gaita	1									
John Morano	1									
Steve Pelonero	1									
Bruce Ponchak	1									
Chuck Russo	1									
Angelo Verrone	1									

### Opening Remarks

- **President Carmen Criscione**
  - Carmen welcomes everyone to our first meeting of the UNICO year. Carmen introduced and welcomed our Study Abroad Recipient Angela Sabetta and her teaching friend Terri Del Guidice. Carmen also introduced and welcomed prospective member Anthony Sabatino. Carmen noted that UNICO National is the largest Italian American Service organization the United States. He was sorry to say that we lost a long-time member of our chapter and that he is now resting in peace, Anthony Orlando.
- **1<sup>st</sup> VP Joe Benvenuti**
  - Joe also welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded everyone that we are a service organization and that the members consider volunteering to chair or to help on one of the committees.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> VP Chuck Russo**
  - Chuck noted that we were missing a few of our younger members at thei meeting due to this is back to school night for the parents. Chuck also asked for a moment of silence to remember 9-11 and also to keep in our prayers Charlie Kirk, a well-known public speaker, was just today shot and killed at one of his speaking events in Utah.



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## **Secretary Minutes**

Secretary: Steve Pelonero PNP

- Steve reported that the minutes were emailed to all of the members and also to the National Office in Fairfield NJ
- Motion to accept was made by
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Carmen Gaita
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Fred DeMarco
  - All were in favor

## **Treasurer Report**

Treasurer: Bruce Ponchak

- Bruce reported on the financials of our chapter: our bank account balance (\$23,215) and CD balance (\$11,500)
- Bruce also noted that the executive board came up with the budget for our 2025/2026 year and that an email was sent to the membership. A vote will be taken at the November meeting to accept it
- Motion to accept by:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Joe Benvenuti
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Joe Agresti
- All were in favor.

## **Bills and Communications: John Morano**

- John reported that dues checks were received and also that donations were received in the name of recently deceased chapter member member Tony Orlando.

## **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**  
Claudine reported that April 18<sup>th</sup>, Saturday is the date for our Annual Food Pantry Drive at ShopRite. More information will follow.
- **Fifty-Fifty: Claudine Stefanello**  
Claudine reported that she already has the permit and the 50/50 tickets are printed and ready to be handed out to the members. She reported that last years 50/50 brought in over \$4,000 and that she is hoping that the members sell more tickets to bring it to \$5,000.
- **Food Pantry: Carmen Gaita, Patricia Pelonero**
  - Carmen reported that food and/or cash donations can always be brought to any chapter meeting.
  - Steve Pelonero reported that St. Agnes Pantry also takes clothes and he found that our from Facebook and he had already brought them 6 bags of clothes and shoes
- **Golf Outing: Joe Barone**  
In Joe Barone's absence, Joe Benvenuti reported that the outing at Crystal Spings brought in \$9,157 dollars. After replies from the golf committee it was decided not to do another outing at Crystal. Joe Barone thanks all of the members for their help in working it and also in getting the sponsors. Joe noted that after 10 years of being the golf chair, that he is finally stepping down and hopes that someone will step up.
- **Holiday Cheer: Joe Benvenuti, Sal Benvenuti, Carmen Gaita**  
No report but Joe did note that we usually have given during the Christmas season, to five families, \$500 each in gift cards.
- **Overseas Soldier Program: Evelyn Tosi / Roni Corrado**  
Evelyn reported that both her grandsons are OK and in the states



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- **Scholarship: Mike Russo**  
Not report as Mike was at the schools Parents Teacher Night
- **Study Abroad: Cav. Joe Agresti PNP**  
Joe Agresti introduced our chapter Study Abroad recipient, Angela Sabetta. Angela spoke about her travels and noted that she majored in Italian and also was interested in teaching Disabled Students. She is now going for her Masters. Angela's family is from Salerno. She studies her semester in Sienna

## **Non-Fundraising Committees**

- **Flag Raising: Steve Pelonero PNP**  
Steve reported that it is too early to give a report. But noted that Little Falls has always asked if we wanted to celebrate our heritage with an Italian Flag Raising during the month of October which is Italian Heritage month. Hopefully there will be more to follow.
- **Good & Welfare: Joe Benvenuti**
  - Joe reported that a get-well card was sent to John Morano
  - John Morano thanked everyone for the card and the calls while he was out
  - Joe reported that a sympathy card was sent to the Tony Orlando family
  - Joe reported that donations in Tony's name were coming in
- **Italian Heritage: Angelo Verrone**
  - Angelo reported that nothing was planned with the high school, but the Italian studies class did have quite a few volunteers show up at our Annual Food Pantry Drive to help out.
- **Italian Studies: Joe Agresti PNP**
  - Joe reported that he would like to submit our chapter program to other schools so that they can be aware of what we have to offer to our youth.



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- **Membership: OPEN**
  - No report
- **Newsletter & Website: Steve Pelonero PNP**
  - Steve reported that the newsletter is on our chapter website. He also noted that if someone has information about their family heritage and if they would like to see it in a future newsletter, to reach out to him he will come up with a nice page of their family's heritage.
  - The chapter website is now at 19,784 visits, which is up 381 hits from the last meeting.
- **Public Relations: Christina Castillo and Roni Corrado**

Roni reported that the Italian Tribune always puts everything in that she sends to them. Christina reported that all three of the local papers had stories and photos of our events. Roni asked that if any member takes a photo at any of our events that they can send them to her and Christina and also to Steve who does our chapter newsletter, and they will submit them for publication.

## **District and National Events**

- **District News**
  - Carmen reported that it was noted at the National Convention that our NJ District IV made a donation in memory of deceased chapter president of the Passaic Clifton Chapter, David D'Arco, in the amount of \$500 for research for the type of cancer that he had. Our NJ District Governot asked all of the chapters in our district to re-imburse the district in the amount of \$50 each which would be put towards a scholarship from our district in Davids's name. A motion was then made by Joe Agresti and 2<sup>nd</sup>d by Pat Pelonero to approve our chapter to allocate \$50 to the district. Some discussion followed. A vote was then taken with 22 yes and 2 against.
  - It was noted that the next District meeting will be hosted by the Sparta Chapter on Thursday, September 18<sup>th</sup>. **Please RSVP to our chapter president if you plan on attending so that he can advise the district how many from our chapter will be attending.**
  - December 2<sup>nd</sup>, Tuesday, is our District Christmas Party for our Special Need Friends. The flier is on our chapter website and was also passed out at this chapter meeting. **Please RSVP to our**



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**chapter president if you plan on attending so that he can advise the district how many from our chapter will be attending.**

- Our NJ District IV is again having a NYC Bus ride the tree in Rockefeller Center with a dinner to follow at Puglia's the Little Italy section. It is on Saturday December 6<sup>th</sup>. The flier is on our chapter website and fliers were placed on the tables at this chapter meeting. One bus is already sold out at 50 people and the 2<sup>nd</sup> already has 30. **Please let Joe Agresti know if you want to be a part of it.**
- Carmen noted that lots of nice ideas come from listening to the other chapters at this district meeting. Please try to attend and let him know.
- **National News**
  - Pat Peloneroi reported, as one of delegates at the National convention in Fort Lauderdale, with a detailed report stating everything that transpired and what was talked about including amendment votes, donations, etc ...
  - Joe Agresti reported on the next convention, in 2026, which will be in Orlando, FL.
  - Joe reported that the float will again be at the NYC Columbus Day Parade and also in Seaside NJ. Chapter president Carmen reminded everyone that all are invited to participate in the parade and welcome to be on the float.

## **Old Business**

- None

## **New Business**

- Joe Agresti reported that there is a Convention Committee Cigar Night on November 12<sup>th</sup>
- Joe Agresti reported that an anonymous person asked if our chapter would put forward a certain person from another chapter for the Vastola Award. A motion was made by Joe Agresti, and a 2<sup>nd</sup> was made by Pat Pelonero. All were in favor. John Morano said that this person was well deserving of the award
- Carmen Criscione reported that the Sparta Chapter will be hosting an Italian Festival at Lafayette Village on September 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Joe Agresti made a motion that we buy two \$50 chances from the Coccia Foundation for their 50/50 raffle. Pat Pelonero gave the 2<sup>nd</sup> motion. No discussion. All were in favor.



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- Carmen reported the Saddle Brook chapter is running the Saddle Brook Street Fair on September 28
- The Do Good House is running heir golf outing at the PC Golf Club. \$200.
- Wilkes Barre UNICO in PA is doing their Annual Pig Roast October 15<sup>th</sup>. \$75.00
- Meet the UNICO National President will be on Tuesday, October 28<sup>th</sup> @ \$100.
- Fred Demarco asked if our chapter has a Fund-Raising Research Committee . It was answered as “no”, but do you want to chair it, if we start it

### **Adjournment**

- Motion to adjourn was made at 9:38 pm by:
    - 1<sup>st</sup> Joe Benvenuti
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> Sal Benvenuti
- All were in favor.

### **Respectfully Taken by**

Steven Pelonero PNP / Secretary

### **Meeting Attendance**

The year's meeting attendance is on this, and on the following two pages >>>



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			Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
	Total	Members	24	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1	Agresti	Joseph	1										1
2	Barbieri	John											0
3	Barone	Joseph											0
4	Barone	Nicholas											0
5	Benvenuti	Joseph	1										1
6	Benvenuti	Salvatore	1										1
7	Bergamasco	Giavonna											0
8	Bifalco	Mark											0
9	Breitwieser	Thomas											0
10	Campan	Domenica											0
11	Capalbo	Frank	1										1
12	Carbonelli	Michael	1										1
13	Carrubba	Michael											0
14	Castillo	Christina	1										1
15	Castillo	Sara											0
16	Cervino	Peter	1										1
17	Cestone	James											0
18	Cestone	Julianna											0
19	Chomko	Jean	1										1
20	Corrado	Roni	1										1
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	Klosik	Emilia	1										1
33	Kribs	Damian											0
34	Kribs	Ken											0
35	Longo	Pete											0
36	Lynch	Peter											0
37	Morano	Christina Lee											0
38	Morano	John	1										1



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39	Nicora	Peggy Ann											0
40	OHara	Joyce	1										1
41	Orlando	Jack											0
42	Pelonero	Patricia	1										1
43	Pelonero	Steven	1										1
44	Polizzotto	Philip											0
45	Ponchak	Bruce	1										1
46	Ragusso	Michaela											0
47	Russo	Alyssa											0
48	Russo	Chuck	1										1
49	Russo	Jillian											0
50	Russo	Michael											0
51	Scialla	Matthew											0
52	Sisti	Gisella	1										1
53	Stefanelli	Alexandra											0
54	Stefanelli	Claudine	1										1
55	Strippoli	Alyssa											0
56	Tosi	Evelyn	1										1
57	Verrone	Angelo	1										1
58	Youngster	Henry											0

Total	Members	24										
Total	Guests	3										
Total at	Meeting	24										
Meeting	Location	CA										
Percent	at meeting	41%	0%	0%	n/a	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Guests												
Angela	Sabetta	1										
Terry	DeGuidice	1										
Anthony	Sabatino	1										

x