



# UNICO NATIONAL

**PASSAIC VALLEY CHAPTER**  
**P.O. BOX 341**  
**LITTLE FALLS, NJ 07424**  
**PassaicValleyUNICO@gmail.com**  
**www.PassaicValleyUNICO.org**

***Monthly Minutes***  
***November 12, 2025 ~ 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday***

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<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b>January 14, 2026 ~ 2nd Wednesday</b>
<b><u>Place</u></b>	<b>Casa Arturo, Little Falls, NJ</b>
<b><u>Prayer</u></b>	<b>6:30 pm John Morano</b>
<b><u>Flag Salute</u></b>	<b>6:30 pm John Morano</b>
<b><u>Dinner</u></b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>
<b><u>Meeting</u></b>	<b>8 pm</b>

**Members & Guests in Attendance**

<b>Members (47) at meeting</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Guests at meeting</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Percent % at meeting</b>	<b>64%</b>

**Executive Board**

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

**Delegates at Meetings**

1. Sal Benvenuti	1	1	NMT	NM	1
2. Pat Pelonero	1	X	X	NM	1

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

Carmen Gaita	1	1	NMT	NM	X
Bruce Ponchak	1	1	NMT	NM	1
John Barbieri	X	1	NMT	NM	1
Steve Pelonero	1	X	X	NM	1



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#### Past Chapter Presidents in attendance at meetings

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

#### Opening Remarks

- **President Carmen Criscione**

Carmen welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new year. He wished them all a Happy and Healthy New Year . Carmen thanked everyone for their help in all that we did in 2025

- **1<sup>st</sup> VP Joe Benvenuti**

Joe also welcomed and wished all a happy and healthy new year. Joe noted that the Toys for Tots that member Anthony Sabatino chaired went very well. Lots of Toys were collected and donated.

- **2<sup>nd</sup> VP Chuck Russo**

Chuck also welcomed everyone and wished all a Happy New Year

#### Secretary Minutes

Secretary: Steve Pelonero PNP

Steve noted that he was not at the November meeting and no one took the minutes. Steve also noted that there was no December meeting, just our Christmas Dinner. Therefore, there were no minutes to be approved and voted on



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## **Treasurer Report**

**Treasurer: Bruce Ponchak**

- Bruce reported on the financials of our chapter
- Our bank account balance as of the end of December was \$19,993 and a CD balance of \$11,500
- Bruce also noted that the CD just accrued with an amount of \$385
- Motion to accept by:  
1<sup>st</sup> John Barbieri  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sal Benvenuti  
All were in favor.

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

John noted that all of the mail was turned in to President Carmen

## **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 announced that the UNICO Community Service Day for our chapter will be on April 18<sup>th</sup> at ShopRite in Little Falls. At the March meeting there will be a sign-up list . Please save the day and volunteer your time to help others

### **• Fifty-Fifty: Claudine Stefanelli**

- Claudine announced and pulled the winning 50/50 ticket winner: Steven Milazzo.
- The chapter and Steve each get \$2,435.
- Here is the photo of Claudine (on the right) picking the winning ticket with the help of chapter member Christina Castillo



### **• Food Pantry: Carmen Gaita, Patricia Pelonero**

In Carmen's absence, Pat noted and gave thanks for the donation of food that was brought to the meeting. She will be reaching out to the pantries this month. Pat also mentioned that St. Agnes will be collecting fresh food this Saturday morning, (January 17<sup>th</sup>).



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- **Golf Outing: Fred DeMarco**

Fred noted that there is a “tentative date” that he requested. Keep, as of now, Monday June 22 as a date for our Annual Golf Outing. A request for Preakness Valley Golf Course in Wayne has been sent in for a 12-noon tee time. Fred also asked that if anyone would like to be on his committee to please let him know.

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

Joe reported that we gave 5 gift cards to need families for the Christmas Holiday in the amount of \$500 each. Families from Little Falls, Totowa and Woodland Park received them. Joe noted that our chapter budget has \$1500 in it, and that our members donated another \$1000. A thank you card was received from a family who is a single parent (widow) with five children, and it said that it was very very much appreciated and will come in very handy

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

Roni reported that 33 lbs of snacks went to our soldier in Kuwait. Evelyn reported that her grandson will be back home in April

- **Scholarship: Mike Russo**

- Chairman Mike reported that his committee has met and they went over all of the guidelines and are going to try to stay strict with the GPA etc. He noted that there will be no guarantee to members for their grandchildren. The committee will be doing fundraising in addition to what is raised at the golf outing. There will again be the president Cocktail Hour. There is no date set yet for the scholarship dinner.
- Joe Agresti said there may be a wine bottle and cooler fund raiser.
- Churk Russi is again doing the Super Bowl Raffle (two of them) a \$25 a box and a \$50 a box. The prize breakdown for the \$25 box is per quarter: \$200, \$300, \$250, \$500. The prize breakdown for the \$50 box is 2x the \$25 box pool (\$400, \$600, \$500, \$1000)

- **Study Abroad: Cav. Joe Agresti PNP**

Joe reported that he is waiting for Montclair and also Seton Hall to give us a name of a possible student who will be studying a semester abroad in Italy and studying the Italian language



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## **Non-Fundraising Committees**

- **Flag Raising: Steve Pelonero PNP**
  - No report
- **Good & Welfare: Joe Benvenuti**
  - Ken Kribs had shoulder surgery
  - Gerry Gaita also had shoulder surgery
  - John Morano thanked everyone for the calls when he was in the hospital and home
  - Steve Pelonero reminder everyone that knew PNP John Alati, that he left us 5 years ago today on January 14th
- **Italian Heritage: Angelo Verrone**
  - No report
- **Membership: Christina Castillo, Roni Corrado**
  - Christina reported that our chapter has 47 members and that there is only member who has a birthday this month. Happy Birthday to Pat Pelonero. 43 of the members are dues paying members. Four students received their first year as a member at no charge. Any member who is 25 years or younger only pays \$12 a year as their dues.
- **Newsletter & Website: Steve Pelonero PNP**



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- Steve reported that our chapter website is at 20,315 visits and that John Barbieri has re-established the Member Section of the website where you can log in with your name and password and get may reports and sign up to be on a committee
- **Public Relations: Christina Castillo, Roni Corrado**
  - Roni and Christina reported that both the Italian Tribune and the Little Falls papers have both been putting in our photos and stories.
  - Joe Agresti also suggested that our photos and stories be sent to the UNICO Magazine at ComUNICO@UNICO.org

## **District and National Events**

- **District News**
  - President Carmen noted that the next District meeting is January 15<sup>th</sup> at the Chandler in Belleville. Our district has 10 chapters, and it is a time where we report and exchange ideas of what we each do.
  - Joe Agresti reported that the District Pasta Dinner is set for April 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:30. Price per person is still \$25. If attendance is as good as it was last year, there is a possibility that our chapter/district assessment will again be waived. Joe also noted that volunteers are needed to serve, set up and clean up. This all makes the event a success. Joe reported last year we had 350 attend and there were some comp dinners (National President, etc)
- **National News**
  - Sal Benvenuti reported that since the prior office manager Melani had passed away due to cancer, that UNICO had asked himself and Pat Pelonero to come back to re-organize the office until another manager could be hired and trained.
  - Sal also reported that the Mid-Year Board meeting is set for Sunday and Monday, March 22 and 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Hard Rock Café in A/C. Cost to register is \$175 which includes the Sunday night dinner. Room rate average is \$113. Meeting times are Sunday from 12 noon – 3 pm with a Sunday night dinner and Marconi Award. Monday board meetings are from 8:30 am – 12:30 pm
  - President Carmen also reminded that the [www.UNICO.org](http://www.UNICO.org) website has many Scholarship that students can apply for on their own.
  - PNP Joe Agresti reported on the 2026 National Convention in Orlando FL at \$195 per night.
  - PNP Steve Pelonero reported on the 2027 Convention in Nashville TN at \$269 per night.



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### **Old Business**

No report

### **New Business**

- One item discussed was a request for a donation from the Italian American Museum in NYC. Joe Agresti made a motion for \$200 with a 2<sup>nd</sup> by Sal Benventi. With discussion to follow it was noted that with \$1,000 donation we as a chapter can have our chapter name on the wall the museum. It was noted that another donation over the amount of \$200 had to go to executive board for further discussion and then another motion had to be made and approved at the next chapter meeting
- Sal Benvenuti said that it is important that we support our heritage and culture.
- John Morano said that he has known Dr. Joe Scelsa, who started the museum many years ago, and it was his big dream to expand the museum to what it is today

### **Adjournment**

- Motion to adjourn was made at 8:56 pm by:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sal Benvenuti
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Pat Pelonero

All were in favor.

### **Respectfully Taken by**

Steve Pelonero PNP / Chapter 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	20	0	n/a	28	0	0	0	0	
1	Agresti	Joseph	1		.		1					2
2	Barbieri	John		1	.	.	1					2
3	Barone	Joseph		1	.	.	1					2
4	Benvenuti	Joseph	1	1	.	.	1					3
5	Benvenuti	Salvatore	1	1	.	.	1					3
6	Bifalco	Mark			.	.						0
7	Breitwieser	Thomas		1	.	.	1					2
8	Capalbo	Frank	1	1	.	.	1					3
9	Carbonelli	Michael	1	1	.	.	1					3
10	Carrubba	Michael			.	.	1					1
11	Castillo	Christina	1	1	.	.	1					3
12	Cervino	Peter	1		.	.						1
13	Cestone	James			.	.	1					1
14	Cestone	Julianne			.	.						0
15	Chomko	Jean	1	1	.	.	1					3
16	Corrado	Roni	1	1	.	.	1					3
17	Criscione	Carmen	1		.	.	1					2
18	DeLuccia	Alexa			.	.						0
19	DeLuccia	Alexander			.	.	1					1
20	DeMarco	Fred	1	1	.	.	1					3
21	Dransfield	Daniel			.	.						0
22	Dransfield	Grace			.	.						0
23	Eopecchino	Kyle			.	.						0
24	Ermolowich	William			.	.						0
25	Gaeta	Gerardo	1		.	.						1
26	Gaita	Jessica			.	.						0
27	Gaita Jr	Carmen	1	1	.	.						2
28	Klosik	Emilia	1		.	.						1
29	Kribs	Ken		1	.	.	1					2
30	Longo	Pete			.	.						0
31	Lynch	Peter			.	.						0
32	Morano	John	1	1	.	.	1					3
33	OHara	Joyce	1	1	.	.	1					3
34	Pelonero	Patricia	1		.	.	1					2
35	Pelonero	Steven	1		.	.	1					2
36	Polizzotto	Philip			.	.						0
37	Ponchak	Bruce	1	1	.	.	1					3
38	Ragusso	Michaela			.	.						0



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39	Russo	Chuck	1	1	.	.	1						3
40	Russo	Jillian			.	.							0
41	Russo	Michael		1	.	.	1						2
42	Sabatini	Anthony		1	.	.	1						2
43	Sisti	Gisella	1	1	.	.	1						3
44	Stefanelli	Claudine	1		.	.	1						2
45	Tosi	Evelyn	1		.	.	1						2
46	Verrone	Angelo	1		.	.							1
47	Youngster	Henry			.	.							0

Total	Members	24	20	.	.	28							
Total	Guests	3	0	.	.	2							
Total at	Meeting	24	0	.	.	30							
Meeting	Location	CA	Biga	.	.	CA							
Percent	at meeting	51%	43%	0%	n/a	64%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Guests													
Angela	Sabetta	1	0	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
Terry	DelGuidice	1	0	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
Anthony	Sabatino	1	0	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
Gerard	Capizzi	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	
Carl	Ricca	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	

x