



UNICO NATIONAL

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

Monthly Minutes February 11 ~ 2nd Wednesday

Date February 11, 2026 ~ 2nd Wednesday
Place Holy Cross Church, Woodland Park
Prayer 7:00 pm John Morano
Flag Salute 7:01 pm John Morano
Dinner 7:02 pm
Meeting 8 pm – Catered by Francesco’s

Members & Guests in Attendance

Members (49) at meeting 26
Guests at meeting 0
Percent % at meeting 53%

Executive Board

<u>Attendance at meetings</u>	<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>
President: Criscione	1	X	NMT	NM	1	1				
1 st VP: J. Benvenuti	1	1	NMT	NM	1	1				
2 nd VP Chuck Russo	1	1	NMT	NM	1	1				
Secretary: Pelonero	1	X	X	NM	1	1				
Treasurer: Ponchak	1	1	NMT	NM	1	1				
Sgt.At-Arms: Morano	1	1	NMT	NM	1	1				

Delegates at Meetings

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

Board of Directors at meetings (6 past Chapter Presidents)

Carmen Gaita	1	1	NMT	NM	X	X				
Bruce Ponchak	1	1	NMT	NM	1	1				
John Barbieri	X	1	NMT	NM	1	1				
Steve Pelonero	1	X	X	NM	1	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	1	NMT	NM	1	1				
John Barbieri	X	1	NMT	NM	1	1				
Sal Benvenuti	1	1	NMT	NM	1	1				
Carmen Criscione	1	X	NMT	NM	1	1				
Carmen Gaita	1	1	NMT	NM	X	X				
John Morano	1	1	NMT	NM	1	1				
Steve Pelonero	1	X	X	NM	1	1				
Bruce Ponchak	1	1	NMT	NM	1	1				
Chuck Russo	1	1	NMT	NM	1	1				
Angelo Verrone	1	X	NMT	NM	X	1				

Opening Remarks

- **President Carmen Criscione**

Carmen welcomed everyone to the February meeting and introduced and swore in two new members: Carl Ricco and Gerard Capizzi

- **1st VP Joe Benvenuti**

Joe also welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished everyone a Happy Valentines Day

- **2nd VP Chuck Russo**

Chuck also welcomed everyone, wished everyone a Happy Valentines Day and welcomed our two new members

Secretary Minutes

Secretary: Steve Pelonero PNP

Steve noted that the minutes were emailed to all of the members and are also on the chapter website, Motions to accept were from: Joe Benvenuti and Sal Benvenuti. All were in favor



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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 January was \$20,198
- Motions to accept were from: Tom Breitwieser and Pat Pelonero. All were in favor.

Bills and Communications: John Morano

A thank you card was received from the 1st Reformed Church in Little Falls for our multiple donations to their food pantry

Chapter Budget

- N/A

Chapter Elections: Nominating chair to be appointed by Chapter President

- N/A

Fundraising Committees

• Community Service Day: Claudine Stefanelli

Claudine reported that the next Community Day will be on Saturday, April 18th at ShopRite. We again will be looking for volunteers to be at the entrance and exit doors of ShopRite to hand out our flier which lists some ideas for non-perishable items that the shoppers can buy and donate to our committee upon exiting. We in turn will help supply the seven panties in our Passaic Valley towns. Claudine said that a sign-up sheet will be at the March meeting.

• Fifty-Fifty: Claudine Stefanelli

- Claudine reported that the 50/50 brought in \$2400 which will be put into the general fund. She noted that she was thinking of doing the raffle again next year.



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

Pat reported that the pantries are happy to hear from us and very thankful for what we give them. Pat reported that St. Agnes need the most help. Pat also reported that there is a UNICO National Food Pantry form that each recipient needs to fill out themselves and that the National Fund usually gives anywhere from \$500 to \$1000 each year to anywhere from 5 to 10 pantries. Pat noted that our local pantries are aware of this.

- **Golf Outing: Fred DeMarco**

Fred reported that our golf outing is set for June 22 at Preakness Valley GC (formerly Passaic County GC. 12 noon tee time, We are looking for sponsors and golfers, workers and prizes.

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

Joe reported, just so the new members are aware, that in the past we have given to 5 families, from the donations we received both from our members and our chapter. Each of the five families, who are recommended both by a church or social services, gifts cards from ShopRite, Target, and Kohls. We just try making a merry Christmas spirit to families who are in need.

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

Roni reported that none of our family members are overseas at this time. It was noted that chapter member, Evelyn Tosi, that all of her grandchildren are and were in the service overseas at one time or another. The most current shipment overseas was 33 lbs and that the committee will be looking to buy from Amazon and have them ship direct from their warehouses.

- **Scholarship: Mike Russo**

- In Mike's absence, Chuck reported that the committee has met. The Scholarship dinner will be again at the Barnyard in Totowa on Sunday, June 14th. The Committee is also fine tuning the criteria. Thanks to all that participated in the Super Bowl giveaway, the chapter netted a \$3800 profit which will be used towards the Scholarship program.



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

Joe reported that we do have a recipient for the Study Abroad Grant who is now attending Montclair State. More information on the student will be noted at another meeting.

Non-Fundraising Committees

- **Flag Raising: Steve Pelonero PNP**

No report

- **Good & Welfare: Joe Benvenuti**

- John Morano reported that Gerry Gaeta was home following shoulder surgery.

- **Italian Heritage: Angelo Verrone**

- No report

- **Membership: Christina Castillo, Roni Corrado**

- Christina reported that our chapter, with our two new members that were just sworn in at this meeting, is now at 49 members: 45 adults and 4 youth (25 and younger). She also noted that we had 55 % of our members at the January meeting. Many birthday member celebrations in February.

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

- Steve reported that he is always looking for and will write an article on any your family heritage town. The chapter website is now at 20,461 visits. Steve also noted that all of the sponsors from the golf outing are in the newsletter and on the chapter website for the most current UNICO year (July through June)



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- **Public Relations: Christina Castillo, Roni Corrado**
 - It was reported both by Christina and Roni that we have coverage in Italian Tribune and also that we made the front page of the Passaic Valley Today Paper.
 - Pat Pelonero brought up the idea that to get our UNICO name out there that possibly the board would consider having a banner made, at least to start possibly in Little Falls, that would be shown all year on the baseball field on Paterson Ave. Fed DeMarco said that the banner would cost \$500.

District and National Events

- **District News**
 - Joe Agresti reported that our NJ District IV will be hosting a breakfast at Portobellos on Saturday, February 21st, and that 2 comp tickets will be given to each chapter. All are invited to attend.
 - Joe also reported that the District Pasta Dinner Fundraiser, which supports the December Christmas dinner, will be held again at the Wayne PAL building on April 24th. Joe reminded everyone that the District assessment will be again waived to a chapter if they have members at the pasta dinner that help either with set up, clean up and serving.
 - See Joe or chapter president Carmen if you want tickets for the dinner. \$25 for adults, \$10 for children.
- **National News**
 - PNP Joe Agresti, who is chairing the 2026 National Convention in Orlando FL, said that it will be at the Hyatt Grand Cypress from Wednesday through Saturday, July 22 through July 25.
 - PNP Steve Pelonero said that even through is still more a year off, that the convention that he will be chairing is at the Embassy Suites in Nashville TN



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Old Business

- Chapter President Carmen reported that the Executive Board met and recommend that our chapter donate \$500 to the Italian American Museum on Mulberry St, NYC. The money will come from a donation of \$1000 that we received a few years back, of which \$400 was already used for our heritage and this \$500 will leave us with \$100 to be used still for our heritage. With motions from Pat Peloneroa and a 2nd from Sal Benvenuti, it was approved. Carmen noted that the donor would be invited to a future meeting so that he is aware that we are always supporting the heritage.

New Business

- No new business

Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn was made at 9.05 pm by:
 - 1st Joe Benvenuti
 - 2nd John BarbieriAll 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	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
Total	Members	24	20	0	n/a	28	26	0	0	0	0	
1	Agresti Joseph	1		.	.	1	1					3
2	Barbieri John		1	.	.	1	1					3
3	Barone Joseph		1	.	.	1	1					3
4	Benvenuti Joseph	1	1	.	.	1	1					4
5	Benvenuti Salvatore	1	1	.	.	1	1					4
6	Bifalco Mark			.	.							0
7	Breitwieser Thomas		1	.	.	1	1					3
8	Capalbo Frank	1	1	.	.	1	1					4
9	Capizzi Gerard	1					1
10	Carbonelli Michael	1	1	.	.	1	1					4
11	Carrubba Michael			.	.	1	1					2
12	Castillo Christina	1	1	.	.	1	1					4
13	Cervino Peter	1		.	.							1
14	Cestone James			.	.	1	1					2
15	Cestone Julianna			.	.							0
16	Chomko Jean	1	1	.	.	1						3
17	Corrado Roni	1	1	.	.	1	1					4
18	Criscione Carmen	1		.	.	1	1					3
19	DeLuccia Alexa			.	.							0
20	DeLuccia Alexander			.	.	1						1
21	DeMarco Fred	1	1	.	.	1	1					4
22	Dransfield Daniel			.	.							0
23	Dransfield Grace			.	.							0
24	Eoepochino Kyle			.	.							0
25	Ermolowich William			.	.							0
26	Gaeta Gerardo	1		.	.							1
27	Gaita Jessica			.	.							0
28	Gaita Jr Carmen	1	1	.	.							2
29	Klosik Emilia	1		.	.							1
30	Kribs Ken		1	.	.	1						2
31	Longo Pete			.	.							0
32	Lynch Peter			.	.							0
33	Morano John	1	1	.	.	1	1					4
34	OHara Joyce	1	1	.	.	1	1					4
35	Peloner Patricia	1		.	.	1	1					3
36	Peloner Steven	1		.	.	1	1					3
37	Polizzotto Philip			.	.							0
38	Ponchak Bruce	1	1	.	.	1	1					4

