



UNICO NATIONAL

PASSAIC VALLEY CHAPTER

P.O. BOX 341

LITTLE FALLS, NJ 07424

PassaicValleyUNICO@gmail.com

www.PassaicValleyUNICO.org

Monthly Minutes

October 14, 2026 ~ 2nd Wednesday

<u>Date</u>	October 14, 2026 – 2 nd Wednesday
<u>Place</u>	Monte Bello, Woodland Park
<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	30
Guests at meeting	2
Percent % at meeting	60 %

Executive Board

<u>Attendance at meetings</u>		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	☺	x
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	😊	x								
John Morano	😊	😊								
Steve Pelonero	😊	😊								
Bruce Ponchak	😊	😊								
Chuck Russo	😊	😊								
Angelo Verrone	X	😊								

Opening Remarks

- **Chapter President Joe Benvenuti**
 - President Joe Welcomed everyone to the meeting. Joe also thanked everyone for the condolences received from the passing of his brother Frank in North Carolina. Joe remarked that there was another great attendance at this meeting and welcomed our UNICO National Executive Vice President Steve Calantone, from the Wayne Chapter, and also welcomed his wife Julianne (Jules) to the meeting. Joe then had Steve Calantone swear in our newest member Bob Baraco (which brings our chapter to 53 members).
- **1st VP Fred DeMarco**
 - Fred acknowledged what Joe said
- **2nd VP Chuck Russo**
 - Chuck also acknowledged what Joe and Fred said. But Chuck did add that you can always bring a friend to the meeting to experience what we do and possibly get them to join.



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Secretary Minutes

Secretary: Steve Pelonero PNP

- Steve noted that the minutes are on the chapter's website and were also emailed to all the members and also to the National Office and Nations Officers.
- With no questions, motions to accept were from:
Joyce O'Hara and Sal Benvenuti
All were in favor

Treasurer Report

Treasurer: Bruce Ponchak

- Bruce noted that the treasurer's report was sent out to all the members.
- Bruce reported that about \$20,000 or \$25,000 will be put into a 9-month CD
- With no questions, motions to accept were from:
Pat Pelonero and John Barbieri
All were in favor
- Bruce also reported that the chapter budget was proposed at the September meeting and that this was the time to vote to accept or reject it. With no questions it was unanimously approved

Bills and Communications: John Barbieri

- John reported that in the mail was the UNICO National Foundation raffle tickets. Also, there were some thank you letters from our donations that were made at the Annual UNICO Convention.

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 our community service day will again be at ShopRite Little Falls to help collect items for our local Food Pantries. It will be the 3rd Saturday of April, which is April 17th



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• **Fifty-Fifty: Claudine Stefanelli**

- Claudine reported that the 50/50 raffle drawing will be at the Ties in Singas on December 16th. She asked if you need tickets. that she has some left at this meeting, but if you cannot sell them to please let her know as people are already asking for more than she had printed.

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

- Patricia reported that the November meeting is the perfect time for members to bring their Thanksgiving food donations so that the churches and pantries can help those less fortunate.

• **Golf Outing: Fred DeMarco**

- Fred reported that there was no update other than that it will probably be at the same place again next year

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

- Sal reported briefly that our chapter has budgeted and also with member donations, that we have been giving to file needy families gift cards from Target, Kohls and ShopRite. If anyone would like to contribute to please see him, Joe Benvenuti, or Carmen Gaita

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

- N/A

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

- No report but Joe Benvenuti did note that Roni usually will send a package to an overseas soldier. Pat said that she will bring a St. James Church Bulletin that lists all the soldiers that are now overseas

• **Scholarship: Mike Russo**

- Michael reported that there was no report for scholarships, but Seton Hall has many activities at their university.



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Non-Fundraising Committees

- **Flag Raising: Steve Pelonero PNP**
 - Steve reported that there was a great turnout this year for the flag raising. Coffee was served and Mary Benvenuti made some biscotti. Steve remarked that this is a nice event that lets us remember our Italian Heritage.
- **Good & Welfare: Joe Benvenuti**
 - Joe B reported that member Joe Barone recently had heart surgery (3 stents) and that our chapter sent him a gift card. Joe Benvenuti also said that it would be nice to call him to see how he is doing.
- **Italian Heritage: Angelo Verrone**
 - N/A
- **Membership: Christina Castillo, Roni Corrado**
 - Christina reported that we now have 53 members with the swearing in of new member Robert Barraco. She wished our birthday members a happy day and there were three of them in attendance at the meeting: Carmen Criscione, herself, and Frank Capalbo. She noted that the average age of our chapter is now 65 years.
- **Newsletter & Website: Steve Pelonero PNP, John Barbieri**
 - Steve Pelonero reported that all minutes and newsletters are on the chapter website. Steve also noted that the chapter website is now at 21,836 visits, which is up 166 visits from the last meeting. Steve also noted that he is now working on the November Newsletter.
 - John Barbieri said that some people are saying that they are not getting the meeting notice request so that we know how many are attending.
- **Public Relations: Christina Castillo, Roni Corrado**
 - Christina reported that both here and Roni Corrado have been sending all of our chapter photos to both the Italian Tribune and Passaic Valley Today newspapers. They are all being printed and published



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District and National Events

- **District News**

- UNICO National Executive VP Steve Calantone talked about UNICO and the District events that are coming up soon. Steve gave the date (along with fliers that were available at the meeting) of December 1st which is the date of our Christmas Diner for our Special Need Friends. He noted that upon request, there would be younger special need friends there and that tickets can be purchased through our chapter president.
- Steve Calenatone also recognized the date of Dec. 5th, which is when the NYC Bus Trip will take place. The bus, he noted, will leave the Methodist Church in Little Falls at 11 am and go first to the Rockefeller Tree and then to Puglia's Restaurant in Little Italy for dinner. He added that those tickets can also be purchased from Joe Benvenuti, chapter President. Steve C. also noted that this year there will be again two buses so if you are interested in going, please get them soon as this is usually a sold-out event.

- **National News**

- Steve Calantone talked about the Eastern Region Meeting in CT on Saturday and Sunday, November 14th and 15th. Sal noted that Districts and Chapter are always invited to attend and talk about their chapters and also have a chance to meet a lot of other UNICO members from the East Coast (Eastern Regional Meeting).
- Steve Calentone also talked about the November 3rd Cigar Night Fundraiser which helps defray some of the costs for the July 2027 Convention. It will be held at the Brick House. Steve noted that even if you don't smoke Cigars that the dinner is upstairs in the Brick House and the Cigar Lounge is downstairs.
- Steve Calantone also talked about the October 7th UNICO National Meet the National President Dinner. Joe Benvenuti said that we already have about 10 members going. Joe Agresti asked Joe B if he could send him the names because he is working on the table seating at that event.
- PNP and chapter member and the 2027 Convention Chairman Steve Pelonero, talked about the 2027 Convention at the Embassy Suites in Nashville the last week of July, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Steve noted that every room is a Suite and the 30th floor is an indoor pool, which is where there will be a Friday night Social with hopefully some local music (plans are still being made). There will be a few notable guest speakers and that is still in the works as well.



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Old Business

- Joe Benvenuti said that Baseball Signs were discussed for the three towns fields and we will probably get them again for next year.
- Tom Brietweiser said that he is working on the Thanksgiving Christmas Parade Gondola Float. He has a 43 ft flatbed trailer and will soon be decorating it. It was asked if he needs help to please ask. Carmen Criscione noted that there are already 261 floats registered to be in it.
- Christina Castillo noted that at the November meeting we will recognize the members with 30 or more years of service. She asked everyone to please try to attend and thank the members for their years of service

New Business

- Member Gina Bucci, present a very nice Italian Heritage Program to our chapter at this meeting. It was about her grandfather (nonno) life growing up and in the service. She had many photos of his service along with a hat that he wore in the war. A thank you to Gina for giving us a piece of her Italian Heritage.
- Executive Vice President Steve Calantone said that the deceased Passaic-Clifton President, Dave D'Arco (who most knew), that his daughter is running a foundation pasta fundraiser dinner, in his name, on November 15th at the Elks Hall on Union Blvd in Totowa, Priced at \$35. With a 1 pm start

Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn was made at 9:06 pm, by xx and xx
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	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
	Total	Members	29	30	0	n/a	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1	Agresti	Joseph	1	1									2
2	Barbieri	John	1	1									2
3	Barone	Joseph											0
4	Barraco	Robert	1	1									2
5	Benvenuti	Joseph	1	1									2
6	Benvenuti	Salvatore	1	1									2
7	Bifalco	Mark											0
8	Breitwieser	Richard	1	1									2
9	Breitwieser	Thomas	1	1									2
10	Bucci	Gina	1	1									2
11	Capalbo	Frank	1	1									2
12	Capizzi	Gerard											0
13	Carbonelli	Michael		1									1
14	Carrubba	Michael	1	1									2
15	Castillo	Christina	1	1									2
16	Cervino	Peter											0
17	Cestone	James											0
18	Cestone	Julianna											0
19	Chomko	Jean	1	1									2
20	Corrado	Roni											0
21	Criscione	Carmen	1	1									2
22	DeLuccia	Alexa											0
23	DeLuccia	Alexander											0
24	DeMarco	Fred	1	1									2
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									2
32	Good	Duane	1	1									2
33	Klosik	Emilia	1										1
34	Kribs	Ken	1	1									2
35	Longo	Pete											0
36	Lynch	Peter											0
37	Morano	John	1	1									2
38	OHara	Joyce	1	1									2
39	Pelonero	Patricia	1	1									2



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40	Pelonero	Steven	1	1								2
41	Polizzotto	Philip										0
42	Ponchak	Bruce	1	1								2
43	Ragusso	Michaela										0
44	Ricca	Carl	1	1								2
45	Russo	Chuck	1	1								2
46	Russo	Jillian										0
47	Russo	Michael	1	1								2
48	Sabatino	Anthony	1	1								2
49	Sisti	Gisella	1	1								2
50	Stefanelli	Claudine		1								1
51	Tosi	Evelyn										0
52	Verrone	Angelo		1								1
53	Youngster	Henry										0

Total	Members	29	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	Guests	0	2								
Members at	Meeting	29	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Meeting	Location	CA	MB								
Percent	at meeting	55%	57%	0%	n/a	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Guests											

x