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**“SERVICE
ABOVE SELF”**



UNICO National's 2022/2023 President

*Dr. Peter Pettinato and
First Lady Maggie*



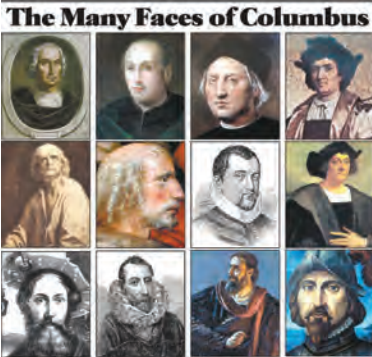
2022 Convention Pg. 12



Columbus Day Pg. 9

THE ITALIAN TRIBUNE

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Wishing All Our Readers a Happy Columbus Day
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 -Michael Frunzio



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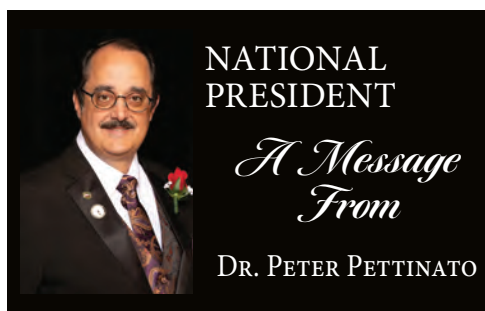
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MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

November 6-7, 2022: Eastern Regional Meeting
 July 26-30, 2023: 100th UNICO National Convention
 July 28-August 1, 2024: 101st UNICO National Convention

For more events, visit www.UNICO.org

Title of Publication: ComUNICO Publication No. 00647700. Filed 11/1/21.
 No. of Issues Published Annually: 5. Annual Subscription Price: \$25.00.
 Mailing Address of Office of Publication, Headquarters, and Publisher:
 271 U.S. Hwy. 46 West, Suite F-103, Fairfield, NJ 07004. Editor: Patricia
 Pelonero. The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization
 and the exempt status for Federal income tax purposes has not changed
 during the preceding 12 months. ComUNICO is the official publication of
 UNICO National. Pages 1-58, and editorial content copyrighted by UNICO
 National ©2022. Pages 58-66 editorial content copyrighted by Fra Noi Inc.
 ©2022 Volume 77, No. 4 • ComUNICO (ISSN-1044-7202) • Circulation 7,000
 Phone: 973.808.0035 Fax: 973.808.0043 • UNICOnational@UNICO.org
 Periodical postage is paid to Caldwell, NJ and additional offices. Postmaster,
 please send Form 3579 and all address changes to: 271 US Highway 46 West,
 Suite F-103, Fairfield, NJ 07004-2458



Well, hello there. Are you as surprised as I am? Here you are reading a message from the National President and I'm the one who had to write it! I still can't believe that the time from my election as 2nd Vice President in 2018 to now has gone by so fast. Even a worldwide pandemic didn't seem to slow it down all that much. Many of those who have held this office before me have told me just how fast this year will go by. So far, I can say that they are quite right. It wasn't that long ago that we were gathered in New Orleans for our 2022 National Convention. Many of you were there and I hope you had an enjoyable experience. To those of you who could not join us, know that you were missed, and we look forward to seeing you soon. We continued our charitable efforts by raising many thousands of dollars for worthy causes. We celebrated 25 years of women in UNICO and we used the occasion to kick off our 100th year celebrations. I want to once again thank Gerry Heytink and his Convention Committee. They did an outstanding job behind the scenes to make our time in New Orleans quite memorable. In the short time I have been President, I have come to rely on the National Office staff even more than before. New Executive Director Melanie Naro, Office Manager Sue Anzelmo, along with Kathleen and Fran are there to assist us all. I encourage everyone to make use of their experience, expertise, and very friendly demeanor.

I look forward to working with Vice Presidents Contini, Bengivenga and Nasello as UNICO begins its second century. The Executive Committee is comprised of dedicated individuals who

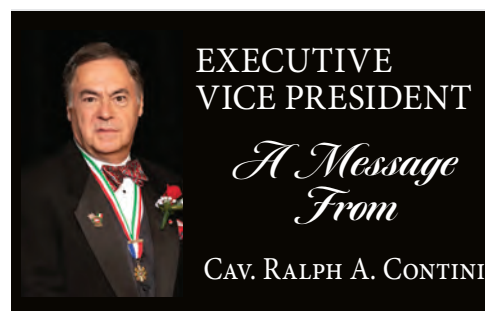
are already hard at work at their assigned tasks. I want to thank all of those who stepped up for the elected offices and also to the past presidents and District Governors who accepted appointments to the committee. Working together with our Chapters and Districts we can ensure that our communities and charities will continue to enjoy the benefits of our "Service Above Self". It's not all work, however. Chapters are busy setting their schedules and filling their calendars. There will be celebrations, anniversaries, dinners, festivals, sporting tournaments and a host of creative events. The only thing UNICO excels in more than service is in having fun while serving.

There can be no doubt that UNICO is the premier service organization in this country. I cannot fully express how humbled I am that you have placed your faith in my ability to lead this great organization. The National Presidency is the ultimate gift that UNICO can bestow. I promise you that I will forever treasure this gift and that I will do everything in my power to live up to the example set by my predecessors and validate the trust you have placed in me. God bless you and God bless UNICO National.

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Don't forget
to visit the UNICO
website for the latest news
and information:
UNICO.org



Buon Giorno a tutti! Greetings from Hackensack, New Jersey! In this, my first message as your Executive Vice President, and as this memorable summer is winding down, it is my sincere hope that all members of our UNICO famiglia are well. I returned recently from attending my 40th consecutive National Convention going back to 1982. I am especially happy that we were able to be together again as we kicked off UNICO's 100th Year Celebration at our 99th National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Congratulations are in order to all our honorees, with a special thank you to James Pitaro, ESPN Chairman, for being part of an amazing evening. Congratulations to all involved in ensuring the success of the convention. To Peter and Maggie Pettinato, to the Convention Chair and his hard-working committee, to our outgoing Executive Director and the national office staff, as well as to the volunteers: I know you join me in sending thanks to them and admiration on a job well done! As we begin another UNICO year, we welcome our incoming Executive Director, Melanie Naro. I would like to express my sincere and personal appreciation to the members at large, in particular to the members of the Hackensack Chapter and of NJ District VII for their continuing support as we take another step forward on this journey. I am humbled to have been elected your Executive Vice President, it is indeed a high honor. As Executive Vice President, among other responsibilities, I am to assist President Pettinato by supervising the activities of all National Committees,

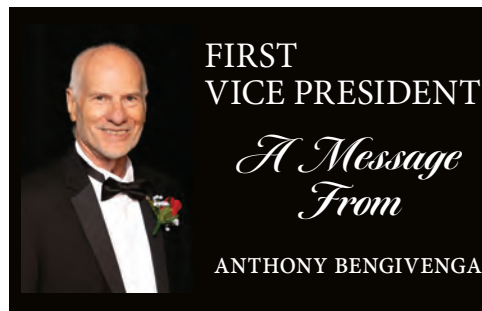
especially in preparing for the National Convention, obtaining sponsors, and working on the ad journal. We will also continue to move forward in the revamping and social media integration of the National website which we plan to implement as soon as possible. Continuity will be essential in order to bring this project to fruition successfully.

It is my honor and privilege to serve in a dual role as UNICO National's Executive Vice President and as Columbus Day Committee Chair. I look forward to being with, and speaking with many of you. In a special way, I encourage you to attend the upcoming Columbus Day Celebrations, as well as at the Eastern Regional Meeting to be held in Shawnee, Pennsylvania, from November 6th to November 7th.

This will be a history-making year for UNICO as we commemorate and celebrate its 100th year anniversary. In particular, I am proud to showcase the accomplishments we UNICANS have spearheaded to Preserve, Protect and Defend Columbus Day. Be sure to join us in celebrating "Columbus Day, a Great American Holiday", and October as "Italian Heritage and Culture Month!"

The 100th Annual Convention will be held at Sanibel Harbour Marriott Resort & Spa, Fort Myers, Florida, starting on Wednesday, July 26, 2023. Since we were unable to hold our Convention there in 2020 as scheduled, the hotel will honor our original pricing for the rooms. (More information will be forthcoming in future issues of ComUNICO). Ciao for now and Andiamo "Sempre Avanti".

*"Service
Above Self"*



As we came off the National Convention in New Orleans, I was so proud of all our collective continued missions of the promotion of our great Italian culture and language, as well as all our generous charity work both locally and nationally. I was sworn in as your First National Vice President and I take that position most seriously.

As First Vice President I am charged with communicating with our Districts and listening to their suggestions and comments. Please submit your District Reports electronically via the UNICO National website. I promise to read each and every District report and respond accordingly. The form for these reports can be located in the "Members Section" of the UNICO National website. You can fill out the form on any computer or notebook and easily submit the form by the click of a button to send it. These reports allow me to keep close track of your District meetings and to understand which Chapters are participating with your District. If the distance is too far to meet in person, I encourage our District Chapters to meet virtually on Zoom. Please don't hesitate to contact me personally or the national office if you need help in finding and submitting the electronic form, or if you need any guidance at all.

This year as we continue to celebrate our organization's 100th anniversary, I look forward to attending the two days of ceremonies and festivities in Waterbury on October 1 and 2, which is being sponsored proudly by the Waterbury Chapter, which was founded by Dr. Anthony Vastola in 1922. I encourage every Chapter and District officer to make an effort to attend

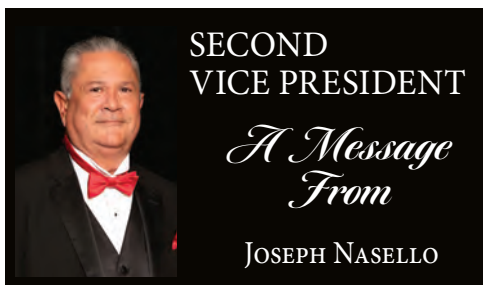
this important centennial of UNICO. Although I will reach out periodically to all Districts by email. If any District has any concerns at all, or if you have any recommendations, please reach out to me by email or phone. I will listen to your recommendations and respond right away. Our National Officers are here to listen to our membership and to serve you. If you hold any position in your District, please feel free to reach out to me if you have any comments or recommendations. Communication is very important. So, please take the opportunity to stay positive and share information with each other, so that we keep our UNICO family strong and vibrant.

I look forward to being in touch with all our District Governors, so please always check your email spam folder in case my email finds its way there. This past year, I participated in so many Chapter and District events. I will be so happy to continue to participate depending on my schedule. My email is anthony@bengivenga.com and my tel is (732) 310-6031.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the 100th Anniversary festivities this October in Waterbury and also, at the Eastern Regional Conference in early November.

Baci e abbracci. A big hug to all.





SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

A Message From

JOSEPH NASELLO

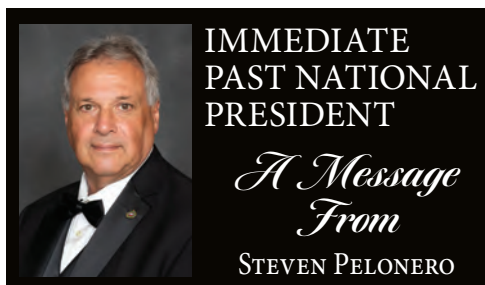
Ciao Tutti. Thank you all for electing me to be your Second Vice President. Our local Chapters throughout the USA are very important to our organization. I would like to remind everyone to continue to submit your Chapter reports via the UNICO National website. These reports help me keep up with each Chapter's monthly meetings and the great work that is taking place in the community. This form is available on our website www.unico.org in the "members section" and can be filled out electronically and submitted via email. Please don't hesitate to contact either myself or the national office for any assistance with the electronic form. In these forms, I am kindly asking for you to include the date, time, and location of your monthly meetings. As of September, there will be a Chapter president calendar in which this information will be shared for all to see.

If any member or Chapter ever has any concerns or recommendations, please reach out to me by email or phone. I am here to listen to our membership and to serve you. I have participated in many Chapter and District events throughout the past year and would love to continue doing so. I would like to meet as many Chapter Presidents this year, please reach out and let me know when you would like me to join a meeting or event.

It was fantastic seeing everyone in July at our New Orleans convention. I am looking forward to seeing everyone in Waterbury, Connecticut for our 100th Anniversary of UNICO National.

Stay well and best wishes to you all and your families.

Joseph Nasello Sr.
201-394-0793, jmnasello@aol.com

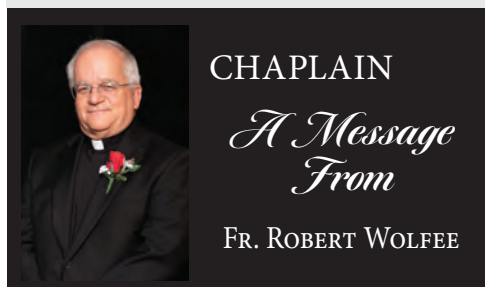


IMMEDIATE PAST NATIONAL PRESIDENT

A Message From

STEVEN PELONERO

I sincerely want to thank everyone in UNICO for your Unity, Neighborliness, Integrity, Charity and for giving others Opportunity. I am especially thankful for all the Chapters and Districts that invited my wife and me as guests at your dinners, events, meetings, and homes. I truly wish that there was more time to have attended and to have met more of you. It was an honor. Patricia and I are blessed to have met you and to have you in our lives. Thank you and God Bless all of us.



CHAPLAIN

A Message From

FR. ROBERT WOLFEE

We can know a spouse or close friend so well that we can almost predict how that person will behave or what he or she will say. When they act "out of character," we are uncomfortable because it calls into question our expectations of who this person is. There are times when Jesus' words in the gospels may make us uncomfortable for the same reason. One example of that is found in the twelfth Chapter of St. Luke's gospel, where Jesus talks about division in households. Passages like this one do not seem to fit with our expectations of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, the gentle and kind Jesus who healed the sick and welcomed little children. However, perhaps it is healthy to have our expectations of Jesus challenged. After all, how can we know all there is to know about him Our human minds cannot fully understand the Son of God.

So, what is Jesus telling us in this particular passage His words are meant to shake us up, to challenge any thought we might have that following him is always comfortable and predictable. We are reminded that we might find ourselves at odds with those who are closest to us. Jesus' message was a source of conflict and dissension, but he did not cause the division. The division that he talked about is caused when people choose themselves and what they want over what God wants for them. We are challenged to persevere and keep our eyes focused on God. Our faith in him will help see us through the difficulties we may face.

When we accepted Jesus' invitation to follow him, we also accepted picking up our crosses. During his life on earth, some people mocked him, others rejected him, and others caused him to suffer. We may face similar things. The secular world tells us that we should be the center of our own lives, but our faith tells us that Jesus should be the center of our lives. When we make him the center of our lives, there might be some people who cannot accept that. We have to choose between what faith tells us and what the world tells us. There is no comfortable compromise. Hopefully, our choice is for Jesus.

God bless,
Fr. Bob Wolflee



SCHOLARSHIP DIRECTOR

A Message From

JOAN TIDONA

Dietro ogni problema, c'è l'opportunità. Behind any problem, there is opportunity. -Galileo Galilei While I'm not so sure that is totally correct, I would never challenge Galileo. Through the UNICO Scholarship Program, we continue the

purpose established by Dr. Vastola and the founding members. As encountered some problems in recent times, owing to circumstances beyond our control, we move forward.

Twenty-one scholarship offerings were in place for the 2021-22 season. This allowed us to benefit thirty-seven deserving students, for the total amount of \$98,250. Included in these awards were the newly instituted Scholarships for Veterinary Studies and Seminarian Studies. The Seminarian Scholarship was limited to one school for the initial offering but is expected to be available to all Chapter states in the future. While the COVID situation appeared to be stabilizing, the number of qualified applicants for some programs was limited. On a positive note, the DiMattio Celli Family Study Abroad Scholarship was reinstated, as schools reopened their courses.

Preparations are now well underway for the 2022-23 Season. Applications are expected to be available by mid-November. Chapter Presidents are asked to appoint a Scholarship Chairperson and identify them to National. This will allow us to work together, to strengthen our program. Information detailing the submission procedure will be distributed to members by way of Constant Contact. Please inform local schools of programs that might be of interest to their students. As students and their families struggle with the cost of tuition, they face additional expenses such as books, housing, and everyday necessities. Consequently, our scholarships are greatly valued and highly sought after. The opportunity we offer young scholars bring positive recognition to UNICO. Anticipated Scholarship Awards for 2023 are expected to total \$121,250. Two additional programs are currently in development. They are the Ralph J. Torraco Scholarship for Computer Studies and the Ralph J. Torraco

Scholarship for Journalism Studies. We request that all Chapters consider sponsoring candidates. In doing so, you will bring greater attention to your Chapter, earn points toward Chapter Achievement and most importantly you will assist young applicants. A Chapter member needs only to indicate they are willing to serve as sponsor. They may provide a letter of recommendation, but this is not required. In the past, some Chapters have used the National application form for local scholarships. Since the online procedure does not allow such access, we have posted an application template on the Members Section of our website. This model can be edited to meet Chapter requirements.

Special thanks to those who have contributed financially to the Scholarship Program. Without your backing, our traditional offerings could be in danger. I don't think anyone wants that to happen. Chapters contributing \$1,000 or more are awarded a banner patch.

Sincere appreciation to Office Manager Sue Anzelmo. Sue has provided tremendous support, helping whenever needed, with professionalism, compassion, and a sense of humor. Mille grazie to the Scholarship Committee members for their work in publicizing our offerings, and providing assistance to Chapters, Districts and potential candidates. I especially thank them for their valuable suggestions toward improvement.

As UNICANS, we will all continue to seize the opportunity to make things better, overcoming any problems we may encounter.

Joan Tidona, Scholarship Director

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My name is Geri Samuel and I am the newly elected Membership and Retention Director. I have served as President and assisted with many other positions in my local Chapter of Scotch Plains/Fanwood. I have served as District Governor of District X and have also held the position of secretary in the District.

I am looking forward to an exciting and productive year in this position. I attended my first event in August at National Night Out for the Plainfields Community. UNICO had a tent at the event and people stopped by to find out about us. Some people signed up for information about their events and meetings.

If you need information for a Heritage Event please contact Sue Anzelmo at the National Office. She can provide you with postcards to mail out to prospective members as well as any information you might need. I am available by email geri.samuel.unico@gmail.com or by phone at 908-337-7661. I work during the day but can call you back at lunch time or in the evening. I will make myself available to attend as many of your events as possible.

In closing I would like to relate a little story. My brother, John, who is a past president of the Westfield Chapter left UNICO when they let women join. I was very disappointed when I heard this. I texted John after my election at the National Convention. He texted back that he would now have to rejoin. I am hoping to welcome him into the Scotch Plains Chapter this fall.

Ciao, Geri Samuel



Ciao a tutti. Since coming back from the National Convention, I am still overwhelmed by the impact UNICO has made in the communities we serve. It made me realize how much more we could accomplish by growing our organization. Service is at the heart of every Chapter, with members holding fundraising events to award scholarships and support local organizations. The work we are doing is remarkable and we should be proud. We should also take the time to spread our mission and instill this sense of service to communities that do not have existing Chapters. Imagine what we can accomplish with more Chapters. What I learned as Membership & Retention Director; is that we are the best advocates of UNICO and we need to work together to develop and grow. As your new Expansion Director, I will work on existing leads, but will explore opportunities in “un-chartered” areas with a strong Italian presence to promote UNICO and encourage involvement. This can only happen if we work together and share information and ideas. Please reach out to me with any suggestions.... maybe you have a former Chapter Member who has moved away and would be a great person to get back involved. At a time when people are looking for something to believe in, what is better than an organization that captures their heritage and their desire to serve? I hope everyone had a great summer. It was wonderful to visit with fellow UNICANS at the Convention and I look forward to seeing you all soon. As always, you can contact me at ncarpinelli06@gmail.com or 973-809-4294.



I am happy to be back as Editor of ComUNICO. Thank you, Dr. Peter Pettinato, for appointing me to the position. I will do my best to give the membership a great ComUNICO magazine with each issue. As in the past, if members have ideas and advertisement leads, please let me know and I will follow up.

The same rules that were approved by the UNICO National Board of Directors still stand and will be posted in every issue. The email address for the ComUNICO submissions also remains the same, ComUNICO@unico.org. Please send in your pictures as single file jpgs and your captions labeled in word.

I will do my best to place all pictures, however that is not always possible or feasible. There are some pictures, because of the nature of an event, that get duplicated. The convention and mid-year meeting are two that come to mind. Many members will submit the same picture as a District or Chapter and placing them all would create a redundancy. Please send in clear pictures. If a picture is not concise to you, I will not be able to make adjustments to change the photo. If you have questions, please give me a call, or email me.

I am looking forward to working with you all again. Hope you like this issue!

Patricia Pelonero

Don't forget
The Deadline for the November 2022 issue is October 14, 2022

UNICO National
100th Annual
National Convention



**Sanibel Harbour Marriott
Resort & Spa**
17260 Harbour Pointe Dr.
Fort Myers, FL 33908

July 26 - 30, 2023

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Celebrating the 100th Birthday of UNICO on Columbus Day

As fate would have it, the 100th birthday of UNICO coincides precisely with this year's Columbus Day. UNICO was founded on October 10, 1922, in Waterbury, Connecticut. A group of 15 men, led by Dr. Anthony P. Vastola, came together to create what has become a very special, very proud, and very effective organization. We truly believe Columbus Day is a "Great American Holiday" proudly celebrated by Italian Americans. We launched this phrase a number of years ago, and I'm proud to say that this phrase is becoming more and more recognized and mainstream.

UNICO's involvement, along with the Italian American community in a number of events, is aiding in the

reversal of the anti-Columbus trend plaguing our country. We urge all Chapters to proceed with plans to hold Columbus Day and Italian Heritage month events. We suggest that this year's theme and celebrations be held in honor of UNICO turning 100 years old.

We encourage all UNICANS to participate in celebrating and commemorating Columbus, one of the most significant figures in all of World History. The UNICO National Columbus Day Committee stands ready to assist with suggestions or even financial assistance.

Review the following list to find and join a parade or celebration convenient for you.

The UNICO National Columbus Day Committee is asking for donations. Your support will enable UNICO National to continue to be a visible presence during these important Columbus Day and heritage events. Individual donations may be made through the UNICO National website or you may send your donation to the National office earmarked "Columbus Day".

Please join us in celebrating "Columbus Day, a Great American Holiday" and October as "Italian Heritage and Culture Month!"

Ciao for Now and "Sempre Avanti!"
Cav. Ralph A. Contini
Executive Vice President and
Columbus Day Chair

The following is information on several other planned Columbus Day parades: We encourage all to participate in any Columbus Day activities available to them.

- **NUTLEY BELLEVILLE COLUMBUS DAY PARADE** – The 40th Annual Parade will take place on Sunday, October 9th starting at 12:30PM at the Belleville High School and will march towards Nutley High School.
- **THE OCEAN COUNTY COLUMBUS DAY PARADE** will be on Sunday, October 9th, starting in Seaside Park, NJ at 1:00 P.M. Members and guests are to assemble at 12:00 P.M, usually on The Boulevard at J Street and head towards Seaside Heights. The UNICO float will be on hand to lead the march.
- **THE PHILADELPHIA COLUMBUS DAY PARADE** will be held on Sunday, October 9th along its historic South Broad Street location. It will kick off from Broad & Moore at 12:00 P.M.
- **The Chicago Columbus Day Parade** will take place on Monday, October 10th. The parade starts on State St. at Wacker Drive at 12:30 P.M. A float will be provided by the West Suburban Chapter.

On October 9, 2022, there will also be parades in East Hanover, NJ and Hartford, CT.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The 78th Annual Columbus Day Parade in New York City will take place on Monday, October 10th. This is our flagship National parade. We are thrilled to showcase: Celebrating 100 Years of "Service Above Self" 1922-2022. The parade will air live on WABC-TV from 12 Noon to 3 PM and ABC online. We will make this celebration bigger and better than ever! Come join us and be part of history!



Waterbury Chapter of UNICO National

PO Box 933 • Waterbury, CT 06721

Birthplace of UNICO • Founded October 10, 1922

June 2022

Dear Amici:

In 1922, Dr. Anthony Vastola applied for membership to a local chapter of a national service organization, only to be rejected simply because he was an Italian-American. After consulting with his Parish Priest and fellow prominent Americans of Italian descent, the decision to create a *unique* service organization dedicated to promoting positive imagery of Italian Americans through cultural, educational and charitable opportunities in Waterbury was proposed. Proud of his heritage but looking to serve his country, Dr. Vastola turned the lemon he was handed into the finest limoncello around.....UNICO. The idea quickly spread across Connecticut and the Tri-State Area and has since grown into the Largest Italian-American Service Organization in the United States of America.

In Waterbury, we have perpetuated Dr. Vastola's dream ever since. This is why, on the first weekend of October, people from across the country will join us to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Founding of UNICO. Plans include a Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes Church (where the organizing meetings of UNICO took place), followed by a procession through downtown led by the Police Pipe & Drums to the majestic Palace Theater (also celebrating their 100th) for a Cocktail Reception and brief program.

However, we can't do this alone, which is why we are seeking financial support from the individuals and businesses to assist with this event. A variety of sponsorship opportunities are available and since Waterbury UNICO is a registered 501(c)(3) corporation, all contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of current tax laws.

Please join us in celebrating not only UNICO, but the perseverance, dedication and achievements of the entire Waterbury area, especially the Italian-Americans. If you need more information, please contact us at WaterburyUNICO@yahoo.com or 203.560.0269 or visit <https://waterburyunico.ticketspice.com/unico100>.

Thank you for your time and generosity.

Sincerely,

Francine J. Nido

Francine J. Nido

Chapter President & Event Chair



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Convention 2022

Ice Breaker! Kicking off a fun filled evening while sporting our favorite teams!





Celebrating 100 Years of Service!



Convention 2022

Ice Breaker! Kicking off a fun filled evening while sporting our favorite teams!





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Convention 2022

Ice Breaker! Kicking off a fun filled evening while sporting our favorite teams!



TBug Goes to Italy

by Katy Vetta

"Such a genius idea! It's Italy wrapped up in a single book...The cute travel bug pulls you in, and the writing and graphics keep you captivated. So excited to see what destination will be next!"

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- Kelsey Rowe

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Katy Vetta has worn more hats than she can comfortably fit in her closet: former kindergarten and fifth grade schoolteacher, followed by educational toy saleswoman, volunteer at her children's schools in a variety of capacities, large-group travel consultant, and then her favorite of all, grandmother of five grandchildren, with one more on the way. She is happiest when she's playing with (and secretly teaching) aforementioned children or stocking up on Vitamin Sea at the beach near their home outside of Charleston, South Carolina.

Travel Bug, "T" for short, has been a dream becoming a reality. Fueled mostly by her husband's nonstop passion for travel, Italy and all its 'faces' has been birthplace to several of their family's fondest memories. Katy's mission is to create more, see more, and share more of all the world has to offer.

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Convention 2022

Photos from the Opening Ceremony and General Session



L to R: Executive Director Sal Benvenuti, Executive Vice President Dr. Peter Pettinato, First Vice President Anthony Bengivenga, National President Steve Pelonaro, Second Vice President Cav. Ralph Contini



Dr. Frank Greco assisting the Executive Committee. L to R: Counsel Frank Blasi, ESQ., Treasurer Lisa Aduato, Secretary Patty Hirsch, Scholarship Director Joan Tidona, Expansion Director Joe Nasello



L to R: Past National Presidents: Kathi Strozza, Dr. Frank DeFrank, Michael Veselka, Cav. Joseph Agresti, Michael Spano



Executive Vice President Dr. Peter Pettinato welcoming all to the 99th Convention



2022 Convention Chair Gerry Heytink



Honor Guard bringing up the Colours



Past National Presidents Escorting the Colours: L to R: Glenn Pettinato, Tom Vaughan, Michael Spano



Opening of the General Session



L to R: Gerry Heytink, Judy Martino from the Carbondale PA Chapter, Frank Blasi, ESQ.



Celebrating 100 Years of Service!



General Session Members saluting the American Flag

Past National Presidents Escorting in National President Steven Pelonero. Cav. Joseph Agresti, Kathi Strozza, Dr. Frank DeFrank, Michael Veselka



National President Steven Pelonero entering the General Session being escorted by Past National President Christopher DiMattio

Executive Vice President Dr. Peter Pettinato handing over the gavel to National President Steven Pelonero to start the 2022, 99th Convention of UNICO National

Members at the General Session



Members at the General Session

Members at the General Session

National President Steven Pelonero addressing the Membership

Convention 2022

Awards Presented at the General Session



National President Steven Pelonero presents Thomas Estler the Philip Mazzei Americanism Award



Americanism Awardee Thomas Estler addressing the membership



Sgt. Cory James Lewis, receiving the Sgt. John Basilone Freedom Award from National President Steven Pelonero and Armed Services Committee Chair Bob Gynn



Armed Services Chair Bob Gynn and Sgt. Cory James Lewis



Celebrating 100 Years of Service!



Chapter Achievement winners. From L to R: Nutley, NJ 2nd Place, Highland Beach, FL 1st Place, Hackensack, NJ Special Local Project Winner, Scranton, PA 3rd Place. Standing in the back is Committee Chair Mark McDade



Scranton, PA and Hillsborough, NJ Chapters receiving Certificates of Appreciation for Chapter Achievement



Keystone, PA Chapter receiving a Certificate for Chapter Achievement



Nutley, NJ and Garfield, NJ Chapters receiving Certificates of Appreciation for Chapter Achievement



L to R: Dr. Frank Greco awarding the Distinguished District Governor Award to New Jersey District IV Gary D'Uva and the Outstanding District Governor Award to Marie Solimo from New Jersey District VII



UNICO National President Steven Pelonero presents a Plaque of Appreciation to Sal Benvenuti as he retires as the UNICO National Executive Director

Convention 2022

Installation of the New Officers



Maggie Pettinato holding the Family Bible as Dr. Peter Pettinato takes his oath of office as UNICO National President



Immediate Past National President Steven Pelonero pins Dr. Peter Pettinato with the UNICO National President Pin



UNICO National President Dr. Peter Pettinato pins Immediate Past National President Steven Pelonero with the Past National President Pin



L to R: Dr. Peter Pettinato presents a Plaque of Appreciation to Past National President Steven Pelonero with Past National 1st Lady Patricia Pelonero looking on



Celebrating 100 Years of Service!



**Our new UNICO First Lady and UNICO National President:
Maggie and Dr. Peter Pettinato**



**Past National First Ladies Club welcomes Immediate
Past First Lady Patricia Pelonero. L to R: Linda Spano,
Linda DeFrank, Pat Pelonero, Terri Pettinato,
Michele Vaughan, Joan Tidona, and Linda-Gail Alati**



**Past National Presidents welcome Immediate
Past National President Steven Pelonero to the
Past National President Club L to R: Michael Spano,
Kathi Strozza, Ann Walko, Cav. Joe Agresti, Steven
Pelonero, Tom Vaughan, Dr. Frank DeFrank, Chris
DiMattio, Frank Tidona, Michael Veselka, Glenn Pettinato**



Installation of District Governors



**2022/2023 officers on the Executive Committee.
L to R: Rev. Robert Wolfec, 2nd Vice President
Joe Nasello, 1st Vice President Anthony Bengivenga,
and Executive Vice President Cav. Ralph Contini**



**2022/2023 officers on the Executive Committee. L to R:
Legal Counsel Frank Blasi, ESQ, Treasurer Lisa Aduato,
Secretary Patty Hirsch, Scholarship Director John Tidona,
Expansion Director Nicolina Carpinelli, Membership/
Retention Director Geri Samuel, and UNICO National
Executive Director Melanie Naro**

Convention 2022

Awardees from the Gala



L to R: Immediate Past National President Steven Pelonero, National President Dr. Peter Pettinato, ESPN CEO Jim Pitaro, and Executive Vice President Cav. Ralph Contini



Joseph Marino Esq. Chairman of the Cianci Award, making his presentation



National President Dr. Peter Pettinato, Cianci Award recipient Past National Eastern Regional District Governor Brian Guarco, and Joseph Marino Esq.



Brian Guarco accepting Cianci Award



Michele McDade Rizzuto Award Chairperson making presentation



National President Dr. Peter Pettinato, Rizzuto Award recipient Dr. Stephen X. Solfanelli and Michele McDade



Dr. Stephen Solfanelli accepting the Rizzuto Award



National President and Vastola Chairman Dr. Peter Pettinato, presenting the Vastola Award



Reverend Robert Wolfee Vastola Awardee and Dr. Peter Pettinato National President



Celebrating 100 Years of Service!



*Reverend Robert Wolfee
being pinned by National President
Dr. Peter Pettinato*



*Reverend Robert Wolfee accepting the
Vastola Award the most prestigious award
granted by UNICO National*



*Sal Paolantonio ESPN Legendary
Sports Reporter introducing ESPN's CEO
Jim Pitaro*



*Sal Paolantonio embracing
ESPN CEO Jim Pitaro*



Jim Pitaro CEO of ESPN accepting UNICO National's Presidential Award



*National President Dr. Peter Pettinato
presenting Jim Pitaro ESPN CEO with the
UNICO National Presidential Award*



*National President Dr. Peter Pettinato,
Jim Pitaro ESPN CEO, and ESPN Reporter
Sal Paolantonio*

Convention 2022

Formal Night



Past National Presidents Standing L to R: Michael Spano, Dr. Ann Walko, Joseph Agresti, Michael Veselka, Kathi Strozza, Glenn Pettinato and Tom Vaughan. Seated L to R: Steven Pelonero, Frank Tidona, National President Dr. Peter Pettinato, Dr Frank DeFrank, and Chris Di Mattio



Vastola Awardees L to R: Gerry Heytink, Cav. Joseph Agresti, Reverend Robert Wolfee, Frank Tidona, and Cav. Ralph Contini



Past National First Ladies Standing L to R: Michele Vaughan, Linda DeFrank, Patricia Pelonero, Linda Gail Alati, and Linda Spano. Seated L to R: Ann DiMattio, Terri Pettinato, First Lady Maggie Pettinato, and Joan Tidona



2022-2023 Executive Committee Standing L to R: Joan Tidona Scholarship Director, Nicki Carpinelli Expansion Director, Lisa Aduabato Treasurer, Dr Frank Greco Sergeant at Arms, Geri Samuel Membership and Retention Director, Patty Hirsch Secretary. Seated L to R: Joseph Nasello 2nd Vice President, Cav. Ralph Contini Executive Vice President, Dr Peter Pettinato National President, and Anthony Bengivenga 1st Vice President



District Governors Standing L to R: Gary D'Uva, Eastern Regional District Governor Steven Calantone, Stephen Bifulco, Nina Held, Frank Lo'Re, and Al Marino. Seated L to R: Gail Cicerini, Francine Nido, Terri Pettinato, and Rose Ann Ceraso Fritchie



The Family of National President Dr. Peter Pettinato



All the Franks, L to R: Frank Lo'Re, Frank DeFrank, Frank Iovine, Francine Nido, Frank Blasi, Frank Coviello and Dr. Frank Greco. Seated Frank Tidona



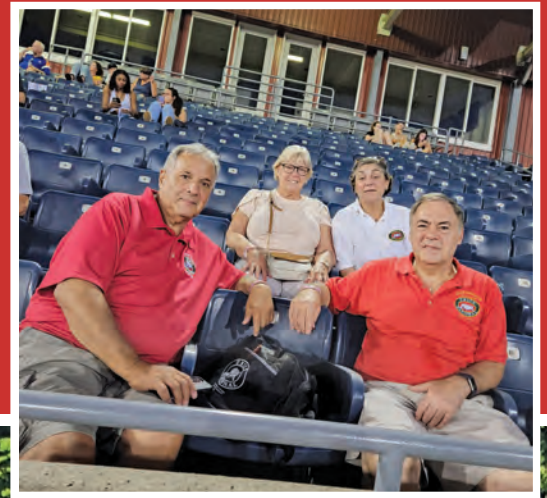
National President Dr. Peter Pettinato's Carbondale Chapter Members



The Family of National President Dr. Peter Pettinato

SKYLAND STADIUM ITALIAN HERITAGE NIGHT

Skylands Stadium in Augusta, NJ hosted an Italian Heritage night July 22, 2022. The field has been named Columbus Field and there is a Christopher Columbus Statue at the entrance to the stadium. The Sparta Chapter coordinated the UNICO members to attend and everyone had a great night. UNICO National President Steven Pelonero was one of the dignitaries that got to throw out the first pitch.



L to R: Steven Pelonero National President, Pat Pelonero First Lady, Marie Rose, and Cav Ralph Contini Second Vice President.



L to R: Cav. Ralph Contini, UNICO National Second Vice President, Al Dorso the owner of the Skylands Stadium, National President Steven Pelonero, and Gary D'Uva District Governor NJ District IV.

UNICO National President Steven Pelonero throwing out the first ceremonial pitch.

Convention 2022

We all had a blast at Gala Night!





Celebrating 100 Years of Service!



Convention 2022

We all had a blast at Gala Night!





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KEARNY, NJ

Kearny Chapter President Anna Marie Latushko presents a check for \$500 to Kearny High School Paul Measso in support of Kearny Project Graduation.



NEW JERSEY DISTRICT VII



Newly elected 2nd Vice President Joe Nasello with Executive Vice President Ralph Contini at the 2022 National Convention.



Members of NJ District VII at the 99th National Convention in New Orleans, LA.

GREATER RAMSEY, NJ

Greater Ramsey UNICO financially supported Ramsey Eagle Scout Eric Jachzel who designed and built a wonderful outdoor seating area, planter boxes and plants at the Ramsey Woodlands Senior Housing Community. Eric presented his concept, complete with drawings to Ramsey UNICO, Woodlands Senior Housing, and the Boy Scouts of America to gain approval to proceed. The project was completed with the plantings and includes a plaque recognizing Ramsey UNICO's support. The Woodlands residents love Eric and Ramsey UNICO for their fantastic new seating area.



Plaque recognizing Greater Ramsey UNICO.



L to R: Aury Licata, Past Chapter President; Joe Verdone, Chapter Director; Eric Jachzel, Eagle Scout; Maria Arrabito, Chapter President.



Eric Jachzel, Ramsey Eagle Scout proud of his work.

NEW JERSEY DISTRICT VII



NJ District VII Members at the Convention Gala. Pictured: Pat Hirsch, Lou Pandolfi, Celeste Pandolfi, Joan Tidona, Vinnie Laborim Seated: Frank Tidona, Father Bob Wolfee, Barbara Laborim.



At the recent National Convention in New Orleans, the Hackensack Chapter receives the Chapter Achievement Exceptional Local Project Award for their Columbus statue and monument 2021 renovation project. NJ District VII, DG Marie Solimo, recognized as the Outstanding District Governor.

Pictured L to R: Maria-Rose Contini, Hackensack Chapter 2nd VP, Marie Solimo, DG NJ District VII, Cav. Ralph A. Contini, First National VP.

MONTVILLE, NJ



The Montville Chapter at its July meeting awarded \$5,000 in educational grants to two high school seniors, Jake Cassidy and Nicole Vecchia.

Jake received the Chapter's \$2,500 "Service Above Self" grant awarded to the Montville Township High School senior of Italian heritage that best exemplifies UNICO National's motto. Jake was a cadet member of the Montville Township First Aid Squad, devoting over 150 hours of service to the squad. Jake was an integral member of the Montville High School Chapter of REACH (Responsible Educated Adolescents Can Help), a program designed to participate in community service events. Jake was the point person for many events at the Chelsea Senior Living Center, organizing and surprising fellow students for such

events as Bingo Night, holiday parties and Grandparents' Day. Jake also volunteered for the Pathways for Exceptional Children organization, mentoring children in the tennis and basketball programs. Jake will be attending Quinnipiac University in the fall studying Health Services in the Masters Physician Assistant program, a six and a half year program.

Nicole Vecchia received the Chapter's \$2,500 Italian Studies Grant, awarded to high school seniors of Italian heritage who have excelled in Italian language studies and have advanced Italian culture in their communities. Nicole studied the Italian language in all four years at Parsippany High School in the schools' honors program, earning the highest grade each year. Nicole is a member of the Italian Honor Society and is the recipient of the Italian Seal of Bilingualism. Nicole will be attending William Paterson University's School of Communications in the fall.

The Montville Chapter has distributed over \$300,000 in scholarships and grants to students of Italian heritage based on need and academic excellence.



Montville Chapter President Michele Maddalena, Executive National Vice President Ralph Contini and Montville Chapter PCP Gene Maddalena wear their respective NFL team colors at the convention.

RARITAN VALLEY, NJ



Raritan Valley members participate in UNICO's Community Service Day: President Tara DeLeon, Donna Lish, Anna Ferrera, "ACE" Gavin Rector, Joe Ferrera, and Sharon Gerard.



Community Service Day: Raritan Valley Members Joe Ferrera and Anna Ferrera.



Raritan Valley Officers being sworn in.



Submit your quality photos to:
comunico@unico.org



Pictures and captions are only as good as what you submit!

SCOTCH PLAINS FANWOOD, NJ



On June 12, the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Chapter of UNICO hosted a bus trip to Hopewell Valley Vineyards in Pennington, NJ. 30 UNICO members and their guests tasted several wines, toured the vineyard's expansive grounds and enjoyed each other's company. A fun time was had by all!



POINT PLEASANT, NJ

The Two Mongiello Sisters Meet the Two Belfiore Sisters at The Court of Two Sisters Restaurant. Point Pleasant Delegates Grace Gynn and Diane Grabowski along with Bernadette Antonelli and Celeste Pandolfi enjoyed a Louisiana style dinner on opening night of UNICO Convention in New Orleans.



Bottom row: Diane Grabowski and Celeste Pandolfi.
Top: Grace Gynn and Bernadette Antonelli.

Ocean County Columbus Committee Dinner Dance in honor of Grand Marshall Cav. Dr. Gilda Baldassari was held recently in Toms River NJ. Area Italian organization members, who are dedicated to the preservation of Columbus Day and supporting the Ocean County parade, were greeted by Michael Blandina, organizer of the parade for the past twenty years. Representing UNICO National were PNP Ann Walko and Past District Governors Grace and Bob Gynn. Also in attendance were District Governor New Jersey I Alan Floria with members of the Point Pleasant Beach and Brick Chapters

of UNICO as well as officers of the NJ Italian Heritage Commission. The Ocean County Columbus Parade along with an Italian Festival is set for October 9th in Seaside Heights.



Pictured L to R: UNICO PNP Ann Walko, Grace Gynn, Mike Blandina, Parade Chairman and PDG Bob Gynn.



Marine Rich Ricafort 2019 Basilone Awardee, Bob Gynn, Sgt Cory Lewis, 2022 Recipient and Danielle Lewis US Army.

UNICO Armed Services Chair Bob Gynn congratulates 2022 Basilone Awardee Sgt Cory Lewis. On hand are Marine veteran Steven Rich Ricafort UNICO 2019 Basilone recipient and Danielle Lewis US Army veteran at the UNICO National Convention in New Orleans.

VERONA, NJ



2022 Scholarship Honorees with members of the UNICO Verona Scholarship Committee: Father Jerry Racioppi, Pam Riley Blake, Nicki Carpinelli and Mickey Lawrence. Not pictured: Committee Member Vincenzo Cappello. Students were honored at a dinner on Tuesday, June 7, 2022 along with their family members and members of UNICO Verona.

PLAINFIELDS, NJ



The Plainfields' Chapter of UNICO had a booth at South Plainfield's annual National Night Out event, providing education and outreach about UNICO to the public. UNICANS Sue Mazzo, John G. DeAndrea, Anthony Bengivenga Geri Morgan Samuel and Debbie Boyle were on hand to provide outreach.

NUTLEY, NJ

The Nutley NJ Chapter continued its fundraising and Culture & Heritage activities over the summer months. The annual "Christmas Eve in July" event chaired by Dan & Cathy Marucci was held on July 13 and attended by 108 guests. All enjoyed the "Feast of the Seven Fishes". Member Chiara Russoniello coordinated and taught a Conversational Italian class, and one of the Chapter's major fund raisers, the annual golf outing, was held on Aug. 24. Tom Sposato chaired the event. Frank Russo chaired a bus trip to Atlantic City on June 26. A large contingent of members participated in the Nutley Memorial Day Parade.

Two meetings were held this past June; one was a special meeting to distribute several of the Chapter's scholarships and the second was the final regular dinner meeting on June 2. This was Vito Matturro's last meeting as Chapter President. The President for 2022-23 will be Daniel Carnicella. The Chapter also congratulates Past President Marie Solimo for a successful 2021-22 year as District VII Governor.

The first dinner meeting of the new year will be Thursday, Sept. 8. The 2022 recipient of the Chapter's Lifetime Achievement Award, Phil Cuzzi, will be presented with the award in the fall following the major league baseball season. Phil, a Nutley resident, is a major league umpire. He is being recognized for his decades long work raising funds for ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease). Our Mille Grazie award will also be presented to member Maurice Ferraro.

The Executive Committee continues to meet monthly to discuss membership, an update of the Chapter's by-laws, the 2022-23 budget, committee chairs and membership, and fund raising activities. The Chapter presently has 165 members, but will be promoting a drive for new members. Our goal regarding membership has always been quality, not quantity.

Frank Cocchiola, Jr.
Past President
Nutley, NJ Chapter of UNICO National

RUTHERFORD, NJ



Rutherford members tailgating in honor of Special Olympics Gold Medalist Geri Lipari. Pictured: Frank Tidona, Joan Tidona, Vinnie Laborim, Barbara Laborim, Pat Hirsch.



Rutherford NJ Chapter 50/50 Drawing
Pictured: Alberto Infante, and Frank Tidona.



"Service Above Self"

PARAMUS, NJ

Paramus UNICO supported Relay For Life and had an Italian Night with Uncle Floyd.



Survivors wearing purple take the first walk around the track with their caregiver.



A Paramus UNICO sponsored 50/50 table.



Some members stayed into the evening to give support.



Paramus UNICO at an Italian Night with Uncle Floyd.



After a successful event run by Diana Maimone, Rene Kauffmann and Rosa Rizzolo, the Paramus UNICO Chapter was able to donate ShopRite Gift Cards to the Center for Hope and Safety.



Paramus Chapter Members attending a baseball game celebrating Italian Heritage.

Don't forget
The Deadline for the
November 2022 issue is
October 14, 2022

PEQUANNOCK, NJ

Pequannock celebrates its new board and officers in a recent installation dinner at AMORE's Restaurant.



Former President receives his Past President's jacket and New Board Members get sworn in.



Pequannock UNICO President Anna Lee accepts a Membership Award from UNICO National's Honored Appointed Member Joe Agresti.

HACKENSACK, NJ

At a recent meeting of the Hackensack Chapter, the new slate of officers along with their new Chapter President was installed by First National VP Cav. Ralph A. Contini.

The Chapter resumed its scholarship program by awarding six scholarships to deserving students totaling in the amount of \$7,000.



Installation of Chapter President:
L to R: Dr. Alfredo Masullo, Outgoing Chapter President; Dr. Robert Barricella, Incoming Chapter President and Cav. Ralph A. Contini, UNICO National 1st VP.



The Group of Installed Officers



Scholarship Awards:
L to R: Pat Ruggiero, Chapter Scholarship Chair; five scholarship recipients (one not pictured) Dr. Robert Barricella, Chapter President and First National VP Cav. Ralph A. Contini.

PASSAIC VALLEY, NJ



The Passaic Valley Chapter had their Installation Dinner on June 21st. UNICO National President Steve Pelonero (right), a member of Passaic Valley UNICO, had the honor of swearing in their next Chapter president Dominick Bucci (left). Dominick presented Eileen Wood (center) with the Past Chapter President pin.



At the dinner, Passaic Valley UNICO Chapter member, Cav. Joe Agresti PNP, swore in their next executive board: Steve Pelonero, Joe Benvenuti, Bruce Ponchak, Carmen Criscione and John Morano. The Chapter presented their Scholarships and Brian Piccolo awards which was presided over by their Scholarship Chairman Chuck Russo.



Passaic Valley NJ Chapter Members at the 2022 UNICO Convention in New Orleans.



PNP Steve Pelonero and PFL Patricia (center) at the UNICO 2022 Annual Convention with Steve's sister Sharon (left) and sister-in-law Jo Ann (right).



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**100th Annual
UNICO
National Convention**
July 26-30, 2023
**Sanibel Harbour Marriott
Resort & Spa**
Fort Meyers, FL

NEW JERSEY DISTRICT X



Officers/delegates of NJ District X during the National Convention General Sessions. L to R: Membership & Retention Director Geri Samuel, Scotch Plains-Fanwood; Elaine Buscemi, Hillsborough; Mariann Cialdella, President Hillsborough Chapter; Santi Buscemi, Hillsborough; PNP Ann Walko and 1st Vice President Anthony Bengivenga, Greater Westfield Chapter.



NJ District X Officers after the voting at the general session at the National convention in New Orleans. L to R: Mariann Cialdella, President Hillsborough Chapter; PNP Ann Walko, Greater Westfield; Membership & Retention Director Geri Samuel and Matt Marino, Scotch Plains-Fanwood; Elaine and Santi Buscemi, Hillsborough Chapter; National First Vice President Anthony Bengivenga, Greater Westfield Chapter.



At the NJ District X officers and delegates meet with National Americanism Award Recipient, Thomas Estler, during the National Convention in New Orleans. L to R: Santi Buscemi, Hillsborough Chapter; National 1st Vice President Anthony Bengivenga; Award Recipient Thomas Estler; Hillsborough Chapter President Mariann Cialdella; Elaine Buscemi, Hillsborough Chapter.



CLIFFSIDE PARK, NJ

CLIFFSIDE PARK CHAPTER ATTENDS ST ROCCO'S FEAST

Cliffside Park Chapter of UNICO National was present recently at St Rocco's Feast in Fort Lee. The attendance was designed to promote the newly revitalized Chapter and garner additional members. A free raffle for a basket of Italian goodies was held and there were other giveaways, including information about UNICO National. St Rocco's Feast is held every year in Fort Lee on the first weekend of August.

The Cliffside Park Chapter abides by the UNICO National motto "Service Above Self". Fundraising events are being planned this fall to support local and national charitable, patriotic and educational projects.



Pictured L to R: Angelina Jastrzebski, Chapter Treasurer; Cav. Ralph Contini, National Executive VP and Mary Ann Maiorana, Chapter President.

Don't forget

to visit the UNICO website for the latest news and information:

UNICO.org

CLIFFSIDE PARK, NJ

CLIFFSIDE PARK CHAPTER OF UNICO IS CHARITY OF THE MONTH

Cliffside Park Chapter of UNICO National was the recipient of a check for \$536 from Sedona Taphouse for the month of May fundraising. Sedona Taphouse, located in Cliffside Park, chooses one charity of the month to be the recipient of proceeds from their promotion on each Monday of the month.

The Cliffside Park Chapter, once a vibrant organization, was recently reorganized and revitalized with the help of Cav. Ralph Contini, UNICO National Executive VP. New members and executive Board members were recently installed in a ceremony at Patsy's Ristorante which was also attended by Joe Nasello, Sr., National Second Vice President and Nicki Carpinelli, Membership/Retention Director.

Recently installed Cliffside Park Board members include, Mary Ann Maiorana, President; Elaine Caruso, VP; Angelina Jastrzebski, Treasurer and Cathy Van Rheenen-Fedele, Secretary.

Proceeds from the charity fundraising will go toward Cliffside Park's scholarship fund.



Pictured: Mary Ann Maiorana, Chapter President and Mendi Zuta, Sedona Taphouse.

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HILLSBOROUGH, NJ



UNICO National Vice President Anthony Bengivenga swears in new President Mariann Cialdella. L to R: Treasurer Mike Giordano (seated), District 10 Governor Bob Bengivenga, President Mariann Cialdella, UNICO National Vice President Anthony Bengivenga, Past President Nathan Santaromita.



L to R: UNICO District 10 Governor Bob Bengivenga swearing in new officers. Taking the UNICO oath newly installed officers: Vice President Fank Delcore, Treasurer Mike Giordano and Secretary Carolyn Tighe. Looking on are UNICO National Vice President Anthony Bengivenga immediate Past Vice President Mariann Cialdella and immediate Past President Nathan Santaromita.

2017-2022 PRESIDENT NATHAN SANTAROMITA APPRECIATION AWARD

As new officers look on, immediate Past President Nathan Santaromita is given plaque of appreciation by newly sworn In President Mariann Cialdella thanking him for his presidency 2017-2022. Plaque reads: "With deep appreciation of your distinguished and unselfish service, leadership, talents and vision for our Chapter."

AWARD FOR UNICO CHAPTER SERVICE

After many years as a member of Hillsborough UNICO Anthony Ferrera will be leaving but still supporting the Chapter. He is presented with a Certificate of Appreciation by President Nathaniel Santaromita in recognition of his services to the Hillsborough UNICO Chapter.

Award reads: "Your Contribution to UNICO Hillsborough is deeply appreciated. We hope this certificate will serve as a memento of your untiring efforts moving our Chapter forward through your many dedicated years of fraternity."



L to R: President Nate Santaromita presents award to Anthony Ferrera.



L to R: VP Frank Delcore, Secretary Carolyn Tighe, Treasurer Mike Giordano, President Mariann Cialdella, Past President Nathan Santaromita.

SPARTA, NJ



AmbroPalooza was hosted by Sparta UNICO on June 12th, 2022, at the Walpack Inn in Layton NJ established in 1949 and hosted by other bands like the Beach Boys. It was a music celebration dedicated to the memory of Robert Ambrosino's life. Robert Ambrosino was a 1998 Charter Member of Sparta UNICO and an exceptional High School business teacher, football, and softball coach, as well as a successful musician within the North Jersey area. Rob's gift of bringing people together and making them feel important never went unnoticed. On Sunday, September 26th, 2021, Rob returned home to get ready for a gig with one of his bands for an afternoon set. He collapsed in his home, after which his wife Kristina called for emergency assistance. It was later confirmed after being transferred to two different hospitals that Rob had suffered

a brain aneurysm. Before Rob passed away, his wife Kristina made sure that Rob would give all working organs towards organ donation. It is reported that Rob's has already helped several people survive since his passing. He's survived by his wife Kristina, and 3 children Erika, Lauren, and Robbie and Rob's Father Gerry Ambrosino, who is a current member of Sparta UNICO. Ambropalooza consisted of five well known bands whose music captured memories from rock to soul, to tribute Grateful Dead Bands. Ambropalooza was set up to provide Scholarships to High School Students in the Arts, Music, and Athletics. This event will also be continued in 2023 at the Walpack and all friends are welcome to join us once again for a Rocking Good Time.

Ray Shupak, President
SpartaUNICO@gmail.com



Once again, this August 6th, Sparta UNICO was proud to be sponsoring a local fundraising event for the tremendously beneficial C.L.E.A.R. program and participating in the 8th annual Changing the Face of Addiction Walk organized by the Sussex County Center for Prevention & Counseling. This program started in New Jersey allows addicts to walk into a Police Station and ask for help without any recourse or criminal charges, truly a Life-Saving option for those under the influence. Our committee members Rick Hughes and Tom Gorrell have organized this event in Sparta UNICO over the past 8 years.

This is truly one the most beneficial local activities our Chapter supports. When you learn about the programs that are funded from the proceeds of the walk, and you personally meet with the family members and walk participants, the accomplishment of knowing we are helping the local community. Between in person and virtual walker participants, there were over 500. In person walkers on Saturday was estimated at over 300, with 63 teams this year.

As a sponsor, we will be setting up an informational table to help the community get to better know UNICO, what we do in the community, and hopefully expand our membership. In the past, the event on Saturday typically has over 200 participants and is an enjoyable morning.

As of this week, the Center for Prevention & Counseling reported that their fundraising total so far for the event is just over \$85,185. To learn more about this event email us at: SpartaUNICO@gmail.com



COMUNICO RULES AND GUIDELINES

The following are ComUNICO Rules that must be strictly adhered to in order for a Chapter and/or a Committee's submissions to be included in an issue of ComUNICO:

- 1) Each Chapter is limited to 300 words per issue. This includes the number of words in a column and captions.
- 2) The only titles to be included in captions are for National Officers and Chapter Presidents. Do not identify other Chapter Officers by title.
- 3) If more than 10 people appear in a picture, do not identify each of them.
- 4. Abbreviations are not to be used. The only title to be abbreviated is Vice President (VP).
- 5) All articles and captions are to be submitted in Times New Roman font, 11 point font size and in black.

- 6) Photo File Name should be identifiable to the corresponding caption.
- 7) A Chapter is allowed a maximum of six pictures per issue for a regular event.
- 8) All award recipients (ie. Scholarship, Brian Piccolo) should be included in one picture. Do not send multiple pictures from an event with one recipient per picture.
- 9) Only pictures attached to an e-mail will be accepted. Pictures embedded in an e-mail will be returned to the Chapter and not included.
- 10) All submissions should be sent to comUNICO@UNICO.org. Submissions sent to any other office e-mail address will not be included.
- 11) The deadline for submissions is 5:00 PM on the designated day.

12) Photos coming in after a holiday will not be included in the next issue, if deemed to be untimely. ComUNICO should reflect the current time of year.

13) Articles cannot contain copy righted materials. All articles must be original and completely written by the person submitting the article. An article compiled from information that was cut and pasted from other sources is considered plagiarism.

The following are ComUNICO Guidelines for a Chapter to follow:

- 1) Photos should be sent in landscape not portrait form.
- 2) Do not send in blurry pictures.
- 3) Review all submissions prior to sending for grammar and punctuation.

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NORTH SHORE LI, NY



NORTH SHORE L.I. NY CIGAR NIGHT

On June 22, 2022 the North Shore L.I. Chapter held their Sixth Annual Cigar Night event at il Bacco Ristorante Rooftop in Little Neck, New York. Proceeds were for the NSLI Scholarship Fund and CNA EPASA for Italian American Citizen Services.

The evening featured over 110 guests, enjoying the variety of foods and beverages, raffles, auction, dance music and the special singing performance of tenor Chris Macchio!

We were very honored to have our UNICO National President Steve Pelenero and First Lady Pat present. Thank you for joining us!



The sons and friends of NSLI members attended with strong support!

NORTH SHORE L.I. NY SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

At their June 15, 2022 meeting, the North Shore L.I. Chapter awarded 5 High School students their scholarships to help them with their upcoming college tuition. All 5 of these students had excellent grades, GPA's and community service hours. Congratulations to America's future leaders.



L to R: DG Elect Gaspare Mistretta from the Queensboro Chapter; Lou Di Rico, PDG; Tenor Chris Macchio; Al Crecco, Co-Chair; DG Ellen Leone; Chapter President Pat Stake; Ottavio Orologio, Co-Chair.



L to R standing: Cigar Night Co-Chair Ottavio Orologio; Katherine Petritis, Past Chapter President Mauro Caputi; front: Member Nick Maurello and Chapter Secretary Francesca Calio.



L to R: Chapter President, Patricia Stake; Awardees - Katharine Caputi, Sebastian Leone, Sabrina Cusumano, Samantha Cipolla and Giuliana Fusco; Scholarship Chair and Past Chapter President, Jason Nappi

QUEENSBORO, NY



Queensboro UNICO officially swears in Anthony D'angelo as Chapter President on Thursday August 11th at Peter Luger restaurant in Great Neck, NY. The event was well attended, and we wish Anthony D'angelo the best of luck and look forward to doing our great work and continue our charitable efforts throughout the community. The slate of officers and board members were sworn in as well for the 2022-2024 administration.



Queensboro UNICO raised funds on the evening of July 26th at the general meeting and paid off a portion of the balance of the high school tuition for the Cottone family that recently lost their father suddenly.

New members Maria Alonzo Giovanni Silvagni Charlie Noto inducted into the Queensboro Chapter of UNICO. Welcome to the organization and we look forward to working together with you thru out the community assisting with charity efforts and preserving our Italian heritage.

GREATER BINGHAMTON, NY



On July 13th, the Greater Binghamton NY Chapter gathered for the annual July picnic at past president Rob Salamida's Sweet Havens. Besides members and their families and guests, special guests included UNICO National Executive Vice President Dr. Peter Pettinato and Maggie and scholarship winners. An excellent time was enjoyed by all even if the event was preceded by a downpour.



The Greater Binghamton NY Chapter presented scholarships to four local high school seniors in July at the annual picnic. The four winners were chosen based on their exceptional commitment of service to their schools and communities while maintaining high academic standards. Pictured are scholarship recipient Ryan Munger, Judy Streuble, Nick Pianella, recipient Gianna Rullo, Frank Cardullo, and recipient Celia Trumino. Recipient Grace Ciaravino who was unable to attend picnic received her scholarship from Nick Pianella.

MARLBORO, NY



Marlboro, NY Chapter's annual tomato contest picnic at Benmarl Winery. Pictured L to R: are Giuseppe LoPiccolo, Richie Messina, National Exec. VP Ralph Contini, Joel Truncali, Nick Johannets, PNP Joe Agresti and seated at the judge's table is Joe Freeborn. One of the category winners was the heaviest tomato at over two pounds. Over 250 guests were in attendance.

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SOUTHINGTON, CT

The procession with the “Madonna della Strada”, pictured are UNICO members, Luigi Barbato and Tony Cusano. Our Italian mass is officiated by Father Frederick Aniello, also a UNICO member.

Photos below are the procession, men (half are UNICANS and half are from the Sons of Italy) who carried the Madonna della Strada and the Italian Rosary Society of Southington.



Patty Boissonneault, Dawn Miceli and Mike Fasulo- frying squash fritters! (Dawn and Mike both UNICO members) Patty is Mike's sister.



WATERBURY, CT

2022 COMMUNITY DONATIONS



Catholic Academy Shelving for Common Area



Are You Dense Tickets to Music Fest



Mt. Carmel Pre-K Classroom Supplies



Arts and Culture Collaborative Charity Program Sponsorship



Waterbury's Harry Potter Day Community Sponsorship



Greater Waterbury YMCA 425 UNICO Backpacks for Child Care Program



East End Community Club Donations for Community Garden

WATERBURY, CT



Boys & Girls Club - Program Support & UNICO Backpacks for Children



ORTV - Sponsorship of 10 Daily Televised Mass



Habitat for Humanity Donation towards an Enclosed Trailer



WARC - Ice Cream Truck for Summer Picnic

GREATER HARTFORD, CT

The Greater Hartford, CT UNICO Chapter shares some highlights from the past 2 years 2020-21- which includes our scholarship dinner, cultural dinner, Hartford Athletics soccer game, making dinner for the Hartford warming center and homeless shelter. Also...celebrating in May 2021-our Chaplain Fr. Michael



Galasso's retirement 50 years of dedicated service to several parishes in Hartford and greater Hartford as well as continued ministering to patients at CT Hospice in Branford and to veterans at the VA in Rocky Hill, CT. The Greater Hartford Chapter recently celebrated their 55th Anniversary: 1966 – 2021



CARBONDALE, PA



Carbondale Chapter members pose with Executive Vice President Peter Pettinato
Seated L to R: Member Lillian Leo, Secretary Linda Gabriel, Member Ann Boyle Standing L to R: Mary Lynn Brannon, Past President, Angel Masco Financial Officer, Pettinato and Carbondale President Nathan Masco.

On July 7, 2022, Carbondale Chapter of UNICO National, awarded scholarships at \$1,000 each to two Carbondale area seniors at our monthly Chapter meeting at the Anthracite Center. The winners were Mia Perri who will major in Biology at Penn State, Main Campus, and Sophia Calzola who will major in Biochemistry/ Molecular Biology at Elizabethtown College. The President of Carbondale UNICO is Mary Lynn Brannon and the Scholarship Chair is Glenn Pettinato, Past National President. The Calzolas could not attend the meeting. Nathan Masco was sworn in as the new president by outgoing president Mary Lynn Brannon and all incoming officers were sworn in by Terri Pettinato, District Governor of PA II.



L to R: Incoming President, Nathan Masco, J.J. Perri, Father, Mary Lynn Brannon, Chapter President, Mia Perri, Recipient, Glenn Pettinato, Scholar Chair & Past National President, Debbie Hollenbeck, Mother and Mike Gill, family friend.



L to R: Chip Calabro, Angel Masco, Mary Lynn Brannon, Chapter President, Mia Perri, Recipient, Glenn Pettinato, Scholar Chair & Past National President, Linda Gabriel, Nathan Masco and Dr. Peter Pettinato, DVM - all scholarship committee members.



National President Peter Pettinato is Grand Marshall for the Carbondale, PA Pioneer Nights Parade. He and First Lady Maggie are driven by Chapter Member Jerry Arnese. Chapter members stood alongside as the car made its way along Carbondale's Main Street.



Carbondale Chapter members and guests gather at the Convention for the Sports Tailgate Party.



August 27, 2022. Carbondale UNICO had their 2nd Annual "Wine & Dine Your Way Through Italy Fundraiser". The photos shows the Carbondale PA Chapter members. The other photo has the Carbondale PA UNICO members along with UNICO National Officers that attended the dinner.



Carbondale Chapter celebrates Dr. Peter Pettinato at the Gala.

SCRANTON, PA



Charlie Spano, past Chapter president, calls bingo for veterans at Scranton Chapter of UNICO National's annual treat and thank you for veterans at the Gino Merli Center, Scranton. Covid protocols limited the number of volunteers but with a cake and cards written by school children, a good time was had by all.

West Scranton High School 2022 graduates: Jade Weber & Kevin Yaurincela, are the recipients of the 6th Annual Cpt. James R. Minicozzi Memorial Scholarships. Proceeds for the scholarships awarded at Minicozzi's alma mater, are raised from The Cpt. James R. Minicozzi Memorial Race, through the Scranton UNICO Chapter; during LaFesta Italiana over Labor Day weekend.



L to R: Theresa Mary Minicozzi Sweeney, Sister of Cpt. Minicozzi & Minicozzi Race Committee Member; Recipients: Kevin Yaurincela & Jade Weber, and Leslie Minicozzi Galacci; sister of Cpt. Minicozzi & Scranton UNICO Chapter & Race Chairperson.

The UNICO Foundation made a check presentation supporting Peggy's Pathway for Women's Cancer Care.



L to R: Karen Clifford, Secretary Scranton Chapter UNICO, Natalie P. O'Hara, Peggy's Pathway Board, Dr. Frank DeFrank, Past National President UNICO, Robert Pettinato, Peggy's Pathway Board, Christopher DiMattio, Chairman UNICO Foundation, Lisa P. Davis, Peggy's Pathway Board.



Ashley DeFelice, Scranton Chapter of UNICO member was the guest soloist singing the National Anthem at the recent NEPA Philharmonic League fundraiser with an American patriotic theme "America is Back in Bloom Dinner in Red, White and Blue" The dinner raises funds for the Music In Our Schools program among others. The event was held at the Glen Oak Country Club, Clarks Summit.



Past Scranton UNICANS of the Year congratulate honoree Jim Brogna Seated L to R: Bob Montalbano; Patti Montalbano, National President Steve Pelonero, Honoree Jim Brogna, Chris DiMattio and Diane Alberigi Standing L to R: Dr. Peter Cognetti, Frank Blasi, Esq, Frank Castellano, Mary Marrara, Frank Gervasi, Chapter president Ann Genett and Charlie Spano



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HAZELTON, PA



Kick off meeting for our Belle Italia festival on September 9, 10 & 11.



Chairman of the Board, Angelo Porreca, installed 3 new 3 year board members: Danny DeMelfi and Brenda Conway are pictured. Jim Montone was not present at time of photo. Congratulations!!



Donna Delehanty installing new Vice President Jeff Collura.



Hazleton UNICO is proud to dedicate our stage at Bell Italia to Danny DeMelfi, owner of DeMelfi School of Music. Danny coordinates all of the entertainment throughout the three festival days. Thank you, Danny!!!



Hazleton UNICO supporting Anthracite Model Train Museum.

KEYSTONE, PA

Keystone Chapter conducted their 11th Annual Scholarship Dinner at La Buona Vita. Scholarships awarded included two Chapter Service Awards, one Brian Piccolo Athletic Awards, one Keystone UNICO Family Award and the Frank and Mary Ann Coviello Military Family Appreciation Scholarship. Also awarded was our Inaugural Kovatch/Perna Family Trades Scholarship. This year, one of the Chapter Service Awards was donated by Keystone Charter Members Joseph and Karen Sadowski. Awardees receive \$1,000 to help further their higher education.



Awardees of our various scholarships. Front row from left: Olivia Amico receiving the Frank and Mary Ann Coviello Military Family Appreciation Scholarship; Micah Madrazo receiving the Chapter Service Award; and Gabrielle Case receiving the inaugural Career Technology Center Kovatch/Perna Family Trade Award. Back from left: Scholarship Director Sandy Collins; Joseph Cardillo receiving the Brian Piccolo Athletic Award; Ryan Legg receiving the Chapter Service Award; and Chapter President Mary Ann Coviello.



Rocco Mack is the recipient of the Keystone Chapter Family Scholarship. Front row from left: Jim and Mary Mack Sr., Grandparents; Honoree Rocco Mack; and Joellen Mack, Mother. Back row from left: Sandy Collins, Keystone UNICO Scholarship Director; James Mack Jr., Father; and Anthony Mack, Brother.

HAZELTON, PA



Hazleton, PA Chapter did a fundraiser for The Helping Hands Society. Potato Pancakes!! Pictured are Tony Colombo, Brian Defluri, Donna Delehanty, Brenda Conway, Cindy Mirarchi, and Jeff Collura.



Keystone Chapter of UNICO National recently donated \$250 to the Mary Kay Holmes Branch of the Scranton Public Library, as part of their ongoing "Random Acts of Kindness" program. The donation is earmarked for the library's renovation project of making the building handicap accessible. Pictured at the check presentation from left are Keystone UNICO Board Members Mark McDade, Bob Tagert, Keystone Treasurer Val Riggi, Scranton Public Library CEO Scott Thomas, Marilyn Vitali, and Sylvia Tagert.

KEYSTONE, PA



Keystone Chapter UNICO National Officers and Directors were recently Installed for the 2022-2023 term at the Keystone UNICO Presidents' Dinner at Colarusso's Coal Fire Pizza. PNP Glenn Pettinato installed the Keystone Board of Directors and Officers. PAII District Governor Terri Pettinato installed Louise Ligi as Keystone UNICO President. The ceremony included a Remembrance to Cherie' Mecca,

Robert Fiorelli and Thomas Jimmie, three Charter Members who passed away during the year. Chapter Charter President Mark E. McDade served as Master of Ceremony.

First Picture: Outgoing President Mary Ann Coviello presented incoming President Louise Ligi with the president's gavel. Pictured from left are Past National President Glenn Pettinato,



PA II District Governor Terri Pettinato, Incoming Board Chairman Mary Ann Coviello, President Louise Ligi, First Gentleman Joe Ligi and Retiring Board Chairman, Frank Coviello.

Second Picture: Pictured is the Keystone Chapter Officers and Directors for 2022-2023.



Keystone Chapter donated \$7,055 from their 10th Anniversary celebration to ClothesLine for Men, a subsidiary of Friends of the Poor. Pictured at the presentation is the 10th Anniversary Committee. Front row from left are: Toni DiVizio; 10th Anniversary Co-chairman Sylvia Tagert; Keystone UNICO Board Chairman Mary Ann Coviello; Friends of the Poor CEO and President Meghan Loftus; and Cesira Berardelli. Back row from left are: Mark E. McDade, Sponsorships; Gloria Rizzo; Frank Coviello; 10th Anniversary Co-chairman Bob Tagert; and Val Riggi.



KEYSTONE UNICO MEMBER INDUCTION:

Tina Haas recently became a member of Keystone Chapter UNICO National. Pictured from left are Mark E. McDade, Tina Haas, new member; Ann Summa; and Mary Ann Coviello.



Keystone Chapter presented Sophia Calzola of Carbondale Area High School and Joseph Cardillo of Dunmore Public High School with this year's Keystone UNICO Brian Piccolo Award. The awardees receive a plaque commemorating the life achievements of football athlete Brian Piccolo and \$1,000 towards their higher education.



First Picture: Pictured from left are Anita Calzola, mother; Mary Ann Coviello, Keystone UNICO President; awardee Sophia Calzola, Carbondale Area High School; and Marilyn Vitali, Keystone UNICO Piccolo Award Committee Chairwoman.

Second Picture: Pictured in Front Row from left is Marilyn Vitali, Keystone UNICO Piccolo Award Chairman; awardee Joseph Cardillo, Dunmore Public High School; and Ann Summa, Piccolo Award Committee. Pictured in back row are Julie Cardillo, sister; Joseph Cardillo, father; and Luanne Cardillo, mother.

LONGMEADOW, MA

Though postponed twice by the pandemic, the 20th Longmeadow, Massachusetts UNICO Food, Wine and Beer Tasting finally took place this spring, and Chapter members report the event was a smash success!

A crowd of about 300 people joined Chapter members and vendors on April 23 to enjoy an evening on Center Court at the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield.

The Chapter paid special tribute to longtime UNICO member and benefactor Frank Langone, who passed away last year, with a special

presentation attended by a large contingent of Frank’s family. “Frank is very deserving of special recognition – he made our wine tasting special over the years with generous donations of centerpieces from his flower shop,” Longmeadow UNICO President Dennis Scibelli said. The new owners of Frank Langone Florist in Springfield continued that generosity by providing centerpieces at the 20th anniversary event.

Scibelli also recognized wine vendor M.S. Walker Distributors, which has partnered with the Chapter and provided more than a dozen varieties of

wine at each event since Longmeadow UNICO’s first wine tasting in 2001, just a year after the Chapter was chartered. This year’s Food, Wine and Beer Tasting also featured an expanded lineup of dishes from more than 20 Greater Springfield restaurants and bakeries, beer from four Massachusetts microbreweries and spirits from regional distilleries.

“Our event has gotten better and better over the years, and we didn’t want anything less than to celebrate our 20th by making it the best ever,” Scibelli said. The event also featured a silent auction and raffle.



PITTSFIELD, MA

Pittsfield Chapter Fourth of July Parade.



CHICAGO WEST SUBURBAN, IL



Donato Ancona being sworn in as the president of Chicago West Suburban UNICO by Past National President Mike Veselka.



President Donato Ancona presenting a \$2,000 scholarship check to the mother of Emma Wheatland on her behalf.



President Donato Ancona presenting a scholarship check for \$2,000 to the father of Mia DiCera on her behalf.



This is our president Donato Ancona presenting a check from Chicago West Suburban to Rick Montalbano of Touch My Heart for \$1,000.



President Donato Ancona presenting a scholarship check for \$2,000 to the father of Michael Rago on his behalf.



Past National President Michael Veselka presenting a check from the UNICO Foundation Food Bank to Rick Montalbano of Touch My Heart for \$1,000.


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Pictures and captions are only as good as what you submit!

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Access to the VIP booth at the event
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L to R: Frank Lo'Re, Mario Giovannucci, Richard Di Liberto, Kathi Strozza, Executive Director Sal Benvenuti, Frank Blasi, Nina Held, Linda Gail Alati, Michael Veselka, Rose Anne Ceraso-Fritchie, Counsel John Chiaia, Morris Borea, Joan Tidona Scholarship Chair, Paula Varsalona-Marino, and Chairman Chris Di Mattio. Not pictured Lou D'Rico, Lee Norelli and Robert Tarte.

CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS



At the recent meeting of the Conference of Presidents of Major Italian American Organizations a luncheon was held at the Italian Consulate Office. Pictured are Dr. Frank DeFrank PNP, Consul General of Italy in New York Fabrizio DiMichele and Cav. Joseph Agresti PNP. Representatives from major organizations from across the country were in attendance for the meeting.



Antonietta Barbato, a UNICO Member of the Southington, CT Chapter is one of the founders of Sorelle d'Italia in America. It was started March 19, 2010. In 2018 they formed a folk-dance group and they have danced to "La Citta di Pulcinella", "Trapanarella" and the "Tarantella" at their festival.

The festival hosts are the Sons of Italy, Sorelle d'Italia in America, and UNICO Southington Chapter.

Antonietta is standing third in from the right (with the dark hair).



"Service Above Self"



Welcome New Members: July, August Congratulations and Welcome to UNICO!

BRIDGEPORT

Grace Trotta
Arcangelo DiStefano
Angela DiStefano
Carol Sansone
Loren Trotta
Greg Trotta
Matthew Trotta

BROOKHAVEN

Antoine Sasanelli

CHICAGO W SUBURBAN

Sam M. Amirante
Pio Falco
Dan A. Grammaticis
Vincent Miceli
Jim Monahan
Ron Onesti

CLARK

Paul D. Belverio
Joseph Cacioppo
Nancy Selem
Lisa Sweeney
Ashley Belverio
Christopher Joseph
Bogash
Natalie Feeney
Gianna Hidalgo
Leila Thompson

FAIRFIELD

Gerard Vincent Porcella
Michele Capriolo
Georgia Crescenzo
Anthony Crescenzo
Danielle Rodriguez

GREATER ORLANDO

Michael Cremin

GREATER PHILADELPHIA

Dan DeLuca

GREATER RAMSEY

Frank Finizia

HIGHLAND BEACH

Anne Grant
Francine Heffernan
Darlene Michele Licata
Jack Robert Licata Jr.

ISLIP/SMITHTOWN

William T. O'Grady
Joan Tolotti O'Grady

LOW COUNTRY

Dena Cordes Olivi

MERRIMACK VALLEY

Christopher Maccarini

MONTCLAIR

Russell Gil
Gery Lomaestro Gil

NATIONAL

Logan Oliver

PEQUANNOCK

Debra Sylvestro
Linda H. Wells
Joseph P. Wells

PHILADELPHIA

Julia Navek

QUEENSBORO

Maria D. Alonzo
Anthony Ficano
Calogero Noto

REHOBOTH AREA

Ann Bailey
Dolores Bottinelli
Gary R. Conte
Faith P. Di Liberto
Joan M. Moses
Susan Scaglione

RUTHERFORD

Christian Cipollone

SCRANTON

Donna M. Cosmello
Nick De Sando
Susan Diana
Vincent Giannotti
Arlene Spinelli Hopkins
Paul J. La Belle
Regina Magnotta Peters
Margaret Dickson

SPRINGFIELD

Jean Callan
Lisa Crinella
Tina Rescia Eddy
Rosemary Saccomani
George B. Tazzini, III

STAMFORD

Dominic Altamura
Jeff Brogan
Stephanie Covello
John Sammarco
Domenic A. Sammarco

WATERBURY

Joseph Gervase

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2023 UNICO NATIONAL CALENDAR



We are proud to announce that our 2023 UNICO National Heritage & Photo Calendar is now available!

Every member will be getting a copy with this issue of ComUNICO.

Extra copies are also available for purchase by calling the
National Office at 973-808-0035.

All the days of the year in this calendar are filled in with dates to
remember along with fourteen (14) photos that were taken by
during our members travels to Italy and Sicily.

Possibly one of those photos are yours or taken by someone you know.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



- **Sept 18: John Basilone Memorial Parade, Raritan, NJ**
- **Oct 1-2: Celebrate UNICO's 100th Anniversary, Waterbury UNICO Invites you to "The Birthplace of UNICO"**
- **Oct 9: Ocean Country Columbus Day Parade**
- **Oct 10: Columbus Day - NYC Columbus Day Parade**
- **Oct 25: Meet the President - The Venetian, Garfield, NJ**
- **Nov 6-7: Eastern Regional Meeting, Shawnee Inn & Golf Club, Shawnee on the Delaware, PA**
- **Mar 24-26, 2023: Mid-Year Board Meeting, Embassy Suites, Alexandria, VA**

FREE UNICO DECALS FOR MEMBERS!



In an effort to promote the UNICO National name, the Executive Committee has agreed to order decals with the UNICO logo for all of the membership. The decals will be free to each member, but the National Office is asking to defray the cost of shipping. You can order the decals for each member in your Chapter.

Please contact the national office if you are interested.

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Prayer to the Blessed Virgin



NEVER KNOWN TO FAIL — (1X)
Oh, most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, fruitful vine, splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh, Star of the Sea, help me and show me herein you are my mother. Oh Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth, I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to succor me in this necessity. There are none that can withstand your power. Oh show me herein you are my mother. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee. (3X) Holy Mother, I place this cause in your hands. (3X) Holy Spirit, you who solve all problems, light all roads so that I can attain my goal, you who gave me the divine gift to forgive and forget all evil against me and that in all instances in my life you are with me, I want in this short prayer to thank you for all things as you confirm once again that I never want to be separated from you in eternal glory. Thank you for your mercy toward me and mine. (Say this prayer three consecutive days and after three days, your request will be granted. Publication must be promised.)

RV, CM, AP, SL, MRM, AH, JP, JNN, AC, LG, PVM, GJA, RMN, JLAN, JCS, JPC, JM, AS, JP, JN, EDD, MC, JP, JJC, CS, WPM, GM, CS, RAB, SP, ME, JP, NLB, JW, AR, AMSP, NAA, JCS, CB, BMC, GT

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Google CALENDAR!



Joseph Nasello Second Vice President has set up a Google Calendar for all Chapter Presidents to utilize for all their meeting and events. The calendar is a good way for the National President and the Vice Presidents to see what the Chapters have scheduled.

Chapters should open a google browser, click on google apps. Go to dots on the right and sign in with your UNICO credentials that Joe Nasello will be sending every Chapter President. unicoChaptermeetings@gmail.com is the sign in and Joe will issue you the password so you can add your information.

If you are having trouble at first please contact Joe Nasello or the National Office for assistance.

GOOD DOG!

U.S. dog lovers are saying “benvenuto” to the bracco italiano. This venerable Italian bird-hunting dog has been named the 200th member of the American Kennel Club’s roster of recognized breeds. That means the handsome, powerful and amiable pointers can now compete for best in show honors at canine competitions across the country, including at the prestigious Westminster Kennel Club event next year. The bracco traces its roots in Europe back more than two millennia, but it didn’t cross the Atlantic until the mid-1990s, according to the AKC. It’s sometimes called the Italian pointer or Italian pointing dog.



HIGH-SPEED HEROICS

Italy’s state police performed a life-saving mission recently when two officers used a Lamborghini Huracán to transport a kidney from Milan to a patient in the Lazio region around Rome. Traveling at speeds of up to 186 miles per hour, the police raced from Niguarda hospital in Milan to the unidentified hospital in Lazio in just two hours. Letizia Moratti, vice president of the Lombardy region, praised the two officers for undertaking this “journey of hope” in the quickest possible time. The police noted that the use of the Lamborghini is “fundamental,” as it leaves helicopters free to carry at-risk patients, reports Tgcom24.

IDYLIC ISLE

Ischia has been named the best island on the planet by readers of Travel + Leisure. The ranking emerged from the annual survey the magazine conducts to determine the world’s top tourism destinations. Readers were asked to rate islands according to their activities and sights, natural attractions and beaches, food, friendliness and overall value. Respondents underscored Ischia’s proximity to Naples, with many noting a renewed focus on the island after it featured prominently in the HBO series “My Brilliant Friend.” Travel + Leisure readers were enamored with Ischia’s “picturesque villages, thermal springs and unspoiled beaches, which include Le Fumarole and its geothermally heated sand.”



PRICING AN ICON

Rome’s legendary Colosseum now has a different sort of dollar value. In a recently published report, the UK-based financial consultant group Deloitte LLP estimated that the landmark’s “social asset value,” or intangible worth, stands at about 77 billion euros, or \$79 billion. “For an iconic asset like the Colosseum, it is necessary to refer in fact to a dimension of value that includes both tangible and intangible value,” said Marco Vulpiani, head of valuation at Deloitte Central Mediterranean. “In this sense, the immaterial value of the Colosseum may be greater than the value related to the economic benefits it can produce.”

—by Robert Allegrini



▲ AUTHOR ▲

EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK

... To know young Enzo's war came to seem the catalytic agent in knowing myself ...

A world falling apart has lately become a staple of Big Entertainment. If it isn't a breakdown in the ecosystem, it's a zombie virus, and either way, staying alive is a job for the lone wolf. The One, the Road Warrior: you find him even in Cormac McCarthy, his end-of-days novel "The Road." The text achieves poetry perhaps — but it ignores society. Starving survivors too would forge allegiances. They'd create tribes and, given decent luck, in time they'd get back to homo urbanus. Doesn't Naples itself stand as a dusty and redolent proof of the human need for community? So too, when my father confronted the apocalypse, he and his brother sought strength in numbers. They joined the guerillas.

This part of his past my father kept hidden the longest, and even now I have only a pin or two holding the traces in place.

**THE ARCHEOLOGY OF A GOOD RAGÙ:
DISCOVERING NAPLES, MY FATHER & MYSELF**
by John Domini

Pages: 274

Cost: \$17.95 (softcover)

ISBN-13: 978-1771835534

Buy: guernicaeditions.com

Digging for a DEEPER TRUTH

by Fred Gardaphe

"The Archeology of a Good Ragù: Discovering Naples, My Father and Myself" is a memoir crafted with all the sharpened tools of a master writer at the peak of his career. It's not what John Domini tells us about his life, but how he tells us that separates this from other return narratives. Through Domini's careful construction, "Archeology" becomes more than an autobiography: It's an act of indigenuity. I've taken to using that word when a writer or artist reaches deep into his or her ancestral past, employing language and an exploration of cultural differences to create a sense of what's indigenous to oneself. This is where the value of ethnic diversity lies, even as the tricks and treats of assimilation attempt to bury those treasures.

Throughout the book, Domini uses his life's work — his reading, writing and teaching — to let his readers know how and why he's come to live the life he so eloquently recounts. Time shifts constantly from present to past to future in no chronological order, keeping us wondering just what's going to happen next. In this way, the novelist's skills of this award-winning writer are put to good use. So too is his use of place, as he recounts the crisscrossing voyages of his father from Italy to the U.S., as well as those of immigrants to Italy from Africa. In so doing, he helps us better understand that migration is a natural act, as old as mankind's presence on the Earth.

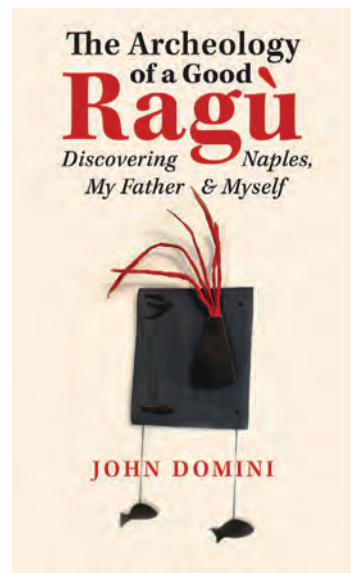
Along the way, he uncovers stories about his father and builds his own narrative with the help of informants, making discoveries that light his way while

resonating with our own lives. "Despite his many coverups, my father proved in fact an able assistente. The few difficult memories he'd share revealed telling details once I was back in his hometown. The family he'd left behind were my most useful informants, whether as a teenager strolling the Vomero or a man of middle age hiking up Corso Camaldoli.

Then too I'd been raised with a sense of how their minds worked. Really, if I were on a dig, could I have asked for better tools? What's the problem, really? One answer, one element that drove my digging, that lent it something like frenzy, was that the work didn't just concern my father, but also the father business generally. For instance, there's the primary obligation, for a Pop: to be there for the family. Yet, as my daughter reached middle

school, and her own home took a bomb hit, I began — let's put this harshly — to gallivant off for weeks at a time."

Domini uses elements of Napolitan' oral tradition to identify the various sections. Part One is titled "Mo' lo facc' — I'm on it"; Part Two, "'O polpo si ccuoce in acqua su' — The octopus cooks in its own water"; Part Three, "Chi chiagne fot'à chi ridi — The one crying is in bed with the one laughing"; Part Four, "Natale cu i tuoie e Pasqua cu chi voie — Christmas with yours and Easter with whoever you want"; and Part Five, "'a capa è 'na sfoglia 'e cipolle — A brain peels like an onion." Each proverb sets up a thematic structure for this enchanting memoir, one that warrants full attention and multiple readings.



Drummer to "THE KING"

by David Witter

He was Elvis Presley's drummer. That's all you need to say about the man who laid down the beat for songs like "Heartbreak Hotel," "Don't Be Cruel," "Jailhouse Rock," "All Shook Up" and "Hound Dog." In total, Dominic Joseph "DJ" Fontana appeared on more than 450 recordings during his 15-year stint with "The King." Presley and his original band have once again captured the spotlight with the release of the film "Elvis," in which Fontana is portrayed by Terepai Richmond.

A native of Shreveport, Louisiana, Fontana's first major professional job was as the house drummer for the radio broadcast "The Louisiana Hayride," which is where he met up with destiny.

"I was at the Hayride, playing on the staff band, but country bands didn't use drummers as much, so a lot of the time I just sat there, waiting," Fontana said during a presentation at the Musicians Hall of Fame. "Then, one day, Elvis came in — he and Scotty (Moore) and Bill (Black) — and they were thinking about maybe using a drummer, because they didn't use one on the Sun recordings. So we went back in the dressing room and talked for a while, and they said 'Yeah, we can do that.' So that's how I met Elvis."

The main reason for their long union was Fontana's spare playing style. While big-band drummers like Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich became stars by playing long, complex solos on expansive drum kits, Fontana immediately recognized that Presley's vocals were the star of the show. "I just had a small kit using a stick and a brush, no tom toms or cymbals," Fontana told Rolling Stone magazine. "I figured I would just let Elvis do what he did so well."



It worked, as his recordings with Presley on RCA netted 18 platinum and 14 gold records, changing not only musical but cultural history in the process. Bill Black left the band in 1958, but Fontana continued to play with Presley throughout the 1960s, including on the famous "Comeback Special" in 1968. Fontana also appeared in several of Presley's films, including "Jailhouse Rock" and "G.I. Blues."

After Presley's death, Fontana's legend continued to grow. Working as a session drummer in Nashville, he recorded with the likes of Ringo Starr, Paul McCartney, Charley Pride, Jerry Lee Lewis, Waylon Jennings, Dolly Parton and Roy Orbison.

One of the highlights of his later career was reuniting with Moore and The Jordanaires for an LP called "All the King's Men." The album was recorded in 1998, the 20th anniversary of Presley's death. Word got out about the project, and rock legends Keith Richards, Levon Helm, Jeff Beck, Ron Wood and many others joined them on the album. The CD was nominated for a Grammy Award, and the sessions became part of an award-winning documentary called "The Return of the Blue Moon Boys," which was the name Fontana, Moore and Black gave themselves after they started backing up Presley.

Fontana searched for his Italian roots later in life, visiting Italy in 2008. While there, he was welcomed with open arms by the Italian Chapter of the Elvis Presley Fan Club, which fêted him at its "Good Rockin' Tonight" event, and named him honorary chairman of the club. Fontana passed away in 2018 at the age of 87.



ELVIS: THE BEST OF THE '68 COMEBACK SPECIAL

After a decade of churning out movie soundtracks that led him further and further from pure rock 'n' roll, Elvis Presley returned to his roots with a vengeance. His 1968 "Comeback TV Special" was not only one of Presley's best performances; critics agree it was one of the greatest performances in the history of rock.

Abandoning the slick orchestration that had come to characterize his work, he called on his original guitarist, Scotty Moore, and drummer, DJ Fontana. It was the first time Presley and his longtime bandmates had played live together in many years.

Fontana's lean, no-nonsense style provides the special's musical bedrock, but Elvis is, as always, the star. Leading off with "Heartbreak Hotel," he belts out, "Since my baby left me," with all the energy, charisma and individuality that transformed a generation. Presley, Moore and Fontana then roll through a cavalcade of songs that helped give birth to rock 'n' roll.

At one point in the performance, it's just Elvis and his guitar, with Fontana playing a beat box and tambourine. When Presley later formed his "big orchestra," Fontana declined to join, making this the last live show Presley and Fontana ever played together.

WINE

of poets

by Helen Gregory

The tiny town of San Gimignano towers above the Tuscan landscape. In medieval times, there were more than 72 towers within the city walls, each a symbol of the nobility's hold on the beautiful view beyond. Today, 14 towers remain to draw tens of thousands of visitors each year. The living history of the area is captured in the local white wine, Vernaccia di San Gimignano. A popular choice since at least the 13th century, Vernaccia is an ancient grape immortalized by Dante Alighieri, who banishes a decadent pope to purgatory for the sin of feasting on "too many eels and Vernaccia wine," in the "Divine Comedy." Eels have since diminished in popularity, but Vernaccia di San Gimignano endures as one of Italy's most tempting wines.

Tuscany is so well known for its reds that white wines can be overshadowed. Vernaccia di San Gimignano is a notable exception. At its best, the native Vernaccia grape variety produces lovely, dry white wines with delicious citrus, floral, mineral and flinty notes. In 1993, Vernaccia made history by becoming Italy's first DOCG, or Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita, a mouthful that denotes the country's highest quality wine designation. Local producers are proud to point this out and with good reason. By law, Vernaccia di San Gimignano DOCG production is subject to strict regulations designed to benefit wine consumers. To preserve their historic origins, the wines must be sourced and made within the small commune of San Gimignano, 85 percent of the grapes must be Vernaccia, yields are controlled to promote quality and the top riserva wines are subject to minimum aging standards prior to release.

Vernaccia has always been worthy of note, and great strides have been made

by winegrowers to explore its complexity. For a small growing area, Vernaccia shows a surprising range of character that stems from the unique geology of the region. Ten million years ago, Tuscany was covered by a shallow sea that left behind a patchwork of limestone, sand and clay. Oyster shells often turn up between the vines to remind growers of the ancient



marine layer that lies beneath. In areas like Pancole to the northwest, the percentage of clay is higher, and a fine-grained sand, called tufo, lends Vernaccia richness and complexity. From their home base in Pancole, the Cesani winery makes an exceptional Vernaccia, cultivated in organic vineyards with a stunning skyline view of the towers of San Gimignano. Nearby, Tenuta San Quirico, also certified organic, works with some of the oldest vines in the region to make a deeply colored Vernaccia finished to perfection in large oak barrels.

You can trace a circle around the San Gimignano growing region and find nuances among Vernaccia wines that rise and fall with the hills. To the west, the Poggio del Comune sits at a higher elevation, allowing for slower ripening. The neighboring Panizzi



and Montenidoli estates produce elegant wines that improve with age. Farther south on the road to Siena, the La Lastra winery also farms organically to produce richly colored Vernaccia with a zesty, herbal character that ages into vanilla and marzipan notes over time. Like many of the wineries in the area, La Lastra has an open-door policy and welcomes visitors to their family winery for tours, tastings and meals.

Most travelers to San Gimignano pile out of tour buses to take in the towers, squeezing in a few hours en route to Florence or Siena. If time allows, it's worth exploring longer. Just beyond the city walls, many of the winegrowers of the region offer charming accommodations on property, with family-cooked meals that outshine the touristy places in town. For a true taste of Tuscan living, Poggio Alloro serves their boutique wines with farm-raised meat and produce. After dinner, you can retire to a quiet guest room or lounge by the pool like one of the family. For a more luxe option, book a spa treatment and wine dinner at Villa San Paolo, just 10 minutes outside of San Gimignano. The picture-perfect views paired with a glass of Vernaccia may well inspire your next sonnet.



2021 La Lastra Vernaccia di San Gimignano

Medium deep straw yellow with a floral, citrus bouquet. An organic wine with great structure and fresh minerality on the finish.

Italy discovers THE TOMATO

by Dolores Sennebogen



Though it isn't easy to imagine, certain foods were unknown in Europe before the voyages of Columbus and subsequent New World explorers. Among them are tomatoes, bell peppers, chocolate, corn, green beans, pecans, potatoes, chili peppers, blueberries, squash, peanuts and vanilla.

But the bounty sailed both ways, with Europeans introducing rice, oranges, cinnamon, peaches, olives and sugarcane to the Americas. Among other contributions to world culture, Columbus initiated an explosion of new foods on both continents, and eventually to every corner of the globe.

It is especially difficult to consider Southern Italian cuisine without the use of tomatoes. When they first arrived in Italy, they were immature and yellow, hence the appellation *pomo d'oro*, or



golden apple. They were considered largely ornamental, and many feared they were poisonous. Aristocrats, it seems, were eating them on metallic plates, and that was a bad combination given the high acidity of the tomatoes.

The tomatoes leached lead from the plates, causing illness and death. But the plates, not the tomatoes, were the culprit.

Eventually, of course, tomatoes were thoroughly embraced, and they were considerably enhanced by botanists who bred them to be sweeter, heartier and less acidic. Cooks, led by Italians, have found ingenious ways to make them a delicious mainstay of world cuisine.

This month's first recipe was prepared for me by my friend, Luciano Sestito. The rest are my own.

PENNE CON SUGO DI TRE CARNI

(Penne with a Three-Meat Sauce)

- 4 ounces ground beef
- 4 ounces ground lamb
- 4 ounces Italian sausage, casings removed
- 3-4 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped Italian flat-leaf parsley
- Pinch of cayenne pepper
- 3/4 tablespoon salt
- 1 (8-ounce) glass of white or red wine
- 1 (28-ounce) can peeled tomatoes, crushed and pureed
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 pound penne rigate, cooked al dente
- Freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano

Continues on page 64 ...



Regrind all the meats together in a meat grinder or food processor. Set aside. Heat the olive oil and sauté the onion in it. When it begins to soften, add the garlic and sauté a short while more. Add the ground meats and let them brown. Add all the spices, including the salt. Add the wine and let it evaporate. Stir in the tomatoes and the tomato paste. Partially cover with a lid and simmer on a very low heat for at least 1-1/2 to 2 hours, until thickened. Stir frequently. Serve with the drained pasta and a generous amount of freshly grated cheese.



sliced bell pepper, mushrooms and garlic, and sauté until the mushrooms are slightly browned. Discard the garlic and distribute the vegetables over the chops. Sprinkle lightly with salt and pepper.

Add the tomato paste to the skillet and thin it with the water and wine. Season to taste with basil, oregano, onion salt and parsley. Pour this over the chops and vegetables. Cover the casserole and bake in a preheated 325-degree oven for 1 hour or longer, until fork tender.

Note: This recipe calls for only a small amount of tomato, but it adds richness and complexity to the sauce. Sometimes, I use several colors of bell pepper to brighten the presentation.

FAGIOLINI SAPORITI

(Savory Green Beans)

- 1 pound young, tender green beans, blanched
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 small onion, minced
- 2 medium cloves garlic, pressed
- 4-5 plum tomatoes
- 1/4 teaspoon dried mint
- 1/4 teaspoon oregano
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- Black pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 teaspoons shredded fresh basil

Blanch the green beans by precooking them briefly in lightly salted water until they are partially cooked. Drain very well and set aside. Heat the olive oil in a skillet and sauté the onion until

it is translucent, 5-8 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté an additional minute or two. Dice the tomatoes into fairly small pieces and add them to the skillet, along with the mint, oregano, salt and pepper. Stir and simmer for about 5 minutes. Add the beans and water, and stir. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and cook uncovered until half the water has evaporated. Cover and continue cooking until the beans are just tender. Stir in the fresh basil near the end of the cooking time.

Note: Sometimes, I peel and seed the plum tomatoes, but it is not required.



SALSA DI POMODORO

(Fresh Tomato Sauce)

- 2 pounds tomatoes
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 3 small cloves garlic, minced or pressed
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 8-10 large basil leaves, shredded

Wash the tomatoes and use a sharp paring knife to make an X on the bottom of each. Plunge them into rapidly boiling water for 60 seconds. The skin will peel off easily. To seed the tomatoes, cut them in half and scoop out the seeds with the tip of a knife or a very small spoon. Work with a strainer over a bowl to catch the excess juice. Press as much pulp and juice as possible through the strainer. Dice the tomatoes small.



COSTOLETTE DI MAIALE ALLA NAPOLETANA

(Neapolitan Pork Chops)

- 4 pork loin chops, 1-inch thick
- Onion salt, pepper, paprika
- 2-3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 bell pepper, cored and sliced
- 6 large mushrooms, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, flattened
- Salt and pepper
- 4 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/2 cup white wine
- Basil, oregano, onion salt, parsley

Trim the excess fat from the chops and sprinkle them lightly with onion salt, pepper and paprika. Brown them in 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a skillet over a medium-high heat. Remove them to a flat casserole.

If necessary, add an additional tablespoon of olive oil or butter to the skillet and reduce the heat to medium. Add the

Heat the olive oil in a skillet and add the onions, sautéing until they become translucent. Add the garlic and sauté 1-2 minutes longer. Do not allow the garlic to burn. Add the diced tomatoes, the collected juice from the bowl, and the salt and pepper. Cook over a medium-low heat for approximately 25 minutes, or until the sauce thickens slightly. Add the shredded basil near the end of the cooking time.

Variation I: Add a pinch each of sugar and oregano, and approximately 1 tablespoon each of chopped parsley and grated Parmigiano Reggiano.

Variation II: At the end of the cooking time, add 1/2 cup of ricotta cheese to the sauce in small dollops and heat through. Toss immediately with your favorite cooked pasta.

INSALATA DI POMODORO E BURRATA

(Tomato and Burrata Salad)

- 1-1/4 pounds ripe Campari tomatoes
- 1 cup yellow cherry tomatoes
- Salt and pepper
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced sweet onion
- 12-14 black olives of your choice, halved
- 1/3 cup shredded basil, divided
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon white balsamic vinegar
- 1 small garlic clove, pressed
- Baby spinach or greens of your choice (optional)
- 8 ounces burrata cheese



All the ingredients for this dish should be at room temperature. Core the Campari tomatoes and cut them into 1-1/2-inch pieces. Halve the yellow cherry tomatoes. Combine them in a bowl and season with salt and pepper to taste. Add the onion, olives and most of the basil. Whisk together the oil, vinegar and garlic, adding salt and pepper to taste. Pour over the tomatoes. Let marinate for at least 15 minutes.

If desired, line a round serving plate with greens. Toss the tomato mixture again and, using a slotted spoon, place the tomatoes in a circle around the serving plate. (Save the juice for inclusion in future recipes.) Place the ball of burrata cheese in the center of the tomatoes and sprinkle the dish with the remaining shredded basil.

Variation: Cut the burrata into 1-inch pieces. Do this in a bowl so you can collect the cream inside. Distribute the burrata pieces and cream over the tomatoes in dollops. Serve with crostini, if desired.

For a heartier luncheon plate, cut 3 or 4 slices of prosciutto into thirds and tuck the pieces among the tomatoes.

MISTO DI FUNGHI

(Mushroom Ragu)

- 3 cups mixed fresh mushrooms
- 1/2 ounce dried porcini mushrooms
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 small onion, chopped small
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can petite diced tomatoes
- 1/4 cup red wine

- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon thyme, or to taste
- 2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley

Use a variety of fresh mushrooms, including button mushrooms, portobello, cremini, shiitake, chanterelles or any other varieties you like. Slice them about 1/4- to 1/2-inch thick. Soak the dried porcini mushrooms in hot water for 20-30 minutes to plump them and remove any grit. Drain, rinse, pat dry and chop them. Add the butter and 1 tablespoon of olive oil to a large skillet and sauté all of the mushrooms over a medium heat, stirring occasionally. When they have given off their liquid and are cooked through, set them aside.

In a separate skillet, sauté the chopped onion in the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil. When the onions are beginning to soften, smash the 2 cloves of garlic with the blade of a large knife and add them to the onions. When the garlic just begins to turn golden, remove it and discard. Add the tomatoes and their juice to the skillet along with the wine, salt and pepper to taste, and thyme. Cook over a low heat until the sauce begins to reduce and thicken, about 12 minutes. Add the prepared mushrooms and simmer for an additional 8 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the parsley. Taste to adjust the seasonings. This sauce is good over creamy polenta.

▼ COOK'S TIP ▼

When autumn turns to winter, Midwest cooks won't find flavorful, fresh tomatoes at the supermarket. I forgo the pale, tasteless offseason offerings and select cherry tomatoes. They are successfully grown in greenhouses all year. Because they are smaller, they have less water, fewer seeds and a concentrated tomatoey flavor. Cooking them concentrates the flavor even more. When available, I also enjoy the somewhat larger (but still petite) Campari tomatoes, which have many of the same characteristics.



Bridge to THE PAST

by Robert Allegrini

As the Romans marched north across the Alps, they left a landmark that has endured for more than two millennia — the bridge over the river Lys that gives its name to the town of Pont Saint Martin.

Both the town and the bridge are gateways to the Aosta Valley. Italy's smallest region, it is officially bilingual, with both French and Italian spoken. Pont Saint Martin lies just inside the region's border with Piemonte. The lively town of 4,000 inhabitants is built around its chief monument and symbol, the spectacular bridge that bore witness to the Romanization of the area, which began in 25 B.C. Anchored to bare rock on both sides, it soars 82 feet above the river, with its single arch spanning a width of 115 feet.



On the afternoon of Aug. 23, 1944, Pont Saint Martin was bombed by the American Army Air Force, which was tasked with blowing up bridges that could otherwise afford an escape route to the retreating German army. Destruction rained from above, leveling much of the city center and killing 130 innocent

civilians. But when the fires abated and the smoke cleared, the stunned citizens of Pont Saint Martin saw that their beloved bridge had survived completely intact.

One of the U.S. bombardiers taking part in that raid was the author Joseph Heller, who immortalized the ill-conceived attack on the defenseless Italian town in the pages of his famous novel "Catch-22."

Pont Saint Martin was rebuilt after World War II and today is well known for an infinitely happier occasion — its annual carnival. A fixture of the town since 1902, the event features elaborate parades and historical re-enactments. It culminates at the famous bridge, when an effigy of the devil is hung from it and burned in spectacular fashion above the river Lys.





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