

IT'S "ONLY" A MOVIE . . .

How stereotyping shapes the public image of today's Italian Americans. Contributors' names, when known, are in parenthesis. Compiled by Dona De Sanctis

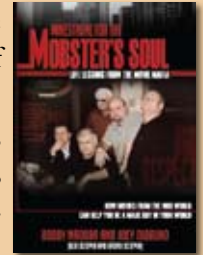
- Even food writers who make a living touting Italy's stellar cuisine show a remarkable lack of respect. For example, **Neil Zevnik** in his column for the January issue of *Better Nutrition Magazine* refers to eggplant as "guinea squash." To complain, write to Editor Nicole Brechka at editorial@betternutrition.com. (*Anita Clemens, Massachusetts*)
- The principal of Santa Cruz High School has apologized to the CSJ and the Grand Lodge of California for producing *Mafia: the Musical* written by two students. A disclaimer also was placed in the play's program apologizing for stereotyping Italian Americans and honoring their contributions. (*Mary Jo & Val Belli & CA CSJ Chair Russ Rametta, California*)



• Children are being introduced to stereotyping early with the Godfather doll from Sideshow Collectibles. The 12" figure looks like Marlon Brando and comes with accessories, including Don Vito Corleone's "stately chair." To complain, leave a message at www.Sideshowdoll.com. (*Walter Santi, Illinois*)

- Pavaline Studios is sponsoring "Mafia Short Script Competition" of short films about the Mob. The winning screenplay will star *The Sopranos'* **Vincent (Big Pussy) Pastore**. **Paul Borghese**, a self-described "no stranger to the Mafia genre," will direct. Pavaline produces "films that matter," according to its press agent. (Matter to whom?) To complain, write to Pavaline Development Head David Allensworth (david.allensworth@pavaline.com) and Padrino Films at Paulborghese@aol.com
- "Learn all about life," promises *Minestrone for the Mobster's Soul*, by cousins Bob and Bruno Ociepa. Their

book features "14 lessons from the movies on how to get made," a list of the "100 best mob movies of all time" and more. Adding insult to injury, they gave themselves Italian names, Bobby Madura and Joey DiBruno. (*Walter Santi, Illinois*)



- Wiley Miller's nationally syndicated comic strip *Non Sequitur* purports to give "a wry look at everyday life." His Jan. 29 strip features an elderly couple walking past a store named "Fugetaboutit's". A sign in the window reads "Shop here and nobody gets hurt." It ran in 700 newspaper coast to coast. To complain, go to www.gocomics.com/nonsequitur (*Frank Travisano, Connecticut*)
- Commenting on the Italian heritage of **Leon Panetta**, the CIA's new director, a respected former congressman and presidential advisor, Lauren Collins quoted congratulations from Panetta's cousin, a former mayor of Siderno in Calabria. In the Jan. 19 issue of *The New Yorker's*, popular "Talk of the Town" column, she claims the town is "historically a Mafia stronghold." The statement is both false and inappropriate. To comment, write to themail@newyorker.com. (*Andrew V. Ippolito, Connecticut*)



- Further proof that shows like *The Sopranos* feed off Italy's rich cultural heritage came late last year with the launch of *The Sopranos Wines* from **Vesuvio Import Company**. A wine-tasting at Trump World Tower in Manhattan Nov. 18 featured many cast members including **Dominic Chianese (Uncle Junior)**, who sang traditional Italian love songs. (How proud his mother must be!) To complain, write to info@sopranoswine.com.

SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO: "It's Only a Movie", Italian America Magazine, 219 E Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002. E-mail: ddesanctis@osia.org. Include name and daytime telephone number. No telephone calls please. Submissions cannot be acknowledged.