

## IT'S ONLY A MOVIE...

COMPILED BY DONA DE SANCTIS

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

- Parents and faculty at the *Fox Meadow Elementary School* in Scarsdale, NY last May received an invitation to a PTA luncheon with "an Italian flair" that featured numerous references to the Mafia. The CSJ launched a letter-writing campaign to the principal and school board that resulted in an apology and a new invitation sent out that had Italian monuments as its theme. [CSJ National]



- Gino the Ginny* is an 11-year old boy in New York City whose "comedy act" on the Internet consists of four-letter words and obscene gestures. He has been written up in the *New York Post* and featured on the local ABC-TV affiliate's news show. [Rocco Zaccardi, NYC]

- No one laughed when during a public meeting of the Manalapan Township in New Jersey last March, *Larry Roth*, husband of Deputy Mayor Michelle Roth, flipantly declared he hated Italians. The Italian American One Voice Coalition and the Monmouth Italian-American Association met with the mayor and the council, which voted to hold a township-wide showing of the Seton Hall documentary on the history of anti-Italianism. The Roths also apologized. [Tom DeGenaro, NJ]

- Just in time for Christmas, kids will be treated to a new *Sopranos video game* which will let them become



"made men" if they kill enough people. The game from THQ, Inc will use voices and images of the series' star James Gandolfini and others.

- Proof there's a double standard for political correctness was offered recently by Cingular Wireless, the largest wireless company in the U.S. To promote its service, Cingular has made a commercial featuring *Sopranos* regular Tony Sirica ("Paulie"), playing a menacing Italian American gangster. Requests to have it removed have been ignored.

However, last May, Cingular apologized and immediately removed from its online store a ringtone called "La Migra Alert" (Spanish slang for the Border Patrol) that denigrated illegal aliens as soon as a reporter brought it to the company's attention.

Contact [cingularbusinesspr@cingular.com](mailto:cingularbusinesspr@cingular.com) or spokesman Mark A. Siegel at [mark.a.siegel@cingular.com](mailto:mark.a.siegel@cingular.com). (Philomena Decker, NJ)

- "*Leaving Brooklyn? Fugheddaboudit*" is the message on signs placed at four major exit points across the borough of Brooklyn, NY. The 5'x 8' billboards are the handiwork of borough president Marty Markowitz, who had them erected in July, 2004 to compliment 11 "Welcome to Brooklyn" signs. None of the 11, however, has ethnic overtones. To express your opinion, contact Mr. Markowitz at 718/802 3836 or email his communications director Eric Demby at [edemby@brooklynbp.nyc.gov](mailto:edemby@brooklynbp.nyc.gov).



Send your contributions to: "It's Only a Movie", Italian American Magazine, 219 E Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002. E-mail: [ddeasantis@osia.org](mailto:ddeasantis@osia.org). Include name and daytime telephone number. No telephone calls please. Submissions cannot be acknowledged.