

IT'S "ONLY" A MOVIE . . .

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

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- **WHAT COUNTRY IS THIS?** According to Steve Job's new Apple Computer application, Italy is "Mafia, Pizza, Pasta and Scooters" and a special "Mafia Parking" sign. It can be downloaded to iPhones, iPads, and iPod. The Sons of Italy CSJ joined Italy's ministry of tourism in calling for its immediate recall.



The Italian ministry also plans legal action. [CSJ National President Santina Haemmerle, NYC]

- **AND SPEAKING OF TRASHING...** The NY CSJ has strongly protested "Here Comes the Garbage Barge," a children's story by Jonah Winter. The main character, Gino Stroffolino, a garbage man, and his friend, Joey LaMotta, send Long Island's garbage to South Carolina, but when no one wants it, Mr. Stroffolino orders, "Take da garbage back to Long Island, but I gotta coupla places you could try along da way." In her letters to the author, the publisher, Random House and several public libraries, NYCSJ's Stella Grillo called for the author to remove all Italian stereotypes. [NYS CSJ President Stella Grillo, NYC]



- **SPREADING THE VIOLENCE** More than 26 million people around the world are playing *Mafia Wars*, a browser game set in New York's



Little Italy that encourages players to create their own mafia crews, commit crimes and build criminal empires. Social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace and Friendster allow players to recruit friends to fight other players. [National CSJ]

- **A NEW RACE?** Playmobil, a line of toy figures sold internationally by the Brandstatter Group in Germany, offers toy figures of different ethnic families. The company describes the Northern European family as "Caucasians" while Southern Europeans, Middle Easterners and Hispanics are grouped together in a separate category labeled "Mediterranean/Hispanic." [Mike Bacarella, Chicago]



- **WHOLE FOODS APOLOGY** To promote wines from Sicily, Whole Foods, the high-end all-natural supermarket chain, announced in its Fall newsletter: "No need to pay protection, we've got your back with Sicilian wines.... Sicily is starting to share more than tough guys and caponata with the world."



That's all it took Lou Rago, founder of the Italian American Human Relations Foundation in Chicago, to swing into action. His letter to the company was immediately answered with an apology and a revised newsletter that went to all 270 stores nationwide. *Bravo, Luigi!*

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