

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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• Everybody loves Mamma's meatballs, but proceed with caution, according to writers on the NBC crime series, *Law & Order*. Its April 21 show presented "Mamma Rosa," an Italian meat-distributing company in Brooklyn, N.Y. that was overrun by rats and roaches. To make sure viewers did not miss the Italian connection, the company workers wore uniforms sporting the red, white and green Italian flag. *Giancarlo (Carl) Marotta, Florida*



• Some Italian Americans just don't get it when it comes to offensive stereotyping. Include in that crowd, Seaside Heights Borough Administrator **John Camera** who thinks *Jersey Shore* is good for his community. (The show is filmed there.) Among the reasons he gave for issuing the show a filming permit: "None of the drunken brawls that took place during the first season rose to the level where they could deny a taping permit." *Manny Alfano, New Jersey*

• Busy, busy, busy! When the season finale of *Jersey Shore* aired in January, the cast further enriched themselves by doing bar tours for \$5,000 to \$7,000 a pop. Ronnie and Sammie showed up at McFaddens Saloon in Pittsburgh last January to participate in the **Guido Olympics**. The event reportedly drew a huge crowd. *Andre DiMino, New Jersey*

• The movie, "*Kick Ass*" offers up a new "bad guy" - an 11-year old Italian American girl who is either cursing, shooting or beating up people. The movie's other villains are the usual Italian American stereotypes prone to crime and violence, led by an evil drug lord, Frank D'Amico, who has trained his young daughter to be a ruthless hit man. But hey, it's only a movie. *Richard Annotico, California*



• *City Island* bills itself as "a little family drama/comedy," but Italian Americans are not laughing. It presents Vince Rizzo (Andy Garcia) as a prison guard who wants to become an actor, but is held back by his hysterical and foul-mouthed wife; a daughter secretly working as a stripper; a son obsessed with porno; and an illegitimate son who is an ex-con. Just your typical loving Italian American family, right? None of the cast is of Italian descent and nothing in the script requires the family to be Italian. Of course, a movie about a similar black, Hispanic or Jewish family would be offensive.



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.