

IT'S "ONLY" A MOVIE . . .

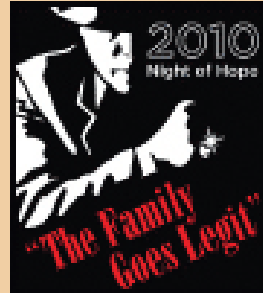
*How stereotyping shapes the public image of today's Italian Americans.
Contributors' names, when known, are in parenthesis.*

COMPILED BY DONA DE SANCTIS

- Al Capone only made it to age 48, but that didn't stop self-described movie producer **Rich Larsen** from throwing him a 111th birthday party last January in Wheeling, IL to make a buck off the memory of this long-dead gangster. Among the events, *Best Dressed Gangster* and *Al Capone Look-Alike* contests and the possibility of meeting "maybe even a real life gangster!" Larsen also is making a documentary, *Capone the Music Man*. To protest, contact him at 847/537-9100 or email him at caponemovieproducer@yahoo.com. (*Manny Alfano, NJ*)
- **Andre DiMino** is the national president of UNICO, the Italian American service organization, but to Steve Kane, host of his own radio show in Miami, he is a "Top Wop." That is how Kane described him in radio spots promoting DiMino's appearance on Kane's show in March to speak out against "Jersey Shore." Deluged with emails protesting the insult, Kane called DiMino to apologize.
- To raise funds for cancer victims, the **Sarasota Wellness Community** in Florida recently held "The Family Goes Legit interactive Italian-Style gala." The invitation read "Don your Mafia chic" and stated "You *betta* buy a ticket or we're calling Cousin Guido." Donor categories included "The Don," "Underboss," and "Capo." A letter of protest went to the board from *Mary Amabile Palmer*, president of the Gulf Coast Italian Cultural Society in Sarasota.
- TV reporter **Melissa Ruggieri** of the *Richmond Times Dispatch* in Virginia has no problem with "Jersey Shore" or stereotyping. In her Jan. 28 column, "The Beat"



she wrote "Maybe you wondered why their names all look like a mafia roll-call with requisite nicknames (and for the record, as someone who is 100 percent Italian-American, I'm not at all offended by the stereotyping of Italians that brewed controversy after the show's debut. Spend a Saturday night in Atlantic City — those stereotypes are shall we say, true.)" She received a letter of complaint from *Nicholas Maiolo*, who also sent a copy to her editor.



2010
Night of Hope

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- "Make an offer you can't refuse? 'The Gavones' will most likely make an offer you can't understand." This is how "Star Trek's" **William Shatner** is promoting his cartoon pilot about Italian American gangsters in Hollywood. The title is a distortion of the Italian word *cafone* or ignorant person and can be seen on both Shatner's YouTube page and his website. In an interview last year with People.com, Shatner said that Robert DeNiro, Joe Pesci and Martin Scorsese may make appearances. "We can get anybody we want with the flick [of a pen]," he reportedly said.



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.