



IT'S "ONLY" A MOVIE...

How stereotyping shapes the public image of Italian Americans today.

SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO mfisher@osia.org or mail to: *Italian America Magazine*, 219 E Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002. Include your name, email or daytime telephone number. No telephone calls please. Submissions cannot be acknowledged. Contributors' names, when known, are in parenthesis.

By *Dona De Sanctis*

• **VERGOGNA!** Once again, one of our own slings the mud. **Joe Bastianich**, son of the famous chef, Lidia Bastianich, appeared recently on the children's television cooking competition, "Master Chef Junior," as an elderly Italian American.



He wore an open-chested jogging suit, a heavy gold chain necklace, and rode in on a handicapped scooter with a large Italian flag propped on the back. Puzzled, the children asked him why he looked so strange. "Because this is what all old Italian American men look like," he replied in a New York City accent. Requests for an apology were ignored. *Manny Alfano, president, the Italian American One Voice Coalition. Email: mannyalfano@comcast.net. Tel: 973-429-2818 in NJ.*

• **IS NOTHING SACRED?** Mafia stereotypes are bad enough, but now Italy's fine craftsmanship is being ridiculed in a TV commercial from **State Street Global Advisers**, a leading investment management company. As melodic Italian music plays, the spot opens on a turn-of-the-century furniture factory, "Saviano e Figlio." Inside, two men are carefully making a table and chairs. But the table is lopsided so they cut off the legs on two of the chairs. The scene shifts to the Leaning Tower of Pisa as an announcer says: "If there's a precise way to do something, SPDR ETF investors will find it. Precise in a world that isn't." To vote "boo" to the ad, go to www.ispot.tv and look for "Leaning Tower of Pisa" ad. So far, the ad has a 90% approval rating. *OSIA National Office, Washington, DC*

• **GODFATHER CONCERT** The movie is rated "R," and so should the concert that was offered in February by the Chicago Symphony. Billed as "an offer they

can't refuse," the orchestra played Nino Rota's score to Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* as the audience watched "a live screening" of the movie. Poor taste all around. By the way, how can you do a "live screening" of a movie?



Walter Santi, Chicago

• **ET TU, JEB?** The March 16 issue of *Time Magazine* explored **Jeb Bush's** chances of winning the presidential election. To prove his grit, Bush "joked about killing so many bills [when he was governor of Florida] that he earned the nickname of 'Veto' Corleone." Not the best way to win over Italian Americans, is it, Mr. Bush? *Dan and Fanny D'Amelio, California*

• **BAD, BAD BADD BING** To hawk its pies, the **Screaming Sicilian Pizza Company** has created the Mambo Italiano, "the pizza to take with you when you're going to the mattresses." They "badda bing, badda boom" it with "mozzarella smuggled in, excuse me I mean *purchased*, from Wisconsin." The pizzas are in supermarkets nationwide. *Elizabeth Rossell, Michigan*



• **BEDTIME STORY** Want to give your children nightmares? Let them watch the **Halo Mandarin** commercial, "Little Pony." In it, a little girl puts the head of a toy horse in her father's bed to punish him for not buying her favorite fruit, imitating the infamous scene in *Godfather I* in which the gangsters punish a Hollywood mogul by putting the bloody head of his race horse in his bed. *Lou Gallo, State CSJ President, New York*