

President's Corner  
**CSJ President's Message**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the officers, members and friends who contributed to the CSJ at the Convention. Your contributions are instrumental in assisting the CSJ to fight bias and bigotry against Italian-Americans. Over the years, under the guise of entertainment, Italian Americans have been maligned. With the excuse, "It's only a movie!" Italian Americans have been subjected to various forms of bias and bigotry. Our positive image programs have successfully brought out facts that Italians and Italian Americans have been very prominent in all fields – art, mathematics, astronomy, engineering, music, exploration, sports – just to name a few. Yet, most Americans believe we are mere extensions of the "Sopranos."

Recently, my granddaughter and namesake, an architecture major, had the wonderful opportunity to study in Italy for six weeks. It gave her the opportunity to make good use of her three years of high school Italian. However, while touring in Verona, she happened upon a store called, "Grillo's." While taking pictures of the storefront, she was approached by an Italian man, who asked if she was American. When she responded that she was, he asked, "Is your family Mafia? As I indicated in last month's Justice, the fall out from the "Soprano's" has long tentacles. Italian Americans of any and every walk of life are almost branded as "Mafia types."

Last month I addressed a letter to "Time Warner" protesting their very distasteful ad, negatively portraying "Soprano like" Italian Americans, which was supposed to advertise "Time Warner." We wrote to them suggesting that it be removed from the air. I became very hopeful, when I didn't see the ad for several weeks. However, last week, there it was again! If anyone sees this ad on the air, please feel free to write to Mr. Edward Adler, Executive Vice President, Time Warner Inc., One Time Warner Center, New York, NY 10019 and express your personal feelings about this distasteful ad.

We also wrote to Newsday concerning an article in the food section entitled, "Adventures in Grocery Shopping – Uncle Giuseppe's" that touted this wonderful store. However, the food editor, Erica Marcus opened her article as follows, "Exuberant, playful and dramatic, this mercantile monument to Italian American sub urban prosperity is like an episode of 'The Soprano's' in which no one is murdered." In our letter, we asked if this meant that in order for an Italian American to achieve suburban prosperity, they must be of the Soprano's ilk?

It was brought to our attention by National CSJ that Cingular is currently airing a commercial featuring Soprano actor, Tony Sirica (Paulie) in the role of an intimidating Italian American gangster. Attempts by several Italian American organizations to have this commercial removed have been unsuccessful. However, the May 14<sup>th</sup> issue of the *Washington Post* reported that Cingular's online store offered a ringtone called "La Migra Alert" (Spanish slang for border patrol), mocking illegal aliens. When a Post reporter brought it to Cingular's attention, the company's response was an apology and immediate removal of the offensive material from the online store. In the article, Cingular was quoted as saying, "We realized it was offensive, no question about it. We apologized for putting it up there in the first place." Our question to Mr. Siegel of Cingular was, "Why the double standard?" We also asked that the offensive commercial be removed from the air and are awaiting their response.

The Italian American Legislator's Conference, held on June 11, 2006 in Albany was very interesting, informative and entertaining. Many thanks to Dan Colontone, who arranged for the

bus trip; Eleanor Jobbagy, Marge Moschella and Mary Ann Rispoli, all of whom helped to make this a successful day. Members of the Order, family and friends make up a large portion of attendees at the Conference. Among the speakers were John Dabbene, Chairman of the Garibaldi-Meucci Museum and Jack Como, President of the Italian American Legal Defense and Higher Education Fund. The day concluded with dinner at a local hotel dining room.

CSJ/B'nai B'rith Essay Contest was completed on May 24<sup>th</sup>. The three outstanding recipients were as follows: First Prize, (\$500. bond) Brittany Bookbinder, Kings Park High School; Second Prize (\$250 bond) Vidya Viswanathan, Herricks High School and Third Prize (\$100 bond) Hamsa Sridhar, Kings Park High School.

There are some very exciting events in the near future – **Italian American Day at Shea Stadium, Saturday, September 9, 2006, - Michael Amante will entertain at 12:20 PM. Sports bags will be distributed to the first 2,500 entrants. Mets v. LA Dodgers starts at 1:10 PM. Tickets are \$22. per person.** Contact Marta Nunziata for tickets reservations at 718-428-8545 or Stella Grillo at 347-204-8006.

**September 16, 2006 – our Annual Day at the Races at Belmont** – always a fun day and a fund raiser too - includes a buffet luncheon and entrance to the park. Tickets are \$42. per person. Contact Tony Corsello – 516-766-5518.

Please visit us at [www.nyscsj-osia.org/](http://www.nyscsj-osia.org/) We have published information on our positive image material; **the new Video Tape Library Listing together with order sheets**; and other interesting and informative material. We are continuing to enhance the Video Tape/DVD Library. You can now download the entire listing and order sheet from the web site.

As always, we commend our CSJ Executive Board, District Chairpersons and Local Lodge Liaisons for their efforts in fighting bias and bigotry. They are a great team!

Many thanks to New York State President Carlo Matteucci and First Lady Madeline, and all of our New York State and National Officers, OSIA staff, members and friends for their continued support.

We also extend our heartfelt sympathy to the Maffettone family on the loss of their mother, Virginia. Domenic Maffettone had been CSJ Treasurer and a dedicated member, for several years

***Remember if you are a member of OSIA you are a member of the CSJ!!!***