

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Another New York State Convention has come and gone and New York State OSIA has elected Nancy DiFiore Quinn as their first female New York State President! We congratulate Sister Nancy and the new Executive Council. I personally thank Sister Nancy for re-appointing me as NYS CSJ President and look forward to working with her.

We 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.

On a sad note, during the convention, we were notified that our beloved Walter Wolff quietly passed away. Walter achieved notoriety, when he came forward with his remarkable story of how his life and the lives of over 45,000 Jews were saved by Italians during World War II. Walter had been ailing for some time. The CSJ members were so pleased that we had the opportunity to present Lehman-LaGuardia Awards to **Walter Wolff and Vincent Marmorale**, Co-Chairpersons of our Holocaust Memorial Committee, at our CSJ/B'nai B'rith Annual Solidarity Breakfast, and to celebrate Walter's 90th Birthday.

Walter was delighted with the theme of our sixth CSJ/B'nai B'rith jointly sponsored essay contest, which was "The Saving of Jews in Italy." Students were asked to discuss the lessons that could be learned from the way Italians reacted to Nazi efforts to deport Jews to death camps? Although some 7,600 Italian Jews were murdered during the Holocaust, many others survived because a non-Jewish population aided them. Students were also asked to describe the aid extended and to evaluate the dangers and risks faced by the rescuers and probe their motivation.

The three winning contestants were Jacqueline Palma, Hopewell Junction, NY - First prize- \$500. U.S. Savings Bond; Rafael Tangorra, Bethpage, NY Second prize- \$250 U.S. Savings Bond; Nicole Setter, West Sayville, NY, Third Prize - \$100 US Savings Bond. The awards were announced at the schools attended by the winners. All of the essays submitted were excellent and choosing the finalists was difficult – we congratulate the winners and all the contestants.

Ever since the New York State United Teachers printed a piece in their monthly magazine, about our Italian American Women's posters, we have been contacted by teachers in the New York Tri-state area, all of whom have expressed an interest in our material. I have had extensive conversations with some teachers. One eighth-grade social studies teacher, inquired about our Medal of Honor program and other posters. In response to the material we sent, various posters and the Medal of Honor Documentary, he sent a wonderful thank you note, which I quote in pertinent part, *"The posters are great....they can be used for different units of social studies.....By the way, from viewing the video and studying the posters, I have learned more about United States and world history."* We are very proud of the fact that we have developed such educational positive image material. We plan to retain these contacts and will notify them of our Teacher's Conference in September at Hofstra.

In the last issue of Justice, we noted that the price of the Medal of Honor Documentary tape was reduced to \$5.00 per tape. The notice inadvertently noted that the cost **included postage and handling, it should have read plus \$2.50 for postage and handling.** We have accommodated any orders that we have already received. Thank you for your interest in this very interesting and informative documentary tape.

The Black Donnelly's, a new series on WNBS about an Irish American family, has been cancelled. It seems that we were not the only complainants about the negative ethnic references in this program.

As we previously indicated, we had been informed by parents and teachers that the accomplishments of Christopher Columbus have been reduced to a few lines, in Social Studies textbooks. We wrote to New York State Education Commissioner, Richard Mills, and his Senior Deputy Commissioner, advising them of this problem. We included copies of pamphlets that provided many facts about how Columbus was instrumental in changing the course of history. We received two letters from the Department of Education, indicating that all schools in New York State must follow a Social Studies core curriculum. It is then up to the schools and/or school districts to determine the refinements to this curriculum. The letters suggested that we contact schools and provide them with the same material on Columbus that we had forwarded to the State. A review of the State Required Curriculum indicates that teachers do have much material to cover, however, Columbus' contributions cannot be relegated to one or two sentences. We plan to actively pursue this project.

It was brought to our attention that On June 7th, 2007, the New York Times published an article entitled, *Kenyan Police Kill 11 in Nairobi Gang Crackdown*. The article referred to a mass slaughter in Nairobi. The first sentence of a paragraph entitled, "Kenyan Mafia" stated in part, that the "Mungiki, a quasi religious sect, is now a large, organized crime operation like the Italian Mafia....." The article further described the violent acts perpetrated by the *Mungiki*. We addressed a letter to the President/General Manager of the Times protesting this inference and asking for a retraction. No response as yet.

We addressed an email to the Hillary Clinton Campaign Office, concerning her recent and very distasteful campaign ad, portraying Hillary and Bill in a "Soprano-like" setting. The ad, which was meant to be *entertaining*, obviously was not amusing. We asked that this video-clip be removed from her campaign.

The Annual Italian American Legislator's Conference was held on **Sunday, June 3, 2007**. CSJ again sponsored a bus for this event. The cost for lunch and dinner, and the programs in Albany is \$35. per person. The bus left from two locations, in Nassau County at the Columbus Lodge and at St. John's in Queens. Thirty-five members and friends joined us on the bus trip and we were joined by another 20 more members at the Albany Conference. OSIA members and friends comprised most of the audience at the Conference. Bus riders were entertained by Centennial Lodge Members on the trip up to Albany, and by a ukulele playing guest on the return trip. There was literally – dancing in the aisles and a great time was had by all!

Our next exciting event is our "Day at the Races" at Belmont Park – Saturday, September 15, 2007. This is a District I, II, III Fund Raiser and promises to be a great afternoon. The cost is \$42. per person and includes lunch. Contact Tony Corsello, ASAP for reservations – 516-766-5518.

If you see something – say something! When you notify us about an incident, please also provide us with the TV or radio station; date and time of the program; the name of the publication, date of issue; and as much information as possible so that we can properly respond to the matter. We try to address every issue.

Remember – *If you are a member of OSIA you are a member of CSJ!*

Fraternally,

Stella Grillo
NYS CSJ President