

President's Corner  
CSJ President's Message

As we draw close to another New York State annual convention, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the CSJ Executive Council, Executive Board, District Chairpersons and local lodge liaisons, all of whom have given of their time and energy to help make the CSJ a very viable part of OSIA. I particularly would like to thank Carmine Federico, our NYS Corresponding Secretary for his assistance with our CSJ Liaisons in District VII. We need CSJ Liaison Chairpersons in Districts VI and VII. The only requirement is an interest in fighting bias and bigotry against Italian Americans and promoting our positive image and a few hours of time during the month.

Mille grazie to all those who attended or supported our February fund raiser. Our brunch/dinner was a huge success with about 200 members and friends in attendance. Both our honorees, Brother Joseph Tursi and Sister Emilese Aleandri were deeply honored by the recognition. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Josephine Morici Cohen, Dinner Chairperson, Sylvia Summa, Journal Chairperson, Marge Moschella and Josephine Truglio, Raffle Chairpersons and the entire dinner dance committee, all of whom contributed to the success of this event. I particularly commend Josephine Cohen, Dinner Chairperson, who Chaired this event, while her husband Murray was hospitalized and gravely ill. We extend our deepest sympathy and prayers to Josephine on the passing of her husband, Murray Cohen.

We received many telephone calls and emails concerning Rev. Wright's derogatory remarks concerning Italians. "[Jesus'] enemies had their opinion about Him . . . . The Italians for the most part looked down their garlic noses at the Galileans." He then called Jesus' crucifixion "a public lynching Italian style" executed in "Apartheid Rome". An excellent response to these remarks was released by Philip R. Piccigallo, Ph.D, National Executive Director, OSIA.

The *Little Italy Game* was brought to our attention, by members of Police Lt. Joseph Petrosino Lodge located in Manhattan's *Little Italy*. This game was promoted by Playroom Entertainment and they advertised the game by distributing postcards to all the businesses in *Little Italy*. This board game invites gamers to *become the head of a crime family in 1950's Little Italy*. This "game" glamorizes the criminal underworld and encourages young adults to "think like a criminal and become a crime boss. Letter was written to Playroom Entertainment suggesting that the game be recalled. Kudos to the members of the Petrosino Lodge, who removed all of the postcards and advertisements from the stores and restaurants.

A two-page feature article, written by Mehrnoosh Torbatnejad, entitled *Cemetery has a mob of Mafiosi* was printed in the *New York Daily News*. Not even the dead can rest in peace! A quote by Beth Santore of *Grave Addiction Web site*, expertly deduced that because many of the mobsters buried at St. John's Cemetery are Italian, they are also Roman Catholic, therefore they are buried in a Catholic Cemetery. She even went so far as to allude that "*there is competition amongst rivals in cemeteries.*" What exactly was the point of this insensitive feature. Many of our members, who have close relatives buried at St. John's Cemetery, were incensed at this article. The first sentence stated that, "more than 20 infamous gangsters are buried there." How then did this reporter come to the conclusion that the Cemetery has a *mob of Mafiosi*? The *Daily News* did reprint a portion of our letter on their Editorial Page.

*New York Daily News* - The comic strip, "Chuckie Bros" showed a very elegant shoe shop, with the letter "V" on the awning and a sign, "Vinny's Shoe Shoppe" *One Size Fits All*. The picture window features two *mobster-like characters*, wearing what is supposed to be "cement shoes." This cartoon certainly wasn't funny – how would an adult explain it to a child.

La Terranova Restaurant - members of the *Loggia Glen Cove* complained that this restaurant recently featured a new show, "You Got Whacked: *Gangsters and Pranksters*. The local newspaper, *Gold Coast*

*Gazette*, featured a front-page article touting this show, which was co-hosted by Tony Darrow and Vinny Vella, two actors who are known for playing gangster roles in movies and on TV.

*That's Amore* – In this series on MTV –Domenico Nesci – a young man from Milan, comes to the United States to find a wife. He does so from his *Howard Hughes like mansion* that is lit up with red, white and green lights. He parades around in red, white and green shorts, while be vies of young women vie for his attention by wrestling in a giant bowl of spaghetti and other inane events that border on pornographic. Our letter questions the message sent to our young Italian American men and women concerning respect for each other. What message are they receiving about our Italian culture?

The NYS and National CSJ/OSIA, and the MetroNorth Region of B'nai B'rith International circulated notices of our seventh jointly sponsored writing contest entitled "2008 Enlighten America - Enlighten the World Youth Essay Award." New York State demographics indicate changes in the ethnic makeup of our population. Students were asked to address the following topic: "How has diversity enhanced or broadened your experiences in your school and in your community?" Three prizes offered are: First - \$500. U.S. Savings Bond; Second - \$250 U.S. Savings Bond; Third - \$100 -US Savings Bond. A certificate of participation will be issued to every student submitting an essay. We are in the process of selecting the winners, which will be declared by May 24, 2008.

Invitations were sent regarding our 27<sup>th</sup> NYS CSJ – B'nai B'rith Breakfast of Solidarity, will be held on **Sunday, June 1, 2008 at 930 AM.** Lehman-LaGuardia Awards, will be presented to Howard S. Maier, Chairman of the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County and his wife, Dr. Margaret Cuomo, who has been dedicated to promoting Italian language and culture. The breakfast will be held at the **Woodlands in Woodbury, NY.** We look forward to seeing you all there.

We hope to release a new poster at the Convention – *Italian American Members of the Sports Hall of Fame*, researched and prepared by Tony Corsello and Sal Moschella.

Please visit our web site at [www.nyscsj-osia.org](http://www.nyscsj-osia.org). Under positive image material, we included videos and dvd's that are available for circulation, - also included is information on how to obtain films. The list can be downloaded. The video library is currently housed at the Garibaldi Meucci Museum. There is no charge to borrow films. Entertain your members at a meeting – show a short and interesting film.

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

Fraternally,

*Stella Grillo*  
NYS CSJ President

