

Passion and Joy: **KGTV's Lee Ann Kim**  
and the **San Diego Asian Film Festival**

by Kat Avila



Page 1 | [2](#)

Lee Ann Kim works as the weekend anchor and as a general assignment news reporter for KGTV/Channel 10, which is the ABC network affiliate in San Diego. By being on television, she is demonstrating that Asian American women are articulate, credible, aggressive, and can speak perfect English. Kim is also the founding executive director of the San Diego Asian Film Foundation, which puts on the **San Diego Asian Film Festival (SDAFF)** now going in its third year (**October 3-6, 2002**). Originally, SDAFF was an event of the San Diego chapter of the Asian American Journalists Association (AAJA), a chapter Kim helped found in 1999. As of this year, SDAFF has broken off from AAJA in a test of its importance and relevance to the surrounding community.

### What can you tell me about yourself?

I was born in Seoul, Korea. Came to Chicago, Illinois, when I was one, and pretty much grew up in Chicago. I'm the oldest of four daughters, no boys. My mom was my best role model. The person I became today has a lot to do with her - her push to always have a goal and to always represent the family face, as well as the Korean American face. When I got my first TV job, she said to me on the phone, "You are no longer my daughter. You are now the daughter of the Asian American community. So be careful what you do. Because no matter what you do, they don't see you...they see all of us." That was very profound for me.



by Nelson Abalos, i7media.com

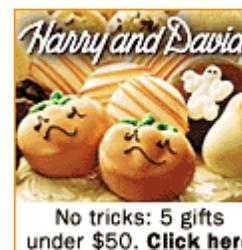
### Before you moved to San Diego, where did you work?

I worked in Annapolis, Maryland, as a radio reporter, covering state

[Back to Home Page](#)

[View TOC](#)

**[E-mail this page to a friend!](#)**



**Arts and Entertainment**

[15 minutes with Lucy Liu by Cynthia H. Cho](#)

[No Laughing Matter: Margaret Cho sounds off on political correctness, Asians in the media, and defying her parents by Jear Tang](#)

[Cindy Hsu:](#)

politics. I helped jumpstart a CNN affiliate in Houston, Texas. I worked in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, where certainly there were no Asian American women on the air. I was the first person of color in Springfield, Missouri, to ever anchor the news there. Then I came to San Diego in 1996.

### **Do you like San Diego?**

Coming to San Diego was nice because, unlike the other markets I worked in, San Diego is a little more diverse. After settling in here, it was interesting how many phone calls I started to receive, particularly from Asian American female students in college and high school who would call to ask for advice about how to do what I do or to say they needed a mentor.

### **You helped found the San Diego chapter of the AAJA. Wasn't that enough? Why the film festival?**

I asked myself what can we do for the community beyond just journalism or reaching out to the media, that could incorporate our mission to ensure fair and equal representation of Asian American issues. I only wanted it to be a mini-film festival. That first year we ended up showing 60 films at the University of San Diego. It was very successful for a first-year project. And we broke even. That first festival cost us about \$80,000. Our second year, last year, we showed about 100 films and we moved it from a university campus to a commercial theater center, the Hazard Center's Mann 7 Theaters, now known as Madstone Theaters.

The unfortunate thing last year was our film festival took place two weeks after 9/11. If you can remember that time, it was so surreal. The week of 9/11 nobody did anything - they sat at home, maybe went to work, they were reevaluating their lives, and everything was sinking in about what was happening with the world. Starting the week after, people tried to move forward and make things positive. By the time our film festival rolled around, certainly audience numbers were down. But the people who came out really wanted to experience different cultures, diversity, and learn about other people.

[Sweetheart in the City by Jessica Centina Hsieh](#)

[PARTY AT ANIME EXPO 2002 By Kat Avila](#)

[Q&A with Aubrey Aquino by Sae Bom Kim](#)

[Kim Myung-Hee: Dance of the Soul By Michael D. Kaplan](#)

[Missed Opportunity: How "Blue Crush" Continues the Tradition of Cultural Theft by White Producers of Asian-Pacific Culture By Jeff Park](#)

### **Check Out These Pages!**

[WebWise By Radhika Pradhan](#)

[A regular column that reveals the wealth of the Web -- Asian News Sites](#)

[From the Vert at X-Games VIII](#)

[HK's Fashion Week lacks glamour and excitement by Woo Yee Ming](#)

[Q&A, He said, She said, but Mama said](#)

[Oh, Canada--A New Immigrants Perspective by Rana Rizvi](#)

---

Kat Avila (buscandocalifornia@yahoo.com) regularly writes on issues affecting the Asian American and U.S. Latino communities. She maintains a web site on Chicano and Asian American theatre at <http://www.geocities.com/buscandocalifornia/>.

**We would like to hear from you!** If you have any comments or questions, please send an e-mail to: [writeus@jademagazine.com](mailto:writeus@jademagazine.com) or click [here](#) [Write Us!](#)

Reproduction of material from any jademagazine.com pages without written permission from the author is strictly prohibited. (c)2002 Copyright Kat Avila. All rights reserved. [DISCLAIMER](#)