

2012 EXTRAORDINARY APAS SPECIAL ISSUE



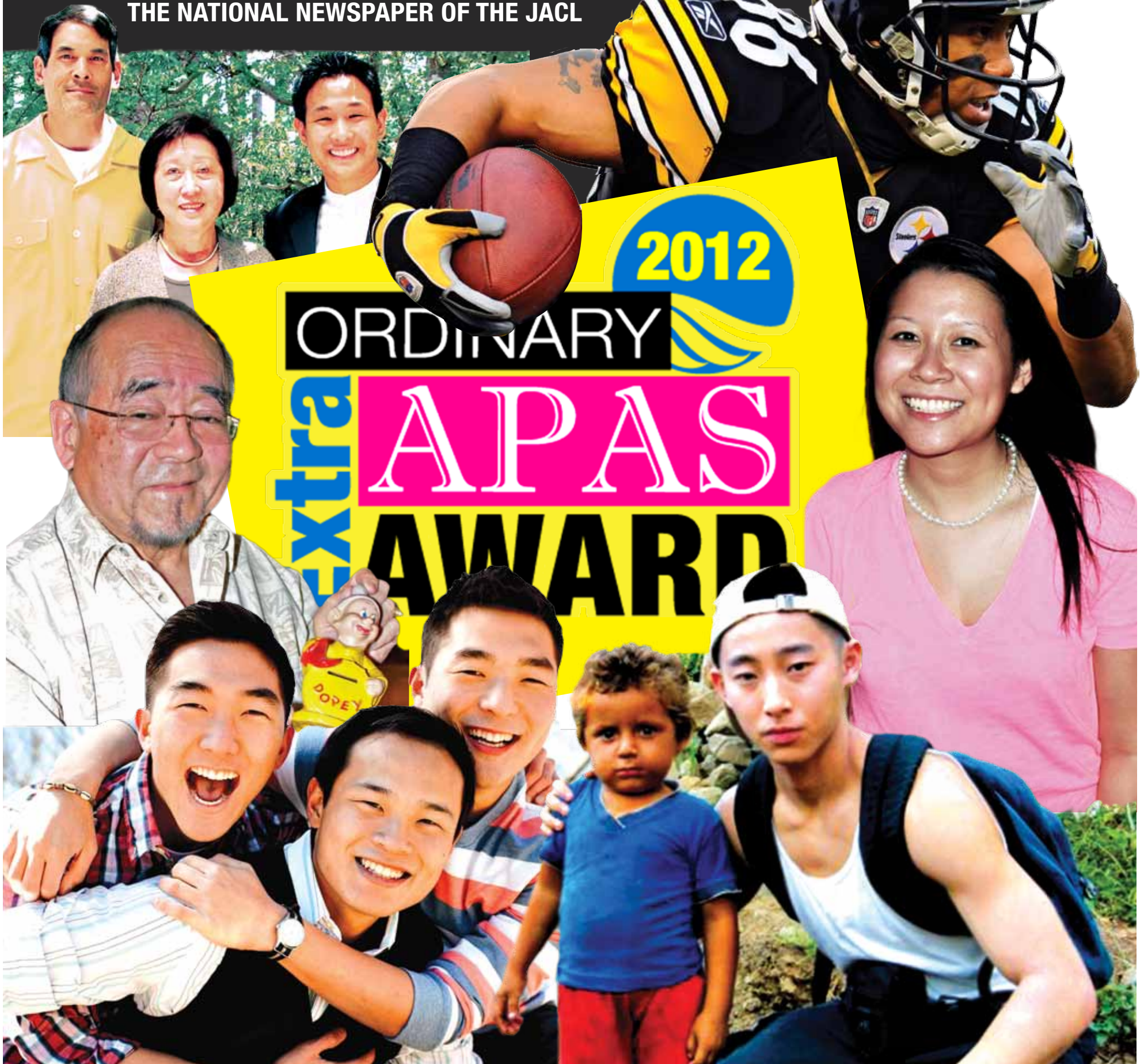
PACIFIC CITIZEN

- The Bellevue JACL
- National Convention
- is approaching.
- Register now before it's
- too late.

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THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE JACL



Congratulations to
CAROLE FUJITA, JEFFREY CHIN, and
CHRIS TASHIMA
 for your extraordinary work with the Lil Tokyo Reporter film!
We are so proud of you!!




Willie,
 You have proven
 that dreams do
 come true.

Congratulations!
 Shig Yabu



PHOTO: MARIO REYES/RAFU SHIMPO

(L-r) Chris Tashima, Fumiko Carole Fujita and Jeffrey Gee Chin aim to complete the film this summer.

Congratulations,
Gary!



We always
knew you were
extraordinary!

- From the *Pacific Southwest District*

CHUCK JONES™
Center for
Creativity

Congratulates
Willie Ito
 on being named
 Pacific Citizen's
 Extraordinary
 Asian Pacific American
 for the Arts

www.ChuckJonesCenter.org

©Warner Bros. Image courtesy Chuck Jones Center for Creativity

‘Lil Tokyo Reporter’ Crew

The film's crew includes: director Jeffrey Gee Chin, actor Chris Tashima and executive producer Fumiko Carole Fujita.

To tell the extraordinary story of Sei Fujii's life — a gambler and a heroic newspaperman who wanted to expose the truth about his neighborhood — director Jeffrey Gee Chin and his film crew transformed Little Tokyo into a 1930s bachelor's society filled with scandalous characters.

"It is a true history," said Chin, 25, about his forthcoming narrative short film, "and had it not been for Fujii's determination to protect the livelihood of his people, willing to risk his own life, much would have been lost."

The goal is to complete post-production on the short film starring Academy Award-winner Chris Tashima as Fujii by the summer. Fundraising for the film is ongoing, and so are the trials and tribulations customary of an independent film production.

But the filmmakers persevered.

While researching Fujii's life, Fumiko Carole Fujita, a Sansei South Bay JACL member, often wondered what the trailblazing Issei was like.

"My thoughts included wishing to have been able to meet him to have a conversation," she said. "So bringing Sei Fujii to life in the film through Chris Tashima's portrayal of him was an awesome experience."

Can you talk about the behind-the-scenes drama involving a disgruntled production member?

Chin: There was an early supporter of our production who was not entirely enamored with the story and wanted us to minimize the truths of the gambling and romance that existed during the 1930s. This individual felt it would not portray the community in a positive light. These opinions were personally acknowledged

and addressed. However through lack of communication, feelings were hurt and it took months for the entire situation to calm. The individual's concerns did cause our team to take time to re-evaluate and assess our film's effect on the community. However, we were able to garner greater support, therefore indirectly in a creative sense, we are thankful. We acknowledge and appreciate the constructive criticism provided by members of the community and encourage those within the community to continue supporting the culture, heritage and youth in arts.

Sei Fujii was an American patriot.

Fujita: He was a self-sacrificing hero, a forerunner of civil rights advocates and according to Keizo Norimoto, former president of the *Hokubei Mainichi*, a samurai, potentially the last of the breed of outspoken and proactive role models for the Japanese American community. Although as an Issei, Sei Fujii was 'ineligible for citizenship' he worked to change the law and became a U.S. citizen, 51 days before he died in 1954.

To donate to the production of the film visit, <http://ltreporter.com>

What Sei Fujii would say about the film?

Tashima: First, I think he would chuckle, being flattered that we're making a movie about him. I think he was a modest man, like the Issei were, putting others before himself. But, because of that, I feel he would see the value of his own story, and what he did for our community. I think he would say, "Thank You," for keeping his legacy alive and for letting others know, today, all that he accomplished on behalf of his fellow Issei.

Finish this sentence, "If I had \$1 million, I would..."

Tashima: Consider many of the stories of how Asian Americans have participated in the building of our country and use the money to share our experience through film or perhaps theatre. And maybe I'd buy a Harley. ■