

Liberations Queens keep the tradition of honor alive

It was inspiring to see the Liberation Queen candidates on Guam featured in last Sunday's paper. What many on Guam may not know is that we also select a Liberation Queen in San Diego, California.

Since 1953, the Sons and Daughters of Guam Club in has crowned a Liberation Queen of their own. Traditionally, the SDGC Liberation celebration is a formal affair highlighting World War II veterans and the coronation of the winning candidate. As I have watched the Liberation court over this past year, I have seen that the pageant tradition is much more than a contest. It is a bonding experience for our community.

Liberation candidates begin their campaign months in advance. Their outreach and fundraising efforts bring together friends and relations from far and wide. The girls and their families work closely with the Guam Club, becoming an important part of the organization in the course of their campaigns. You will regularly see Queen candidates gracing public events, offering their musical talents, even serving lunch at the regular senior (manamko') luncheons. Lasting relationships are created, including close camaraderie among the competing candidates.

Anissa Acfalle is this year's Liberation Queen Chairperson who will guide the girls vying for the 2014 title. Anissa herself ran for Liberation Queen in 1985.

"I was a princess and loved every minute of my campaign. During my campaign Auntie Lupe Perez was queen chair and, to be honest, it's because of her and the experience I had as a candidate that made me passionate about Liberation."

Anissa's two sister's in law were each royal princesses at one time, and in 2007 her daughter, Alissa Acfalle was crowned Liberation Queen. Between her daughter and her fellow candidate, Christina Gerber, a record \$97,000 was raised for the club that year. This entitled the pair to travel to Guam for the island's Liberation Day festivities. Their Chairperson and mentor was Julie Holowitz.

Says their mentor, Anissa Acfalle, "We are proud of our lineage and our commitment to our community but most of all, being able to have represented our people during this most important time, which was when our island was liberated."

For this historic 70th Liberation celebration, I wanted to introduce the two San Diego Queen candidates, Ferlyn Quitagua and Mauryn Mantanane.



Ferlisa Quitagua
Photo by Bryson Kim



Mauryan Mantanane. Photo by
Bryson Kim

My name is Ferlisa Ruphia Matagolai Quitugua. With the help and support from my family and friends, I am a Liberation Queen candidate for The Sons and Daughters of Guam Club Inc.

I am currently a Junior attending Diego Hills Charter School. I am 16 years of age and the youngest of eight. Growing up, I was adopted by my grandmother Luisa M. Quitugua.

My maternal parents are Harvey and Efcy Matagolai. I was born and raised on the island of Saipan and hail from the village of Koblerville. I presently reside in San Diego, California. After living in San Diego for three years I have grown attached to its Chamorro Community. Goals: My future goals involves continuing and finishing high school and going straight to a community college to further my education, to become more involved in spreading knowledge of the Chamorro language, culture and customs. I want to help the SDGC in bringing our Chamorro community together, so that together we may preserve, embrace and continue our heritage out here in the mainland as if we were all back home. Guam's Liberation to me is:

The day the US military helped free Guamanians they didn't just gain their freedom, but they gained their pride as well. Guam's Liberation is the biggest celebration held on Guam and some parts of the mainland. Chamorros come together and have big parades and festivals in honor of the freedom

Guamanians gained on that day. They recognize and celebrate all those who fought and won freedom for Guamanians to live and die being a true Guamanian/Chamorro and not a Japanese Worker or prisoner. **Mauryn Jessi Matanane** is 17 years old, and originally from the village of Tamuning. Her parents are: Martin Matanane and Giana Balajadia Matanane. Her paternal grandparents are Francisco Anderson Matanane (Familian Che') and Maria San Nicolas Matanane (Familian Hilario); Maternal Grandparents: Santiago "Sam" Baza Alcazar (deceased) and Lola Guzman Alcazar. Mauryn has two brothers (Martin Jr and Blake Jon) and four sisters (Chloe, Sharae, Meeah and Megan). She is sponsored by TeamMauryn and ISA07 / IRIEspect.

Mauryn was born on Guam in May 1997 and relocated to San Diego at the age of 2 1/2 years old. She is a Junior at Monte Vista High School in Spring Valley, CA (San Diego). Mauryn loves playing softball and plays for Monte Vista High School. Mauryn also enjoys Polynesian dancing.

Goal: To study early child development and own my own Day-Care/ Preschool Program.

What does Liberation mean to me? Growing up in the mainland, I was not able to experience the Liberation festivities.

However, after reading and listening to the stories, Liberation means FREEDOM to our grandparents, uncles, aunts and our Island. I also acknowledge that the Chamorros endured pain and suffering during this time. With that we celebrate the soldiers that fought and the FREEDOM that was given back to our Island.

SEE THE ARTICLE AS IT APPEARED IN THE PDN ON JUNE 7, 2014, BELOW. You can click to enlarge.

