

## Kah-Nee-Ta's Supervisor Of The Month: Chuck Reilly



(As told by Chief Jobe Charley, a Wasco on the Yakima Reservation, and printed in Indian Legends of the Pacific Northwest, by Ella E. Clark.)

Long ago, our people went up to the sky every feasting time. There they sang and danced and gave thanks to the Great Spirit for the roots and berries on the earth.

One time Speelyi and Toop-toop, his brother, went up to the sky with the people. All sang and danced and prayed for several days. Speelyi became so tired that he dropped down and fell asleep. Finding him and recognizing him, the people threw him down to the earth, where he belonged.

## The Origin of the Root Festival (One Man's View)

His brother Toop-toop kept on with the thanksgiving ceremony. After a while he thought of Speelyi down on the earth and went to him with some bitterroot, camas, huckleberries, and salmon. Speelyi had a big feast.

When he had eaten all he could eat, Speelyi raised his hand to the east and made a new law. "My people, no more will you go up to the sky to feast and to give thanks. Many new people are coming to our land, and so we cannot do all that we are used to doing. We must share with our new friends. We must learn to bear our hardships and our sorrows

as best we can.

"I am going to put bitterroot and camas and other roots in different parts of the country. You will have feasts here every year. When you begin to dig the roots in the spring, you will sing and dance and give thanks to the Great Spirit. You need not travel up to the sky for that. And as you dig the roots, you will sing songs of thanksgiving. Your children will learn the songs from you.

"I am Speelyi. I have spoken."

And so that is why my people had a root festival every spring, when they began to dig the roots we used for food.

## A Well-Seasoned Chef

A retired military cook with a flair for continental cuisine and table-side cooking? Kah-Nee-Ta's Assistant (Sous) Chef Charles Reilly has just that spicy background. As Acting Chef for two months, Reilly, who likes to be called "Chuck", has brought seventeen years of such varied experience to Kah-Nee-Ta's kitchens and earned himself the Supervisor of the Month award for April.

"He stepped right in and took over, working extra hours," said Personnel Director Carol Jenkin. Fifteen to sixteen hour days have been the rule for Reilly. There have been 25 employees to supervise, menus to plan, food preparation to oversee, and inventory to control.

Chuck, who started at Kah-Nee-Ta last October as the Banquet and Buffet Chef, was obviously pleased to receive the award. "They showed me there were observing what I was doing and that I was appreciated," he commented. He suspected that it was his "long, hard hours" and the "quality of the food, its appearance and taste" while he was Acting Chef that brought him the award.

But he also pointed to the fact that "I get along with people super well. It takes a lot to get me ticked off."

Now that a permanent chef has been hired, Reilly is back in his position as Sous Chef, but those dining at Kah-Nee-Ta will continue to see...or taste...his influence on the menu. Chuck and the chef will be creating a new selection for the Lodge and River Room menus and the Sous Chef hopes

to introduce some of the Japanese cooking he learned in Tokyo. The Juniper Room has recently featured souffle, a dish Reilly picked up while at the Grenoble Institute of Cooking in France.

He says that even though many of the guests go for "red meat and potatoes" the repeat customers like to see change. Cooks also need variety or they get in ruts, he noted.

Reilly began to cook for a living during the last four of his 22 years in the military. After retirement, Chuck sought training in France and Japan and launched his civilian career as a chef. Resorts are familiar to him and he was even employed at another Indian resort on a reservation in California.

Chuck came to Kah-Nee-Ta after four years as chef at the Sheraton Motor Inn in Colorado Springs. "I wanted to get out of the city," he said.

He enjoys living at the Kah-Nee-Ta hamlet because "it's quiet." When he's not working, which isn't often, he enjoys the races as a change of pace.

But Reilly has a dream that goes beyond the lifestyle he has created at Kah-Nee-Ta. In a couple of years he would like to leave steady work behind, get a motor home and "follow the seasons." Chuck envisions summers in Yellowstone and winters in California. Of course a man with so many years of work under his belt won't be able to "bum it" totally. "I'll work 6-7 months a year," he predicted.

And when he travels, he's certain to be going first class—with soukiyaki and souffles heading his menu.

## Kah-Nee-Ta's Employee of the Month: Mike Gomez

## The New "Kid" at the Front Desk

With the sophistication of a much older person, 18 year old Mike Gomez greets Kah-Nee-Ta's guests and tries to make them as comfortable as possible. Even amid the demands of a buzzing switchboard, people needing refunds, bills to be figured and paid, and baggage to be carried, Mike appears unruffled as he chats with the guests each night.

That is why Mike Gomez was selected as Kah-Nee-Ta's Employee of the Month. "He's the first thing people see when they come in," said Personnel Director Carol Jenkin. "He's very friendly and cooperative and a real asset to Kah-Nee-Ta."

Having started as a CETA trainee on the front desk last September, Mike soon became a one-man operation. Now Mike is on the Kah-Nee-Ta payroll and he has recently become responsible for supervising two new trainees. He remarks on the youthfulness of the front desk trio—"We're all under 20." Because of his age he was surprised to receive the award.

"It's hard to believe," he said, referring to others who were older and had been at Kah-Nee-Ta longer. "I really got a kick out of it."

However, the front desk clerk, whom people seem to refer to as the "cute kid", recognizes those qualities that impressed his superiors. Mike says he enjoys meeting and talking with different kinds of people. He finds enough of a variety among the employees and guests to keep him interested.

Mike doesn't let the difficult folks disturb him, but instead laughs about the occasional complainers and troublemakers. He has come to believe, with Manager Dan Myles' encouragement, that "the guest is the boss," thereby avoiding any clashes.

A Chemawa Indian School graduate, Mike has continually found himself in people-oriented roles. He was president of the Student Council in his senior year and traveled nationwide and into Canada with the Chemawa Alcoholism Education Program.

Since he had an "urge to work" Mike thought he'd try Kah-Nee-Ta for awhile. He has been sufficiently enthused with his work that he says about his future, "I want to do something like I'm doing now." He is considering public relations or counseling and plans to study at Ft. Lewis College in Durango, Colorado this fall.

Heading south would be like moving closer to home for Mike, who is a Hopi from Arizona. He moved up to Oregon eight years ago with his family and lives now in Warm Springs with his mother and step-dad, Evelyn and Hamilton Greeley.

By the time he goes away to school, Mike will have taught the trainees his juggling act behind the front desk. They will find the ruts in the carpet where Mike rushes from station to station while he registers guests, works the switchboard, posts bills, refunds lost quarters, receives complaints and coordinates bellhops.

And with luck they will carry on the charm that has been Mike's trademark.



MIKE GOMEZ