



THE BACKPACKER

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Colegio de
Chihuahua

Christmas' True Essence

by: Jesus Lopez

Christmas time is one of the most anticipated times of the year, not only for the religious reasons and for the days off work and school, but because it is a time of love and union and support no matter who you are or where you live. It's a needed excuse to express your care for everybody that you love, and even to those you do not know yet need it the most. It may sound cliché to say it, but it truly is a time for giving. Not just presents and gifts wrapped in fancy paper, but to hand out your heart and share what you've got. During family reunions you must express yourself and be grateful, during parties with friends you should go to those you care for and tell them all those reasons why you love them. You must also learn how to forgive and let go of all the hatred and the regrets from the past. Give out little things of meaning, even a tiny chocolate is able to do so much! It's the representation of your heart, and when you hand it out, you're telling everything you have ever either omitted or forgotten to say, even 'that' for which you can't find words to express.

"He who has not Christmas in his heart will never find it under a tree."

-Roy L. Smith



Make sure that this Christmas you spent your time with those who you care most for and to forgive those who have caused you trouble in the past. Maybe, instead of buying things for yourself, you could spend the money giving to some people who might need it way more than you do.

Go out and see the world, and by this I'm referring to the places in the city you live; open your eyes to things you hadn't seen before. Embrace the good and try to improve the bad, introspectively as well as in your surroundings, like your community, your family, and your school. It's a cold time, it's dark most of the day because of the weather, but that doesn't mean we have to cloud up our minds and hearts. Let's warm up the lives of those around us and be joyous.

Be good this Christmas and express what you feel. Make compromises to yourself and make them happen. Smile, give out many hugs, and share your heart, for that's what Christmas is really all about.

Thank you guys all for reading The Backpacker and enjoy the holidays!!

THE "I DESERVE" GENERATION

by: Lorena Garrido

Author's note: Dear reader, before you begin to read this article I suggest you take into account that this is only my personal opinion.

They call us the "I deserve" generation. We seem to be caught in this world where everything is given to us, and we believe that we deserve it. We think we own the world just because we exist. We grew up without the need to obtain satisfaction with our own effort. We grew up not knowing what effort and sacrifice really mean.

Parents give their children everything, focusing on preventing them to live the shortcomings and difficulties they had suffered themselves when they were kids. Nothing is required from them anymore; we are just given, given, given, but we are not taught how to give, give, give.

Adults state that "We are no longer seeing children who are grateful, enthusiastic,

disciplined. We are seeing the opposite. And that is what we call the "I deserve" generation. Children no longer ask. They demand."

Generations haven't always been like that. There used to be a time in which kids and teenagers worked hard, respected others, they were enthusiastic about life. Then, why did this change? Why are the upcoming generations turning into people who think they deserve everything? It could be that, now, parents have the ability to give us things their parents never gave them. Or maybe, media, gadgets and other new things have influenced us and made us behave this certain way.



Whatever the reason, we must understand that if we want something we must work hard to get it. You can't expect your parents to give you everything! Sooner or later there will come a time in which they won't be able to. We can't think we deserve everything that has been given to us, we must be grateful for what we have. Take some time to deliberate about this. You may either think my opinion is mistaken or that you are part of this "I deserve" generation. If you are, why don't you really think through what you are doing and what you really deserve?

Work hard, respect, and be grateful.



FACTS OF THE WEEK

1. A new £2000 procedure TATTOOS a buzz cut into bald men!
2. When you snap your fingers, the noise doesn't come from your fingers!
3. An Australian lake glowed bright blue in the summers of 2008 and 2009
4. Gas is only 8 cents per gallon in Venezuela!
5. Eating your boogers is good for you!
6. A group of climbers found a piano on Britain's highest mountain!
7. The Dutch had one tank in WWII. It got stuck in the mud on its way to the border!
8. The average stagehand at Carnegie Hall makes more than the President of the United States!
9. A man woke up with a bad headache. He later found out it was because his wife shot him in the head!
10. The world's shortest commercial flight lasts 2 minutes!

Take Flight!

by: Jesus Lopez

During these last weeks I have been struggling with many personal issues, and I have been debating about them over and over, mostly introspectively, sitting in my own little niche, but also, with the help of friends and family. I wanted to share some of these little mementos with you, the readers, something a bit more personal than the usual articles here at The Backpacker. I hope you can all take it as a moment for reflection and it helps out in the many different aspects of your lives.



I have always had a fixation for wings; birds, planes, certain superheroes, angels, things like that. It's something that I've obsessed over since a very young age and still carry with me until today. And this symbol of wings (with all the things that are happening in my life, as I've had the chance to analyze them for a while) have somehow ended up resting on a branch, taking the shape of my many circumstances. These ideas don't exactly have a form or an anatomy in my mind, it's not like I have turned the thoughts into creatures; I have just simply imagined them as wings, my 'problems', that is. Here is what I have concluded about the reasons why I have unconsciously chosen the wings to represent my ideas:

It is very common for humans to not let ourselves move forward in whatever aspect of life, and it's not because others hinder the way or because there are nonexistent resources at our reach, but because we simply limit ourselves. If we truly desire to accomplish a goal, we must motivate ourselves if necessary and find the necessary 'space' so we can extend our wings and take flight. I've come to see every vicissitude in my life as a long dark precipice, and the only way to cross the opening in the ground is to fly.

Also, everybody's wings are different, meaning we have distinct abilities and goals in life. One problem isn't the same for others, and sometimes, the wall that's planted in front of us seems way taller than it really is. Then, how come we don't use these gifts handed to us free of charge to try and climb over the fortress of our cage? Sometimes, it's because of our fear of failure, other times it's because we simply don't know how to begin and take the first step. However, we shouldn't be afraid of failure; with these trips and falls and bruises one learns and gets even better, if faced with a positive attitude. And, if we don't know how to take our first step and feel a bit lost wondering around, then we have to just embrace our confidence, face our problem head on with the right spirit and just spread our wings. Practice is the most efficient way to perfection an ability; so, if we have those wings, we should use them and not let them loiter folded on our backs, we must give that jump of faith in whatever aspect of life that we're dealing with and learn how to fly.

La Ventura Taking You Beyond the Limit

By: Lorena Garrido

November 8th and 9th were bound to be the best weekend ever. We were going to La Ventura in Santa Eulalia, Chihuahua. The only information we had: EXTREME.

We were a group of about 45 students and 5 teachers, all ready for the camping trip. Leaving on Friday the 8th, everyone was so excited. From the moment we stepped on the bus, we knew we were going to have the best time ever. Although the trip only took about 30 minutes, it seemed a long way because our



excitement was ready to blast out.

Getting there was not easy. Santa Eulalia is a small place, with narrow roads; our bus was big for the place. That morning, the fog took over Santa Eulalia and made it hard on the bus driver. We were driving up some hills with fog covering our sight. Next to us, a long fall. Finally and thankfully we got there safe.

The guides received us with great excitement as we unloaded the bus without belongings.

First thing: taking our personal belongings to our cabins. I can tell you one thing: Us girls suffered it! Our cabin was located on the top of a high hill and to get there we had to take many many stairs. Imagine going up many steep set of stairs with sleeping bags and very heavy bags! (remember us girls don't travel light!).

The activities that were waiting for us were incredible. We got to know each other better by introducing ourselves to the group. We were then divided into teams and explained the different activities that we were about to do. I don't want to give



out much information on the activities because if you go there, it is better if you live the experience without knowing what will happen next. All I can tell you is that the activities proved you physically and mentally.

The food was amazing! We were served delicious plates made by a catering group that arrived every time we had to eat and prepared the meals so they were warm and tasty for us. We even had desserts! Candy, cookies, fruit, lollipops etc.

The extreme side involved us doing a series of activities like zip lining across hills, walking across dangling bridges, and rappelling in caverns. I can only tell you that this is the most extreme part of the trip. I loved these activities, and if you are an adrenaline junkie, you would have fallen in love with this place.

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Saying goodbye was not easy. Everyone wanted to stay longer. But the time came and goodbyes were handed out between the guides, the beautiful place and us. We made friends and met each other in ways we couldn't have imagined. Even the teachers let out their real them and opened up their lives to us.

I can definitely tell you that this was an amazing experience to anyone who went to the trip. It is a journey that takes you out of your comfort zone and lets you explore other parts of yourself you never even knew. I really recommend going to this place, it is only 30 minutes away and open to groups of people who are ready to live the adventure of their lives.

Christmas Delight

The Backpackers

In the middle of the desert there falls no snow,
The white is resembled by clouds and fog.
But there is no need for snowmen in winter,
Not when at home you've got warmth and titters.

Flowers wither outside,
But the fireplace shines bright.
Your family is sitting together,
Conversing around the table.

Presents are handed from friend to friend,
And hugs are gifted to hinder the weather.
Christmas is near, Christmas,
that beautiful time of the year.

Dogs bark at the bells hanging from reindeers,
The people, the ribbons, the love.

The church bells echo around
in the streets, Christmas is glee.
Children screaming out loud,
"Santa's coming, Santa's near!"

We're here, we're together.
Our hearts, side by side, they are one.
Christmas time, the anticipation.
Hand in hand, our celebration.

GET TO KNOW... WHAT'S LEFT OF US!!!

If you were to perform in a circus, what would you do?

LORENA: Trapeze Artist.

JESUS: Female Ringmaster.

Teacher Margarita: Acrobat, I would love to fly.

Which is your favorite season of the year and why?

LORENA: Winter with lots of snow!

JESUS: Autumn, because it's not too cold and not too hot,
but just perfect weather for tea and zombie killing.

Teacher Margarita: Summer, because that's when my
birthday comes.

What is your favorite thing to do on Saturday night?

LORENA: Watch T.V. with the family.

JESUS: Reading or writing and hiding in my cocoon of
horror... also eating.

Teacher Margarita: Read.

**What is your favorite movie to watch over and over
again?**

LORENA: "La casa de al lado", The Call, and "Marcelino
Pan y Vino".

JESUS: Anastasia, Rocky Horror Picture Show, or The Day
After Tomorrow, but only if it's cold enough.

Teacher Margarita: Pride and Prejudice.

Belzec

A fictional personification of a Holocaust oven.

By: Jesus Lopez

I started out as a ceramic oven, where the artisans place their sculptures to dry out and toughen. I actually enjoyed those years. Every day I would get to smell the odor of their art and see it take form with time. My owner took care of me and cleaned me right after the sculpture had dried. He never thanked me, though, but I know that he was grateful for the way I assisted with his job.

But time passes and humans, unlike Ovens and Guns and Knives and Ideas, grow old. They turn clumsy, they forget about everything and everyone, including their most cared for possessions. Like me. He was taken away by some doctor, my dear friend, and I was forgotten on the work shop for days. Ten lonely months of anguish had passed before they finally found me.



Her name was Katrina. I thought that she was my savior, but as she placed me up into her truck I began to feel the aura that she held upon her glare. Dark and morbid. It was a ten hour trip, and then we arrived.

There were red flags everywhere with eerie black crosses in the middle, there were also many soldiers holding on to weapons. They marched in groups, their right hand always in the air aiming towards the sky, screaming.

A soldier paid Katrina and then they carried me into a room underground. For days they worked on me, adding more and more metal and gas to my structure. With their many tools they banged on me, and with fire they melted some of my parts away, adding some others, making me greater and stronger. I grew until I occupied an entire room. I heard explosions above. I heard desperate cries for help. And gunshots, especially gunshots. I waited and waited wondering about why those men had made me stronger, why they had made my fire even more radiant.

Then, I heard footsteps. Weak and tired steps getting closer and closer. Humans, many of them. Mostly old and sick bodies, by their smell you could tell they were already rotting. They were dressed on drags, trying to help each other up from the muddy ground. They all reminded me of my past owner, the sweet artisan. Oh, how much I miss him now! I even tried looking for him in the crowd, but, luckily, he wasn't around.

I didn't have time to look farther into the mob though, for hell broke loose. The door they had walked in from closed shut, and then, they turned me on.

I swear I didn't want to hurt them, I fought with all my might to stop the flaming fire from emerging from my deeps, but it was useless. The soldiers, they had done something to me. Now they controlled me.

I burned them, I burned them all. I had to see them all crumble to the ground slowly, all of them in flames. Their lives evaporating away in a thick cloud of ashes. The screams, that was the worst part. They echoed around the room, echoes that only caused more chaos. Involuntary cries that pitched even tougher than my fire's fume. Their cries lingered through even after their bodies were gone. And I couldn't do anything about it.

It all came to a halt minutes later, and all that was left were ashes covering dust, and the dim echo of human shrieks.

And it didn't end that night, it has continued for months. And I tried, I tried so hard to stop, but it was impossible. They kept on walking into the murky room and I... I was forced to keep on burning.

GREEN TIPS FOR CHRISTMAS!

Unplug the Christmas tree at night while everyone is asleep.

It is quite dangerous to let it plugged in for hours in a row, especially when nobody is watching for possible accidents. It's okay to leave the lights from outside turned on, just make sure that everything is working fine in case it rains or snows.

If it is possible, reuse wrapping paper.

Wrapping paper is extremely expensive and some of them even have really good designs. You could maybe reuse it for later events. For instance, if you save them up, you could use it to wrap presents for New Year's. You will definitely save money and resources.

Do NOT throw away food.

One of the most common traditions for Christmas is having a very large dinner with family and friends, many dishes are made; most of the time more food is prepared than consumed. If there are left overs, you can save them in containers in the fridge or even outside (if it's cold enough) and have delicious food for the rest of Christmas break!

Christmas Fun

By: Lorena Garrido

Christmas is coming! My favorite part? Family reunions. For some people, the family reunions at Christmas are the best thing about that time of the year. For others, they are a tedious time where all you hear are forks and knives all over the dinner plates. Does it sound weird? Trust me, I know some people who tend to spend their Christmas dinner like that. But why not break the ice with the family and invite them all to play really fun games? Below, you will find a list of games that will have you laughing your stockings off with everyone, no matter how old or young you are.

1. Oven mitts present mania- What an exciting game! Wrap a small gift in a small box. Then wrap that gift in a larger box, and repeat as many times as you can. Everyone as a family must decide on a number from one to six. Start rolling the dice, and whoever rolls that number first will have the opportunity to start opening the present. The next person to roll the decided number will now have the opportunity to unwrap the present. Whoever opens the real gift gets to keep it. But there is a catch to the game! The person unwrapping the gift must wear oven mitts!



2. Hungry Reindeer - Place M&M's or Skittles on a table or on a flat tray. The player puts a sport sock on one hand and tries to grab as many candies as possible and transfer them to a bowl. Time it for 30 seconds and count the number of candies in their bowl. The one with the most, wins! (if you would like to eat the candy afterwards, try to use a new sock for this activity)

3. Fill the Christmas stocking - Divide into teams and have the participants race to fill their team's hanging stocking with a spoonful of wrapped candy holding the spoon with their mouth.





4. Ornament guess - Have guests guess the total number of ornaments on the tree as they come into the party. The closest guess wins. The best prize that could be given? Extra dessert!

5. Christmas gift fact exchange - Get to know each other even more! Number each gift

as it arrives. Give the person who brought the gift a corresponding number. Have them write a little known fact about themselves and throw it into a bowl. When gift exchange starts, the host draws a fact and reads it without mentioning the package number. The person who guesses who it is first is given the package with the corresponding number. Once someone guesses correctly, they are out of the game. The game ends when there is one gift left for the host.

6. Themed gift exchange- Pick a theme for gifts to be exchanged. Everyone brings a gift with that theme in mind. (example: gifts that begin with M, gifts that are red, etc). Then play the traditional take a number, steal the present game.

Have fun this Christmas with your friends and families, and remember to always be joyful!

The Quotidian Deeds of the Brave

By: Jesus Lopez

What exactly means to be brave? Most of us have grown up with the idea that being “brave” is having an armor and fighting a fire-breathing dragon or protecting our country by facing against the enemies from other places. But bravery doesn’t just stop at having the courage to grab a gun or a sword and battle against your opponents, bravery does not refer to being hostile and being able to stand up for yourself. Bravery is something that goes way deeper into the meaning of someone’s values and moral, bravery is having courage and audacity and faith.

An act of bravery can be as simple as standing up for somebody else when you see fit. How many times have you been in a situation where you are surrounded by your friends in a public place and somebody with a disability walks into the building and your friends either stare or make disrespectful comments? At that moment, you either join in to the diatribe or stay quiet, because you know that what they are doing is very insolent and cruel. If you were brave you would tell your friends exactly what you’re thinking, that they should stay quiet and be respectful to those different from them. That would be an act of bravery that benefits somebody you don’t even know and helps open up the eyes for those you care about but need to be more respectful.

Many times we are stuck in situations like this, where, out of fear of judgment, we decide to stay quiet or stay put, not being able to help out those who need our help.



JOKES FOR THIS SPECIAL ISSUE!!

Why is there no gambling In Africa?

There are too many cheetahs....

Did you hear about the fire in the circus?

It was intense.



These situations are very common at our young ages, when courage to protect that which is right and having a good image are two things that most of the time don't come in wrapped in the same package. We must be very careful about this!

When you're young, there will always be a time when your friends or peers dare you to a trial. They will tease you by saying that you would be a coward if you didn't accept the challenge, even if it is inappropriate or risky. If you honestly believe that the challenge they have put you up to is wrong, being brave wouldn't mean accepting the challenge, that would actually mean that you were too afraid and weak to say no. Being brave would mean having the required self-respect and morale to deny the challenge and stick to what you know is right.



Like that example I could single many out in a long list, but I guess my point has been made. Courage can be found in the smallest of acts, as tiny and insignificant as they might seem. These acts of bravery don't have to make a big explosion and shine out colors and lights to actually have importance, for their mere deed is the cause of human heroism. It is acts like this, small necessary moves of courage and novelty that make our world better and the people living in it maintain what humanity needs the most and is sadly slowly losing: genuinely virtuous people holding on to their warm



THE BACKPACKER

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO OUR READERS

Hello guys! First of all, we would like to thank you all for dropping by every once in a while to check for more incoming issues. Knowing that at least some of you are interested in this project really motivates us to keep on writing articles and publishing them for you all to read.

Our team started with the Backpacker more than a year ago and it is still here! However, there have been some recent changes in the past few weeks. Not only has our friend Sergio been exiled from this country, but even more recently, three important members of our group have decided that they would leave The Backpacker. The four of them are greatly missed. But we are still here (even if there's only two of us left standing) and we will stay as long as we... graduate.

We are asking for whoever is interested in joining the project to contact us or teacher, the English coordinator here at the High School: Teacher Margarita, to see if you can be part of our wonderful group of The Backpacker.

We would love to see interested and talented people take this project further even after the two of us graduate.

Thank you all so much, and remember to keep on sending your writing and art, we will gladly include it into the next issue!