

The PACKARD PRESS

A collection of thoughts and stories to educate, entertain, and inspire.

A GLORIOUS PLACE FOR THE END OF THE WORLD

I Spent Y2K in the Jungle — And Lived to Tell the Tale!

Years ago, I spent six months living in the jungle town of Iquitos, Peru. I was on a two-year mission trip for my church, and I was in Iquitos from the end of 1999 through 2000 — so I spent the Y2K scare almost entirely off the grid.

Instead of worrying over whether our computer would melt down in the morning, my mission companion and I huddled at the door of our thatched-roof duplex, watching locals dance around bonfires to welcome the New Year. I'll tell you about that ritual, but first, I want to share a little about Iquitos. It was a special place, and I have great memories from my time there.

Iquitos is one of the largest cities in Peru, yet no road will take you there. You can only reach the town by riding a boat down the Amazon or by flying on an airplane over the jungle. Iquitos has an urban downtown, but I stayed in the jungle version of the suburbs — an area where the dirt roads were usually muddy, and the thatched-roof houses emerged from the lush green foliage.

The people of Iquitos hold tightly to their old traditions. One of those centers on New Year's and is similar to our tradition of making New Year's resolutions. However, instead of writing out goals for the coming year, Iquiteños incorporate the bad habits and poor behaviors they want to stop doing in the months ahead into something more substantial than a list of resolutions. So, they build a life-size doll and adorn it with tokens representing those habits and behaviors!

“Neighbors stream out of their houses and stack piles of wood on street corners, perching their dolls on top. Then, they use torches at midnight to set the dolls alight!”

A doll can be put together by a single person, a family, or even an entire group of neighbors. It's tradition to paint the doll's face, stuff its body with straw, and decorate it surrounded by your friends and family. If you want to stop drinking, you might attach a beer bottle to the scarecrow's hand, and if you want to cut back on your calories, you might paint a plate of food on its stomach. Your doll can also hold experiences weighing on your heart and mind that you want to let go of, like the name of someone you lost or a token from a relationship that ended.



When the dolls are complete and night falls in the jungle, it's time for the most exciting part of the New Year's ritual. Neighbors stream out of their houses and stack piles of wood on street corners, perching their dolls on top. Then they use torches at midnight to set the dolls alight!

According to legend, as your effigy burns, the flames consume your bad habits, vices, and heartaches. My mission companion and I stumbled out of our duplex in time to see locals gathering around a doll-filled bonfire a few feet from our front door. They celebrated the new year by dancing to the raucous sound of music blaring from portable speakers. We had no idea what was going on — but over the next few days, we pieced the tradition together.

So even though the world didn't end that night, my world changed a little.

I carried that Peruvian New Year's tradition home with me from Iquitos. I don't build a doll or burn an effigy, but I do occasionally practice the spirit of the ritual. One time, my siblings and I gathered on New Year's to write down everything from our “past lives” we wanted to release. Then, we each lit a match and watched as our lists went up in flames. It was cathartic, and I strongly recommend it!

If you feel weighed down by your past this New Year, consider taking a leaf (or a torch!) out of the Peruvians' book. You may be surprised by how much this little ritual lightens your heart.

—Michael Packard

A PACKARD CLIENT TELLS HER STORY

We Helped Brenda Win Compensation!

Months ago, a woman named Brenda called our firm for help. She was in a difficult situation — her ankle was so badly fractured that she couldn't walk. Brenda told us she'd been injured while shopping at a nearby business, and their insurance company wouldn't work with her.

"I notified the owner of the place of business, and he indicated that his insurance company would be contacting me," Brenda recalls. "And I did receive a call from the adjuster. The adjuster was very disrespectful and indicated that [even] if I had actually become injured at the place of business, and [even] if it was a legitimate injury, it didn't necessarily mean they would pay for my medical bills."



Disheartened, Brenda started browsing online for a lawyer. When she saw our five-star reviews on Google, she decided to call us for help. We knew she had a case as soon as we heard her story, and Michael signed on to be her lawyer. He hit it off with Brenda right away!

"He was very respectful. He kept me updated, and he at no point seemed rushed whatsoever. He indicated that if at any time I felt uncomfortable with the way the process was going to just discuss it with him," Brenda says, adding, "He made me feel like I was in control of my own case at every moment."

Together, Michael and Brenda took on the business's insurance company — and they prevailed! The company agreed to pay for Brenda's medical bills so she could recover without financial hardship. We all celebrated together. Today, Brenda says she would recommend our firm to anyone with a case like hers.

"Packard took their time with my case, they actually listened, and [my concerns appeared to be] very important to my attorney. ... They are there to help you. They will listen, and they will keep you informed every step of the way."

It was a pleasure to help Brenda and make sure she got compensated for her injuries. If you or someone you know ends up in a similar situation, please call us. We can advocate for you, too!

—Michael Packard



LOVE AT FIRST SIP

How Pepsi Briefly Created Their Military

Did you know Pepsi had the sixth-largest military for a brief period? One of the biggest soda companies acquired several submarines and other military equipment because one country's leader loved the cool and refreshing taste of the beverage. But how did this happen? Let's start from the beginning.

In 1959, President Richard Nixon and Soviet Leader Nikita Khrushchev attended the American National Exhibit in Moscow, Russia. As the two conversed, they began debating the benefits of capitalism versus communism. This conversation is now known as the infamous Kitchen Debate. Some reports cite that as the conversation was escalating, the head of Pepsi's international division, Donald Kendall, offered Khrushchev a cup of Pepsi. It was love at first sip for Khrushchev, and he encouraged his comrades to taste the delicious beverage.

When Kendall became Pepsi's CEO in 1963, his primary focus was to bring the soda to the Soviet Union. But while Khrushchev loved the drink, he had to create a game plan on how he would purchase the beverage and share it with the rest of Russia. At the time, Russian currency wasn't widely accepted in the Western world, so it didn't have much value to Americans. But in 1972, Khrushchev came up with a plan: In exchange for Pepsi products, Khrushchev gave the corporation vodka to resell.

But after a decade and a half, the Soviet leader had to begin trading something of more value in exchange for the beverage. Pepsi had a surplus of alcohol but no cash or revenue. So, Khrushchev exchanged 17 submarines, a frigate, a cruiser, and a destroyer in 1989 for about \$3 billion worth of Pepsi. With all of the military equipment, Pepsi became the sixth-largest military in the world.

But Pepsi's military didn't last long. They began breaking down the equipment and selling it as scrap metal. Today, Pepsi is all over Russia, but it's not as popular as it was. Coca-Cola made its way to the country during the Moscow Olympic Games in 1980 and took the country by storm.

While Pepsi's military power was short-lived, the history of Pepsi and Russia's relationship is fascinating. What do you think of this story? Do you think your favorite sugary beverage is worth trading military equipment for?

HOW TO LEVEL UP YOUR LIFE IN 2023

3 Tips for Finding a Great Mentor

Mentorship has helped me navigate some of the biggest challenges in my life. When I was in college, for example, I relied on the guidance of my older brothers to help me choose the right classes and balance my course load each semester. With their help, I made it into a great law school and grew as a person along the way.

A mentor can help you think through major decisions in your life and/or career and point you in the right direction. Here are my best tips for finding a mentor in 2023.

- 1. Look for a mentor who is one or two steps ahead of you, not 30.** Our instincts are to go straight to the top for mentorship, but someone just ahead of you — rather than years ahead — may actually be a better mentor. If you want to be a manager at your job, for example, seek advice from current managers, not CEOs! They will remember what it felt like to be in your shoes and won't give you outdated tips.
- 2. Consider joining (or forming!) a mentorship group.** Find a group of people who share ideas freely and openly about the topic you're interested in. If you want to become a better writer, for example, join a local writing group to review each other's work and improve together. Writers C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien were part of a writing mastermind called "The Inklings" — and it certainly worked for them!
- 3. Don't overlook life coaches.** If you have trouble finding a mentor, you can always pay for one! A life coach can guide you



toward your goals and help with your personal development — just Google "life coach San Antonio" to get started.

While mentorship can help you grow in your career or succeed in your hobbies I strongly recommend AGAINST finding a mentor for legal matters. You need to hand your personal injury or Social Security disability case over to a professional rather than looking for someone to help you do it yourself. One of my lawyer friends has a coffee mug that gives some great legal advice: "Don't confuse your Google search with my law degree."

Good luck with your goals in 2023, and remember, our team is here to help if you need us!

—Michael Packard

TAKE A BREAK



- | | | |
|--------|-------------|------------|
| Cocoa | Hibernation | Scarf |
| Fleece | Igloo | Sledding |
| Frost | Layers | Tradition |
| Gloves | Penguin | Wonderland |



Slow Cooker Cheesy Garlic Brussels Sprouts

Inspired by TheKitchn.com

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp unsalted butter
- 2 1/2 lbs Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved
- 4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 4 oz cream cheese, cubed
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 3/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tbsp heavy cream
- 1/8 tsp freshly grated nutmeg

Directions

1. Coat the inside of a 3-5-quart slow cooker with butter. Add Brussels sprouts, garlic, cream cheese, salt, and pepper. Toss to combine.
2. Cover and cook on LOW until the Brussels sprouts are tender, 2-3 hours.
3. Turn the slow cooker off or to the "warm" setting. Stir in the Parmesan cheese, cream, and nutmeg until the cheeses melt and the Brussels sprouts are coated in a creamy sauce. Season with more pepper to taste.

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WHAT'S THAT SMELL? *How to Clean Your Garbage Disposal*

While the garbage disposal is convenient and simplifies kitchen cleaning, it can release foul odors. Sometimes, you'll be able to notice this smell instantly, but usually, it will creep up on you over a few days. But why does your garbage disposal start to stink? And is cleaning it an easy task?



Why do garbage disposals smell?

Over time, your garbage disposal releases odors if bits of food still haven't gone through the grinding process and are stuck in the appliance. Your garbage disposal is great at breaking down the food you put in, but the food particles can sometimes accumulate and cause mildew and mold.

How do you clean your garbage disposal?

It's best to clean your garbage disposal once a week or every two weeks to ensure foul smells don't occur. While this may seem tedious, the process is simple and can take less than 10 minutes to complete. You can use several methods to clean this appliance.

- **Ice** doesn't only get rid of that nasty smell, but it will also sharpen the blades of your garbage disposal. Fill your disposal with ice cubes, and then turn it on. Let the blades shred all the ice until you can't hear it anymore. Hopefully, the odor will be gone. But if not, here are some additional methods.

- **White vinegar and baking soda** used together is another strategy you can try. You first want to turn on your garbage disposal and pour 1 cup of dry baking soda down the drain. Then, flush the baking soda with a cup of white vinegar. This is one of the best methods to remove rank smells from your sink.
- Another strategy you can use is to **cut a lemon, lime, or orange** into small pieces and run it through the garbage disposal. The fruit helps wash away any bad smells and replaces them with a pleasant citrusy scent.

While these remedies will help you remove odors, the best strategy is prevention. Avoid grinding vegetables and starchy foods, as they can easily clog your disposal. You can also grind eggshells and fruits frequently to remove any lingering debris from the blades.

With some preventive measures and household items, your disposal will smell fresh and clean in no time!