

# New Western Cuisine.



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# The Demise of "The American Dream"

## An Evening at Golden Corral & the Blue Collaring of America

Having never before visited a unit of the new American restaurant icon, "Golden Corral" buffet-style "All-You-Can-Eat" restaurants, I was quite curious as to what would be my experience. Unlike most first-time experiences, I had no frame of reference as to what to expect, other than that the cost would be around USD\$10.00 and it was "All-You-Can-Eat". Anticipating I might easily succumb to the temptation of over-loading my plate for my "no limits" dinner, I had a lighter-than-usual breakfast and I skipped lunch...and over-eat I surely did: Thankfully I left without visiting the generous dessert bar. I was not looking forward to my morning appointment with the bathroom scale, because I knew it was going to be disappointing.

But this story is not so much about overeating as it is about the demise of "The American Dream" and the Blue Collaring of America. One evening at Golden Corral or any of the "All-You-Can-Eat" buffet restaurants in America is a bittersweet experience, seeing so many average American families that have had to down-size their dreams, their lifestyles, their daily existences; and when they eat out once weekly or once every-other week or maybe even just once monthly, find more economical alternatives to the white table cloth or mid-upscale casual dining restaurants to which they had become accustomed. It's just one of the many compromises the average American family has been forced to make to survive. Many wander about the various buffet islands, as though in a daze; disoriented, yet determined to eat as much as possible, while they can: For some it is dinner; for others it is their only hot meal of the day. My, but things have changed.

For a growing number of Americans, and I'm not simply talking about the nearly 20% who are currently unemployed, The American Dream is history: And furthermore, it's now beyond reach for most Americans. The fact is it's over and it's not coming back, because The American Dream is now "The Asian Dream". The average American has few alternatives to replace his lost income if unemployed; or if having to settle for reduced income, make-up the difference. As a result, the average American is quickly having to adjust to a very different reality; one that was never anticipated: It just wasn't supposed to be part of The American Dream. But it is the New American Reality and for many American families, it's adjust or lose it all.

Achieving The American Dream has been the global ambition that inspired millions in search of a better life to immigrate to the U.S. over the past three centuries, but the world now fears that

the final curtain has come down on this fabled Dream, replaced with yet another replay of "The Decline of the Roman Empire". As always, the script needs not the slightest of edits, for nothing born of this world is forever: "Forever" is the exclusive domain of the Soul and America has lost both its Soul and its Way. Americans continue to believe they can consume their way out of their nightmare; for they remain attached to their spending and shopping ways. But for now and most likely future generations they will be working for those who own their Treasury Bills.

For the next twenty-five years Mandarin will be the language of choice for those seeking a better way of life. The new immigration is to Asia, where more jobs are being created and more dreams are coming true. The money and the power are now in Asia. American college graduates will increasingly find few jobs in the United States and immigrate to Asia with China their number one destination. "America-The Land of Opportunity" is now "America-the Land of Lost Opportunity". And just as hundreds of years ago, when an astonished Roman civilization watched helplessly as their world fell-apart around them, following the two hundred years of "Pax Romana", when they believed their empire would prevail forever, Americans are in a similar state-of-shock; bewildered by what has befallen their golden Land of Opportunity.

It is, indeed, a bitter pill to swallow for a nation that led the free world to prosperity following the end of the Second World War; for a nation that won the space race to the moon; that launched the now "International" Space Station; won the decades-long Cold War with Russia, was crowned the world's only remaining "Super Power" and became the de facto Policeman of the World. Yet there can be no mistake, it is at long last Asia's turn to shine and The People's Republic of China is the 800 pound gorilla. Time magazine has proclaimed the President of China the most powerful man on the planet, usurping for the first time ever the President of the United States. And it is suggested that by 2035, India may even surpass China as the world's most prosperous economy. Americans, like it or not, will learn the art of serving others, rather than serving themselves; and how it is to be near the bottom of the stack, rather than atop it. It will be awkward, demoralizing and a harsh lesson, but one that must be learned if America is ever, once again, to become a great nation, even if not number one. Sadly, like it or not, the "Paper Tiger" may soon become the "Paper American Eagle", and he who laughs last, laughs best. I am **Red Owl**, over & out.