

The Golden Age of America is Now

Editor's Pick. Written by Stephan Kinsella.

Too many libertarians, especially of the “sky is falling” crowd (the ones who have been predicting major societal collapse for 40 years), are sure we are in End Times. Some previous age was America’s apex, from which we’ve long been in rapid decline. America has gone from being a pretty decent place to a near “police state.” When was this golden period? Not the Founder’s generation (ugh). Not the post-war 1950s or even the post-Civil War 1950s. The ’50s were better in some respects than the 2010s, but not in every respect. Yes, the police state is worse now but war is down. The draft is gone. Marijuana legalization is on the horizon (and marijuana is super-high quality now in states where it is quasi-legal). Gay marriage, unthinkable in the 50s and even 70s, is inevitable. Alcohol was legalized long ago and porn’s legal status seems not in doubt.

Air travel is cheaper and safer, and used more and more by the masses. Middle class people take Disney Cruises, vacations zip-lining in Costa Rica, or vacation in Turkey, Germany, Italy, Britain, Australia. Incomes are higher, houses are bigger, air-conditioning is more ubiquitous. Cell phones are cheap; everyone has one. Computers are powerful, inexpensive and portable, and we are all linked by one of the most amazing developments in all human history: the Internet. 3D printing is on the horizon, food is better and cheaper. Diversity is flourishing, as is tolerance: some people are vegetarians, vegans; no big deal. Meat eaters accommodate them when they invite them for dinner. Christians have Jewish and Hindu and atheist and Muslim friends; their kids all associate with a rainbow of colors of kids from all over the country or the world, with different ethnicities, religions, traditions, holidays—no one minds. A waiter from Alabama might good-naturedly tease his LSU-shirt wearing customers, but everyone laughs it off; they have their mild regional and college and geographical identities and alliances, but they are not serious or real. We don’t have soccer hooligans and stampedes at football games here. The era of private spacecraft is upon us too. Tie-died clothes and “peace” teeshirts, once derided as “hippie,” are now cool—college kids and soccer moms wear them. Some people have nose rings, multiple earrings. Tattoos. Nobody cares. That would have gotten you dirty looks or shunning in the ’50s. Mixed-race couples? Nobody bats an eye.

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