

OPINION

Guest Editorial

Americans should stop trading their real wealth

By KENNETH L. RUSSELL

THE *Los Angeles Times* headline reads: "2005's Trade Gap Tops \$725 Billion" This is a \$725 billion lie. There is no trade gap.

We traded \$725 billion worth of our productive wealth to other countries to balance the account. I assure you we did not get the products from the rest of the world for free. We traded our factories, our farms, our businesses and our skills for products made in other countries. We traded the cotton farm instead of the cotton. The garment factory instead of the garments. The cow instead of the milk and cheese. In other words, we traded all of the things that produce products instead of the products.

Stop the trade-gap lie

We are also trading millions of jobs instead of the products made by our own workers. This is economic suicide! Africa practiced this same idiotic insanity in the 17th and 18th centuries, and look at the plight of Africa today. Congress should immediately stop this lie that there is a trade gap by imposing an export tax of at least 99% on our factories, farms and forests, which are being traded for cheap oil and cheap plastic junk.

We need free trade for the products that America can produce with American labor. We should not be trading the basic wealth of America to China and other nations, especially for items that we can produce at home.

Suicide is supposed to be against the law, and Congress is turning a blind eye to this self-inflicted murder of the United States.

Russell is a professor emeritus of education at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. He was born on a farm near Chilhowee.

It's impossible to put a price on your home

**College Farmer**

By MARGY FISCHER

I HAVE never owned a piece of land. In fact, the apartment I rent only has a 3- by 15-foot strip of mulch between my patio and the parking lot. And to be even more candid, until this past year when I bought a bed and inherited a couch from an aunt's basement, I could fit all my belongings in my sedan.

A lot of college students simply do not own a great many possessions; however, there is one possession that is priceless: their home. Some students go home every week. Some still live at home. No matter the frequency of visits home from college, what draws students to visit their family is the feeling of being there together and the emotional pull to a particular location.

I recently had a conversation with a Michigan farmer who said farmland in his area is not being sold by the acre, but by the ton. When the glaciers receded all those years ago, they left behind valuable deposits in gravel, and

land is priced for its value in mining.

In different regions of our country, development is forcing farmers to put a price on land and find its market value. Here in Missouri, the most powerful market force is for residential development. This is where the struggle over the eminent domain issue lies. We are in a difficult situation when asked to put a price on our land, our possessions and our homes.

I am not one of those students who travels home every weekend. In fact, last year I was able to go home to South Carolina three times. One of my favorite things to do when I'm back home is to go running on top of the dams of our area's lake. Despite my nostalgia toward South Carolina, Missouri has progressively become more like home with every year of college.

On one of those unseasonably warm January days, I went for a run after class. As I ran around a lake at a park, the sun set. It looked identical to the way the sun sets at my lake in South Carolina. For a second I felt like I was home.

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