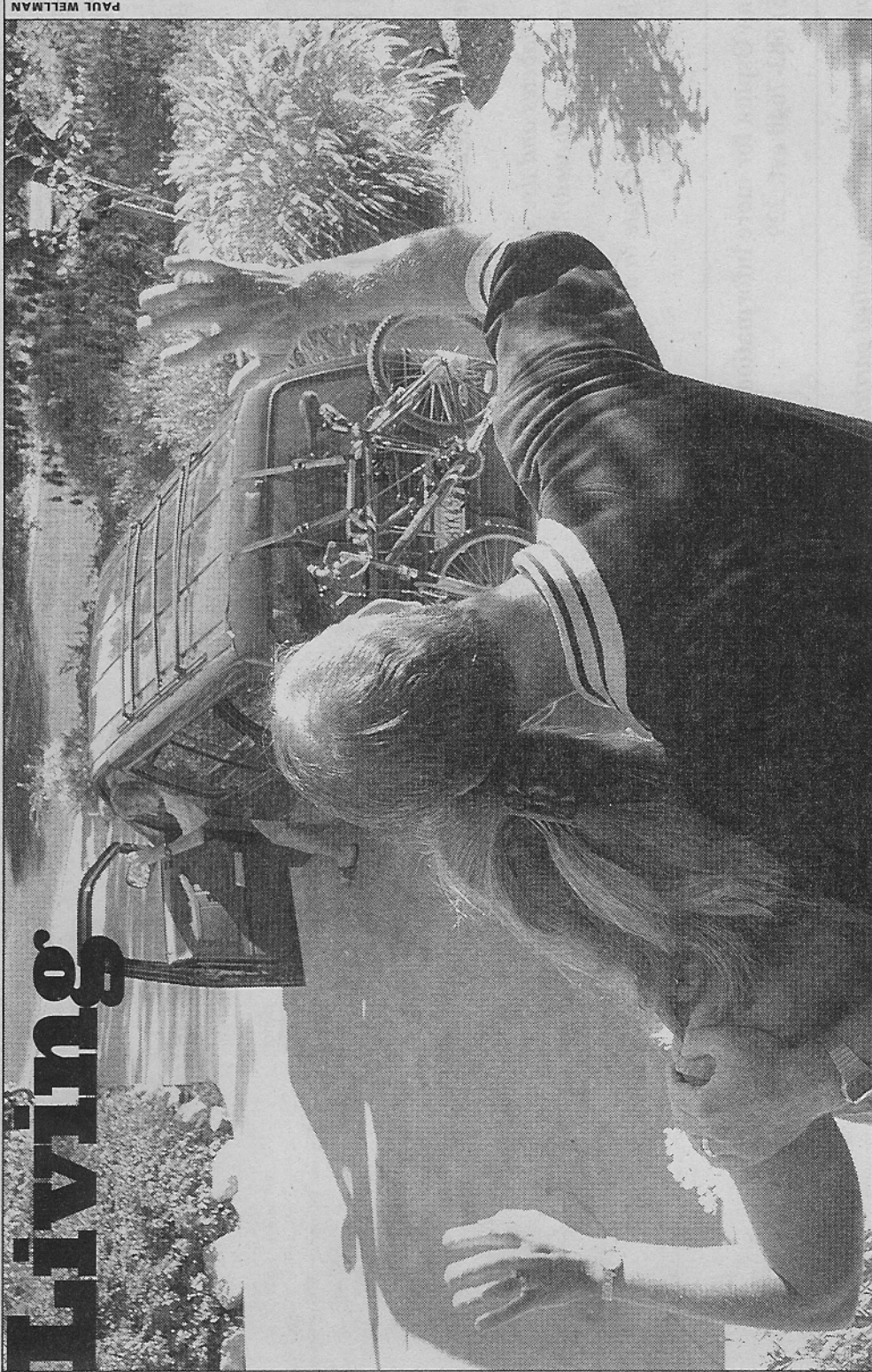


Living



PAUL WELLMAN

my life

Author Karen Telleen-Lawton and her husband David have dealt with the "empty nest" syndrome twice now.

dence, and it never happened. Instead, it metamorphosed into a plan to make lemonade out of a job-loss lemon, by volunteering for environmental and humanitarian projects in the fall of our first empty nest year.

We left in the tumultuous month after 9/11/01, three weeks after abandoning our baby to the suddenly uncertain life on college campus. When we convinced ourselves they'd both be fine, we headed south to work, study, and grow. For us it was a time to be interact, to confront issues we'd ignored for lack of a will to work on them, and to learn to love each other on a whole new scale: one not overly dependent on our mutual admiration of the kids.

Living in barracks in Costa Rica's Guanacaste Tropical Forest, we understood, as if for the first time, the interconnectedness of plants and animals species sharing the planet. Living in the crime-saturated city of San

Baby Boomer Rebirth

How I Feathered My Empty Nest

by **Karen Telleen-Lawton**

U.S. arrogance spoiling planet

One hundred and ninety-one countries have gathered in Johannesburg, South Africa, last week to discuss the world's most pressing environmental and economic issues, and the world's most powerful country is snubbing it. Our president is the only leader of a developed country not to attend, sending instead Secretary of State Colin Powell.

Mr. Powell, in addition to being toured through Angola, whose population *The Economist* calls "the most wretched on Earth," is getting 190 earfuls, no doubt. He has been instructed by his boss to resist setting any new targets since 1992's first World Summit on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro. In fact, the president would prefer to un-sign the promises made there.

The themes on this summit's agenda are difficult ones: water, energy, health, farming and biodiversity. There are contentious disagreements between the rich and poor nations over globalization. And the U.S. more and more is choosing a unilateral approach to these problems: our way or the highway.

The U.S. way, while dependant on the highway, is not the high way: while fossil fuel use worldwide has increased 10 percent since the Rio summit, ours has grown a staggering 18 percent.

America has what many countries don't, and that is choices. In our greed and arrogance, we are turning down the opportunity to lead for the good and instead are choosing, using Bush's vocabulary, evil.

I am ashamed at my country's lack of leadership in the areas where it is needed the most.

Karen Telleen-Lawton
Santa Barbara