



## Building Power

By Harry Brill

There are still many who believe that we lack the money to fund and improve our vital social and economic programs. But consider the following -- Social Security benefits can be substantially increased by raising the taxable limit of \$117,000. Why should executives who earn, say \$500,000, pay no more social security taxes than someone who earns substantially less. How about supporting a viable and expanding food stamp program for the growing number of poor Americans by at least in part reducing if not abolishing the tax deduction for executives who dine their clients and others in expensive restaurants. And generally speaking, how about assuring that the rich pay at least the same rate of income tax as the average worker? In fact, it is commonly known that some corporations that earn billions of dollars pay no taxes at all? What a major difference these changes would make to appreciably improve our quality of life. The problem is not, as the ruling circle insists, an economic problem. It is a political problem caused by the collective greed of the one percent. In short, the extraordinary economic inequality in our society reflects the extraordinary political inequality in our society. How, then, can the 99% prevail over the 1%? We certainly outnumber them.

We are constantly waging political battles. But to stand a chance of winning the war we must always ask the question "How in the course of the many struggles we wage, are we building power?" To do so it is not enough to achieve our specific end. The particular means we adopt are crucial. We must ask no matter what the outcome is whether we attracting more participants **Very critical, are we bringing more people out in the streets. Only then will Congress really listen to us.** Lobbying and internet activism is not enough. Most important, are we operating democratically. Democratic participation is not only a virtue unto itself. Democratic participation also builds leadership and encourages activists to develop their skills and self-confidence. And in the process the vocabulary changes from "I" to "We". **Please keep in mind the very wise words of Mahatma Gandhi "You must be the change you wish to see in**

**the world"**. *In Community, Harry Brill*



Mrs. T-Bill Banks or Santa Claus  
at Gray Panthers's Holiday Party *see article*

**Tuesday, February 18, 7:00 pm**

## **Local, Clean Energy, in Berkeley? We can do it!**

**Ecology Center, 2530 San Pablo Avenue,  
Berkeley**

Imagine if you had a choice where your energy came from. Imagine if it could be cleaner, greener, and more affordable.

Join the Berkeley Climate Action Coalition for an exciting discussion of "Community Choice Energy": what it is, how it can bring local, renewable energy resources to the East Bay, and how it can generate jobs and other economic benefits. Hear about how Community Choice Energy can fast track greenhouse gas reductions while also offering competitive electricity rates. See more at: <http://ecologycenter.org/Cost> Free-Wheelchair Accessibility

**Tuesday, January 28, 7:30 pm. Nick Turse author of Kill Anything that Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam.** First Congregational Church, 2345 Channing at Dana, Berkeley  
\$12 advance tickets: [brownpapertickets.com](http://brownpapertickets.com) :: 800-838-3006  
or Pegasus (3 locations), Marcus Books, Moe's, Walden Pond, Diesel a Bookstore, Mrs. Dalloway's Books, SF: Modern Times. \$15 at door

Wheelchair accessibility

**Every Monday the "Tax the Rich" rally gathers near the top of Solano from 4 to 5 p,m**