

# I INTERVIEW // RECLAIM DEMOCRACY

**Steve Spanier // Thursday, July 26, 2007 // By Phone**

**Tell me a little about the organization. How and why did it form? Who was involved etc., How long has it been going.**

It was formed around the turn of the century initially in Boulder but is now based om Montana. It's interested in restoring democracy and revoking citizenship for corporations. Economic reform is another big push behind that. We believe that a lot of the societal ills are attributable to corporations trying to take to bigger piece of the pie. They need to meet wall street expectations and by nature they must always be growing and that causes a conflict. Media reform needs to happen as well. The news really isn't the news per say. We hear a lot of useless stuff on the television and its good to point out that all major news sources are owned by 6 major corporations who have their interests in mind.

Brenten Woods and the move towards globalization is a big one. It's imperative for the corporations is too expand globally so we have all of these gats and trips trading intellectual property, the purpose is to increase global trade and you get things like trade limiting done in countries (e.g. protecting dolphins in Mexico). In some cases international law takes precedent over local law. California wants to limit the lead in its gasoline which is a good thing but this is trade limiting and therefore illegal. Laws that protect corporate profit are harmful to people. In the movie Erin Brokovic there is a good example of something like this happening.

Endless pursuits of corporate profit always end up hurting people. We need more regulations. Corporations are now sovereign over people and what's more they have more resources than people.

**What does success look like to you. If Reclaim Democracy was 100% successful what would the world look like. What are the steps you see needing to happen in order to get to that place.**

Publicly financed election campaigns. The vast majority of candidates are sponsored by corporations. Media reform is also a big concern. People get their informations from sources that are owned by 6 large companies. It all comes back to shareholder return. We'd like to see breaking up of media monopolies and public subsidizing of broadcasting. Governments need to move away from globalization. 3rd world companies have created economies that are more export based, that's bad. WTO is really really bad news. Mexico: the reason we are seeing such immigration is because of this.

Once it gets so bad, weather or not people start to make change, change will happen. David Korten pushes for what he calls an earth community. I unfortunately see it getting worse before it gets better. The current administration has made a lot more people aware of the issues than before which is good, but I think we are in a bad place. Corporations and government are pretty tightly in bed with each other. The people who run the corporation are sometimes the government heads of organizations and are typically people who are directly involved with the government (Haliburton). The situation with our government now is pretty close to ideal for

corporations. The best investment you can make as a corporation is an investment in an elected official.

**What has been the biggest obstacle to getting your message out? How is it generally received and has there been any one campaign that has been more successful than another? Why do you think that is?**

The biggest obstacle is getting information to the people. News organizations control the airways and like I said media reform is important. The wealthiest people in the country do own stock. People want their stock to do well and that means that the corporations must do well. This has extended to government. The top people in government dictate the way things are. True democracy is the rule of the people and that isn't really happening right now.

**Describe a typical person interested in Reclaim Democracy and its message. Describe a typical person visiting your website.**

I wouldn't say there is a typical audience but I do think this should be adopted by all people. I can tell you that, the membership of the orange county chapter is largely seniors because they have the time but I wish we had more young people.

**What is the single most effective thing I can do as an individual to restore democratic (citizen) authority over corporations.**

I recommend several things. Education is a big one and people need to go to the alternative media for this. As far as taking action another big one is ethical consumption. Advocate buying from small mom and pop shops. We list local vendors and try to get people to them. Even though Walmart is the largest retailer on the planet, if no one shopped there they'd go out of business. People have the power of the purse. Another great thing is volunteering.

**Has design (graphic or other) played any role in getting people involved in the cause or the organization? How?**

It has not really yet happened for these people. We would love to provide more of a pictorial appeal to people rather than a word based appeal. If there are ways you can help us with the visual part of it that would be great.

**You have a list of resources and book on the website but would you have recommendation for resources (books to read,**

From my standpoint reading David Korten is a good start. *When Corporation Rule the World, Gangs of America, Post Corporate World,* and *The Peoples Business.*