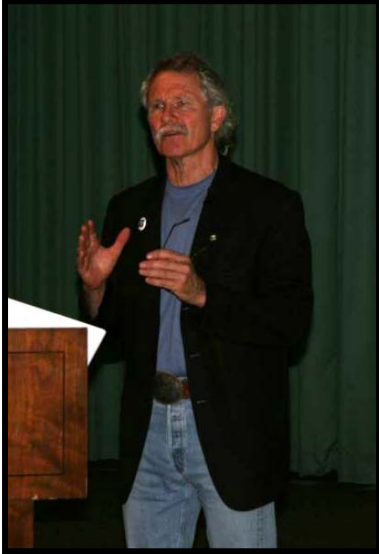


The Archimedes Movement *First Annual Convention June 2008*

Toni Gilbert, RN, MA, HNC



The first annual convention of the Archimedes Movement www.wecandobetter.org was held on the beautiful grounds of Lewis and Clark College. The Archimedes Movement was founded in 2006 by John Kitzhaber, MD a nationally recognized expert and leader in health care reform. I followed the yellow “We Can Do Better” signs to a gathering of a couple of hundred people. The energy was lively, there was food, drink, an information table and t-shirts with the familiar we can do better logo.

Once the audience was registered and seated, our well-known speaker arrived; a gray-haired man wearing a suit coat, t-shirt, Levis and cowboy boots. The cowboy boots were complemented by a big silver belt buckle. The persona was a familiar one; his face had graced the pages of the newspapers many times as Governor of Oregon. This time, the gifted and articulate John Kitzhaber, MD was the champion of the Archimedes Movement, a grass roots dialogue of how we can make changes in our current health care system to make it affordable and available to everyone.

Always fascinated by people’s astrology, I later learned that Kitzhaber was born in 1947. He is part of the Pluto-Saturn conjunct baby boomers. Pluto symbolizes chaos and deep change and Saturn is the old man of tradition. The planetary positions at the time of his birth imprinted him with the astrological potential to be an iconoclast. (Hillary was born in 1947 as well) It is interesting to note that John’s moon in Leo was conjunct this conjunction. The moon’s placement symbolizes feminine expression in the world. John’s profession and current work has to do with the feminine aspects of our world, i.e. health care and healing. An idealistic sun in Pisces, he has the imagination to envision what others cannot. Mercury, the planet of communication is conjunct his sun giving him a talent for communication. A well placed masculine Mars gives him the assertiveness to carry out his mission.

The audience was made up of mostly baby boomers, with a few of the older generation who were more than willing to lend a hand. It was good to see a smattering of enthusiastic young people. Some were people in the current health care system who wanted change and others were from diverse backgrounds, like organic food markets and environmental groups. All were interested in revolutionizing health care across the nation.

The Kitzhaber team, directed by Liz Baxter, is made up of intelligent and intuitive people, quick with ideas and wit. This team has a sense of purpose even though they

don't know what the end product of their current efforts will look like. They are go with the flow types who are into letting this timely movement unfold in its own time, albeit with a healthy dose of creativity that comes directly from within themselves.

The overall goal of this first convention was to move the movement from its current state as a loosely organized collection of chapters and members to a better defined organization that will be able to accomplish its goals for the upcoming years. At this time, the Kitzhaber team is asking for volunteers to join them and they further hone the organization into a voice of the people and for the people.

During his final presentation of the day, Governor Kitzhaber gave the audience the metaphor of the journey of the salmon. He likened the members of this movement to Salmon. He told a story of how the young salmon go out to sea to live their life. One day, an inner timer tells them to make the trip back upstream in order to fulfill their purpose. We are like those salmon, he said, we struggle against all manner of hardships to fulfill our destiny. Part of our destiny like the salmon, is to strive against inequities the current health care system in order to spawn a better future for the next generation.

Things You Can Do

You don't have to be an organizer, a lobbyist, a politician, or a health care policy expert to make a difference in health reform. All you have to do is care. Below are some simple things you can do to be a catalyst for reform.

1. Get informed. Learn what the Archimedes Movement is about and learn how to talk about the difference between health insurance and health care. Be able to explain the Archimedes vision to others.
2. Grow the Demand for Change. Organize and mobilize within your own community. Help increase the groundswell neighborhood by neighborhood.
3. Political Action. We don't just need to influence our elected officials—we need to educate them! We also need to educate our friends about the importance of the political process.
4. Start a Buzz. Help generate awareness through the media, your business, or even your car.
5. Be visible. Keep a presence in your community, at events, and with local area organizations.
6. Raise your voice. Get out from behind your e-mail and out into the community, the Capitol building, and your local chapter meeting.

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