

Off and Running

Bill Hoffman
Class of 1977

By Don Nokes / The Chinook

Bill Hoffman, Class of '77, has a propensity for diving into things. He's dipped himself into every Puget Sound public beach in our district, and we're not just talking tootsies. When Hoffman jumps into something, it's a Pentecostal, full submersion, Holy Ghost gathering, baptismal splash down...Bill's not small. Hoffman's now jumping into the race for Congress in the 7th district (Seattle). He intends to make some waves.

His political campaign is a revival of Hoffman's roots here in West Seattle as he's reexamining the heart and home of where he grew up. "...I'm not a transplant. When you talk about growth, traffic, the viaduct, pollution in Puget Sound... well I know, in a visceral and pragmatic way, what those issues mean to Seattleites."

What has taken Bill so long to jump into politics? "I was interested in government at WSHS. I even went to Close Up, a one-week intensive workshop in DC, a full year before most of my classmates did. So what did take me so long? Frankly, I'm not motivated by money, prestige, position or power...But, like many Americans, I'm frustrated with the state of the political process today and I believe in strong constituent services..." That would mean a political process, of the people, by the people and for the people, a process that would bypass special interests. (A nice trick if you can pull it off.)

An avid backpacker, by his senior year Bill had hiked all the major trails of the Olympics and Mt. Rainier, and worked summers as an assistant wrangler in Colorado, "I spent at least two months a summer for some 5 years in the Conejos Canyon (starting at 9,000' elevation)." Bill's a politician with a good deal of extra tread on his sole, and some water in his moccasins as well. He had his PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) scuba diver's certification in his freshman year. "Yeah, I still scuba." Bill admits. "A group of us started a science club at WSHS, we actually did a number decent projects; we also used the club to get off campus as much as we could. Now when I walk the halls of WSHS...I look forward to when my kids are going to be going there. And I've got a pretty good idea how the school is doing as I serve as VP of Schmitz Park PTA."

With his Argus eyes pinioned on the out-of-doors, it's no surprise that Hoffman's political agenda is aggressively "green" when it comes to environmental issues. And when it comes to the polluted state of our waterways, you might even refer to him as mean-green. He's involved himself from head to toe in the water quality issues facing the Pacific Northwest. "I'm in the process of proposing some innovative solutions to a number of our most important environmental issues." Hoffman contends. "...one of my proposals to help slow the pace of global warming is to create new Federal tax incentives to award those of you who live close to work and to reward the companies for whom you work." Hoffman shows a just concern for the environmental challenges our district is facing, and his apprehension stems from a continuation of his six years of exploring more of his home here. Most politicians peruse our waterways from the riverbanks, tsk-tsking the sheen of oily rainbows on parade; as an avid scuba-buff Bill has actually scanned the Puyallup River, given it his personal MRI from the bottom - up. "More than once ... and I've therefore seen firsthand what a mess it is."

Most Americans have had a belly full of war over the years, a sentiment Hoffman appears to share, "War in most cases is wrong though WWII is a notable exception. That's what I believe. I'm also against protracted engagement...we've fought a number of wars since WWII. Most of them were outright mistakes and we've paid a very high price measured in terms of lost loved ones, monetary cost, and world credibility. I think most rational people in the United States would prefer less war to more war. I certainly do."

What qualifies Bill Hoffman for congressional duty is much the same thing that qualifies most political contenders. He sees a need for change and intends to invest himself in becoming a conduit for that change; for bettering our community, our environment, our future. Also, Hoffman has a BA in Sociology from the UW, "I also majored for quite a while in Economics (at the UW), and I have a MPW (Masters in Writing) degree from USC...Both my brothers (Mark and Erich) graduated from West Seattle as did my father (William Hoffman, Jr.). I'm a 5th generation Seattleite and a 4th generation West Seattleite." Bill concluded.

His campaign info is at www.hoffmanforcongress.org. If you're plunging into the politics don't lose sight of your scuba gear, you're probably going to need it. Snorkel on, Bill.