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Stage set for election

The heat is being turned up this week in Durham-York as candidates prepare for the Sept. 6 election.

And provincial Progressive Conservatives have a tough road ahead in the coming weeks as they attempt to show that the Tories can do a better job of running Ontario than Premier David Peterson's Liberals.

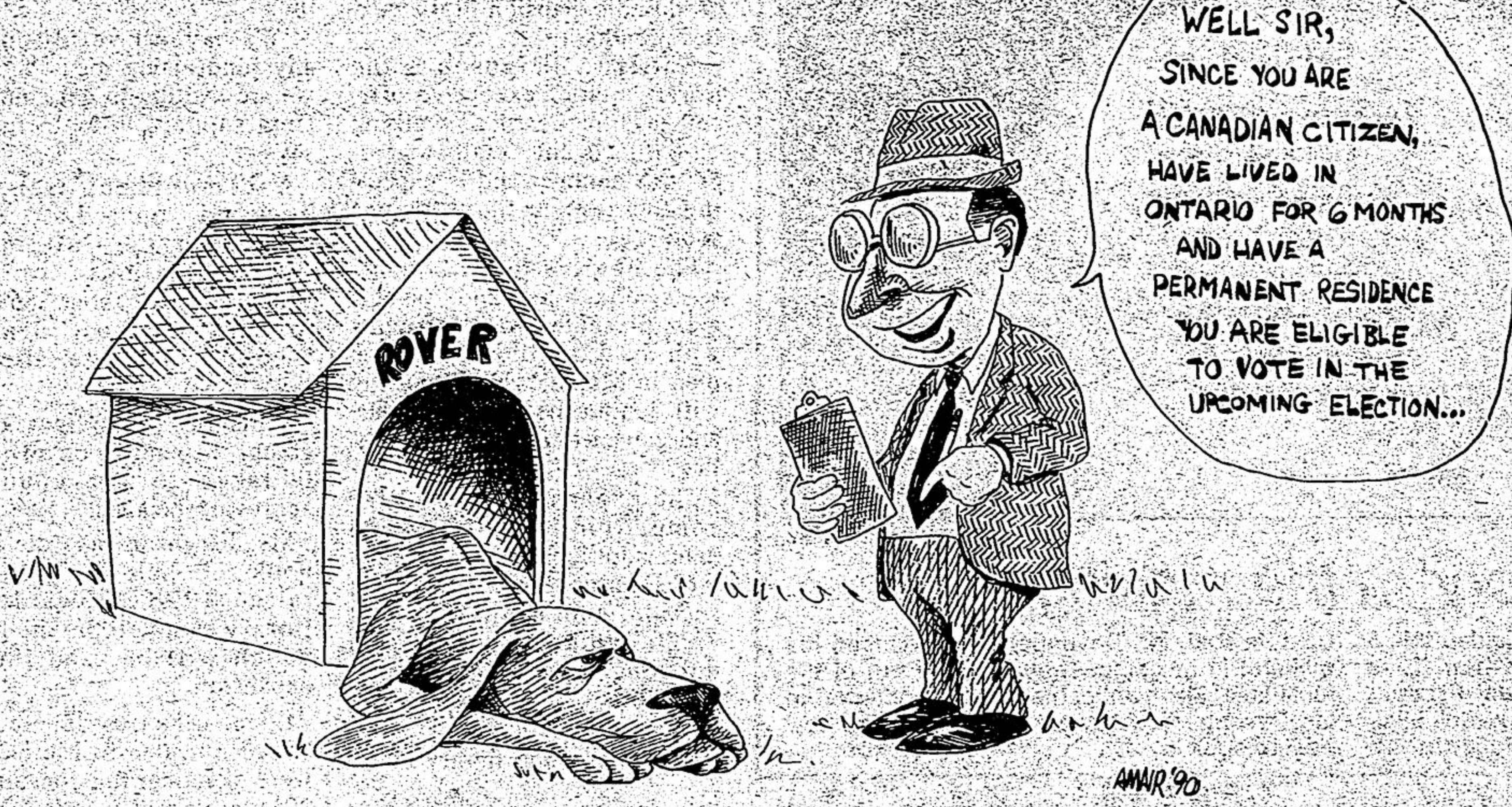
Incumbent MPP Bill Ballinger has quite a head start, and brings the Premier to Stouffville tonight. Meanwhile, the Tories are expected to welcome Jack Hauseman as their candidate to carry the blue banner.

It's important for the PCs to run a solid campaign if they want to wrest the riding back from the Liberals.

Mr. Hauseman, with years of work behind the scenes in the riding, has the credentials and enthusiasm, but faces a tough opponent in Mr. Ballinger.

The stage has been set, and the candidates must now turn to the issues facing voters today, not just the events of the past three years.

Durham-York riding contains a diverse electorate. Voters must take part in this election.



Show me a candidate eating spaghetti

Who says there's a provincial election in the works?

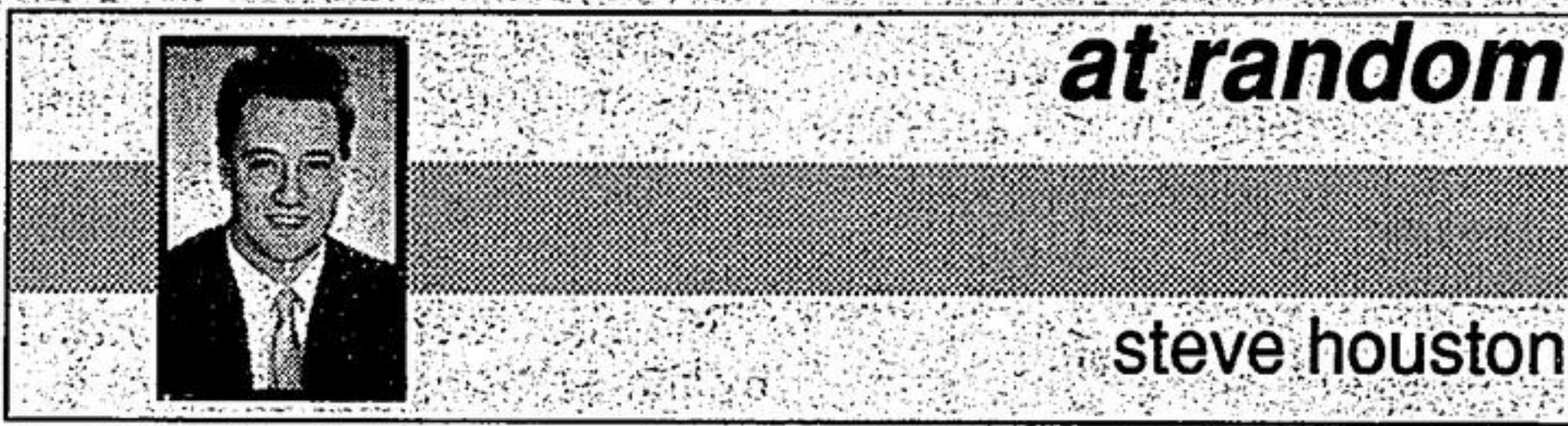
The way things seem around here so far, it looks more like a self-indulgent way for Ontario Premier David Peterson's government to prove its popularity.

But no sir, the Premier won't apologize to the people for calling an election less than three years after being swept to a huge majority at Queen's Park.

Excuse us for asking. Durham-York MPP Bill Ballinger, meanwhile, is already out shaking hands with unsuspecting voters and requesting their support.

There's nothing wrong with that. It's important for Mr. Ballinger, who is well known and respected in his riding, to hit the street and garner votes.

But it just isn't much fun yet.



at random

steve houston

The provincial Tories, grappling with a huge debt and a rather obscure leader (Mike who?) are already far behind.

The local Progressive Conservative organization is set to name a candidate tomorrow, and it will take meticulous organization and boundless energy to make a go of it.

Unfortunately, there is a certain guilt-by-association attached to the provincial Tories courtesy of Mr. Brian Mulroney who, as you all know, is currently on Canada's Most Unwanted

list. In this election, the ridings need exciting races to make this \$40-million ego trip worth it.

I can't take anything away from Mr. Ballinger. He's made himself available and responsive to the needs of Durham-York constituents, and has a well-oiled machine behind him.

But it's disappointing when the horse race only has one runner.

And for me, there is always

the fear that a larger majority for Mr. Peterson's provincial government could result in new levels of political arrogance.

I guess we'll all see, won't we?

Meanwhile, we're hoping that a strong candidate emerges - whether from the Tories or the NDP - so there are no cakewalks. That way, there is always room for more interest and participation in following elections.

Currently, I'm compiling campaign literature to find out what's what. Previous elections brochures have produced true gems in the way they present the candidates.

A former colleague and I still chuckle over a bit of literature

from a certain Tory in the last election, which confirmed that the aforementioned candidate was a man. Honest.

And the campaign booklet photos that invariably show the candidate shaking hands with an average citizen, or hard-hat in hand, talking to someone on a job site, never change.

Show me the candidate eating spaghetti, or arguing with a family member, or shopping for toothpaste and toilet paper. That's what real people do, isn't it?

I shop for toothpaste and toilet paper every month. Don't you?

But then again, we're not politicians, are we?

Stouffville/Uxbridge Tribune

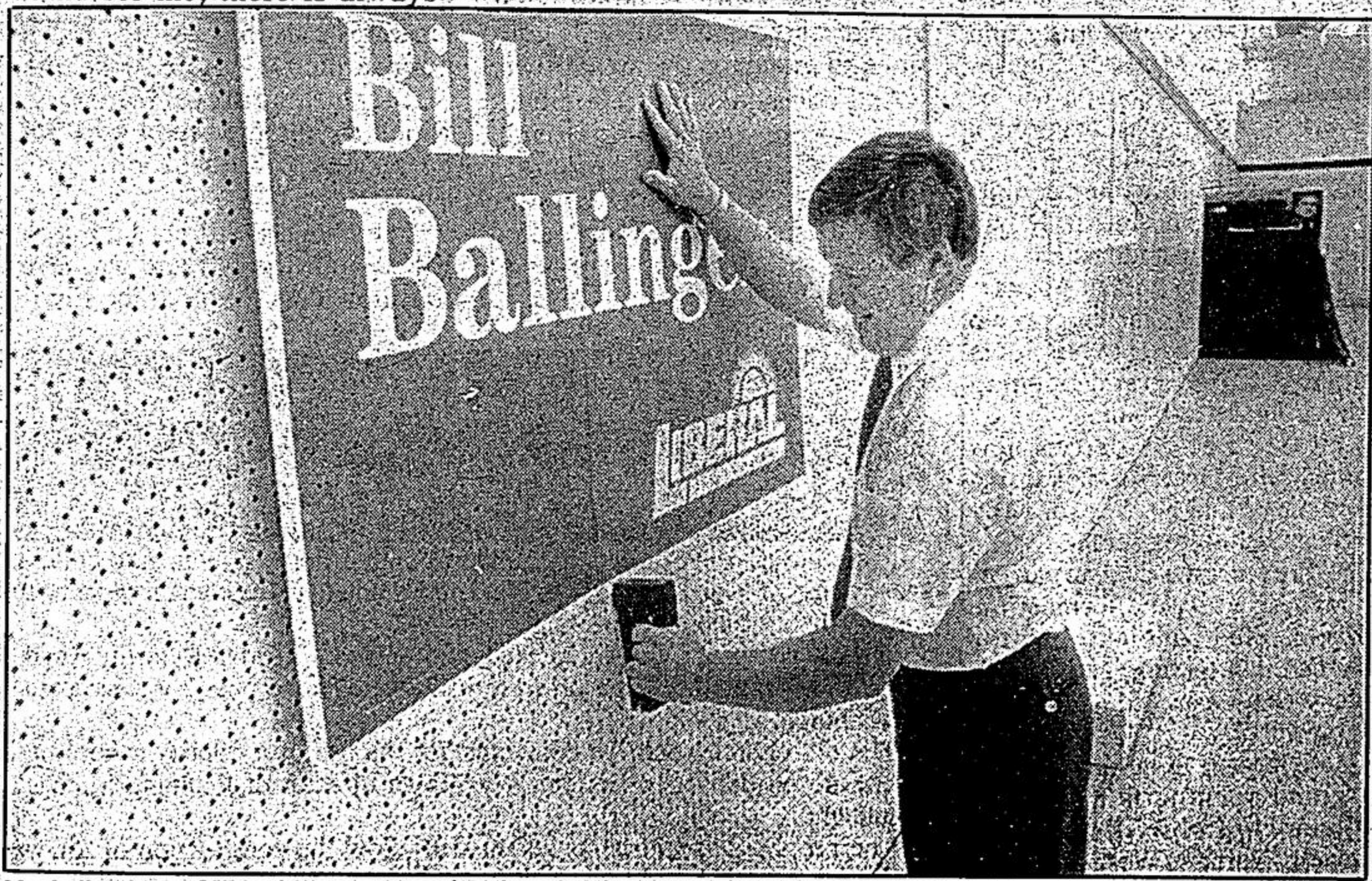
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York-Durham MPP Bill Ballinger was busy this week setting things up at his Uxbridge campaign office, while another is being readied in Stouffville. But the election in the riding needs a strong Tory contender to make this a real horse race. Nobody enjoys a cakewalk unless he or she is the one doing the walking. Meanwhile, we're looking forward to seeing campaign brochures.