

Residents rally to restore park

By DEB BODINE CHAMPION
With a little help from its friends, Markham's Morgan Park could be restored to its former glory.

Once the "Central Park" of Markham village, Morgan Park attracted visitors throughout southern Ontario to its one-acre rose garden — a creation of the Markham Rose Society.

Sunday afternoon concerts were performed in the bandshell for the enjoyment of the community and the park provided a focus for recreation and leisure and is still used today.

Because of its historic significance and strategic location in the heart of town, a group of citizens have joined forces to create a plan for the future of the park.

The proposal is designed to link the park's colorful heritage with the future needs of today's community.

Included in the plan is a smaller rose garden, a water play area, a bandshell with washroom facilities, a revamped "tot lot" playground, a senior playground and an area designed for seniors with table and chairs, horseshoe pits and shuffleboard facilities.

Developed by the Morgan Park Project Steering Committee (MPPSC) with help from landscape architect and committee member Ken Hoyle, the new plan outlines key objectives.

The development is intended to reflect existing uses with an eventual balance between active play-field use and passive use to be phased in gradually.

The report stresses a desire to retain the water recreational aspects of the park in some form, while introducing a number of other family-oriented activities.

"The pool facility, we understand, is running into problems and may require significant money for upgrades," says Harry French, a planner and member of MPPSC.

French hopes the park will reflect its historical background by including such facilities as the rose garden, the bandshell and de-

corative wrought iron fencing. He also stressed the need to link the park with Main St. activities with the creation of an access, while integrating it with the surrounding churches and schools.

The MPPSC wants the park used "as a real community resource," says French.

The MPPSC first convened in March '87. Through a series of door-to-door interviews with residents living nearby, a list of concerns and possible improvements was compiled.

Frequent users of the park were also contacted to determine views and plans for future use of the park, including the Markham Softball League, tennis clubs, lawn bowlers, churches, schools and day-care centres.

Using information gleaned, a number of proposals were reviewed with residents, councillors Gord Landon and Tom Newall, and the Markham Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee.

In August, Barry Hughes, deputy director of parks, joined the residents' group.

"Barry acted our advisor and guided us through the process of presenting this to council," says MPPSC spokesman Elizabeth Plashkes.

The estimated cost of the five-phase project is \$627,226. The first phase is being considered by the Town for inclusion in the 1988 budget.

The 1988 phase of the project calls for the creation of a master plan for the park's future design and development of its features.

But the Parks and Recreation department has the final say in deciding details of the request submitted to council.

"They have done a lot of good work. The department of Parks and Recreation is in agreement with the basic ideas of the project and there will definitely be a submission for the '88 budget, but how much is yet to be determined," says Hughes.



Markham's old Morgan Park could be in for a complete makeover if a group of residents there have their way. Plans to redesign and improve features in the park are now in the making and will soon be

forwarded to council for consideration. More than a half-million dollars would be needed to restore the old park.

— Bill Lanning

Metroland awaits union's reaction to final offer

Metroland Printing, Publishing and Distributing has tabled a final contract offer to the union representing its non-management editorial employees.

Metroland, which publishes 17 community newspapers in the Toronto area including The Economist and Sun, Stouffville Tribune, and The Weekender, has offered increases of more than 22 per cent in the first year of a two-year contract.

The Southern Ontario Newspaper Guild which was certified in February to represent 160 reporters, photographers and sub-editors, has not yet indicated whether it will accept the offer.

The union will be in a legal strike position, and the company able to lock employees out effective midnight Sunday.

Metroland intends to continue publishing in the event of a strike or lock-out. The contract dispute

does not affect senior editors or employees in advertising, distribution, production or administration.

"Our committee has met with theirs more than 50 times since March," said Metroland's chief negotiator and company vice-president, John Coleman. "We feel we have answered the vast majority of their many, many demands and tabled a wage proposal that is as generous as we can afford if we are to remain a viable business."

The company would immediately raise the full-time editorial employee's average weekly salary from \$400 to \$479 and their annual income from \$20,851 to \$25,632 during 1988. Forty per cent of employees have less than two years' seniority and sixty-five per cent have less than four years with Metroland.

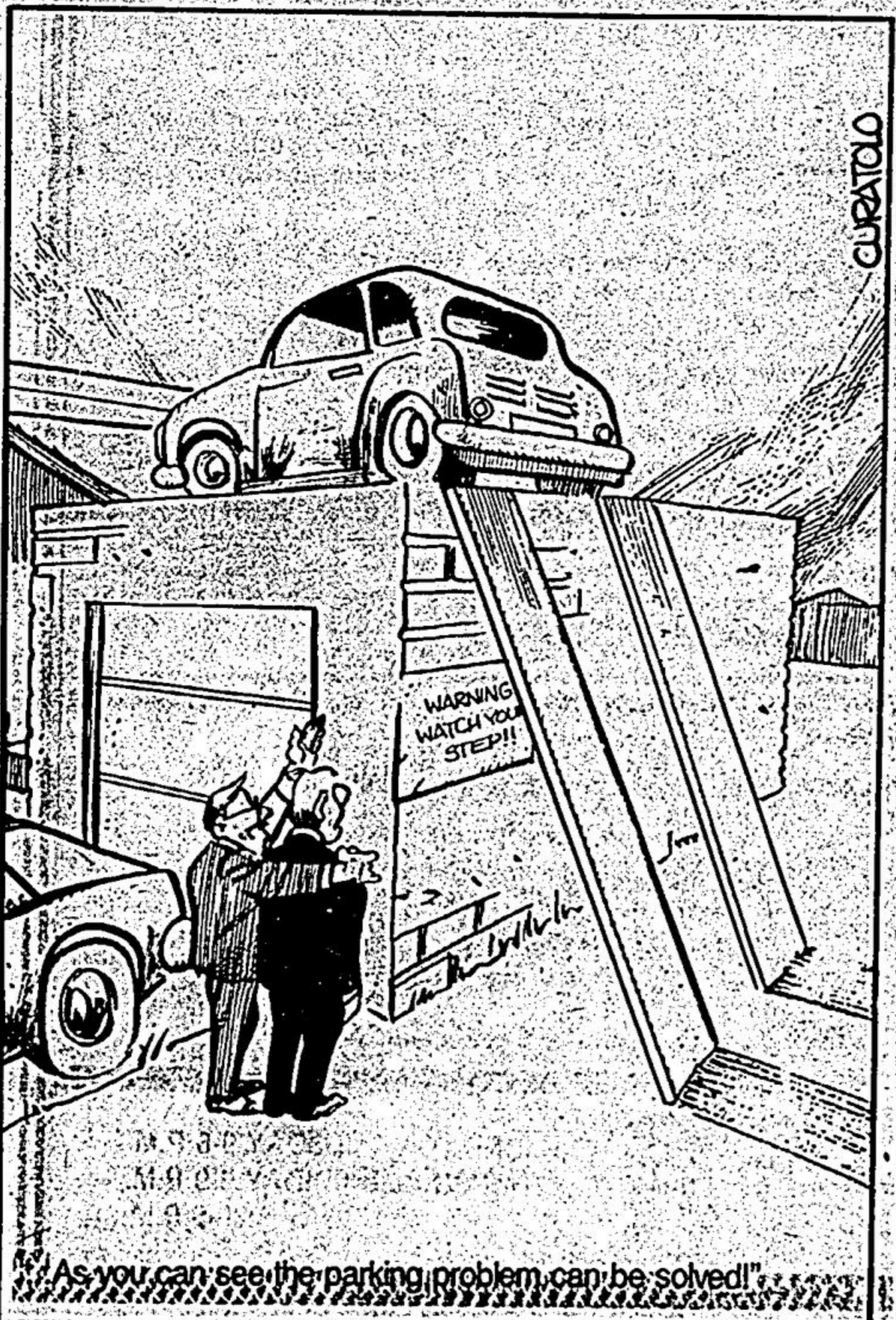
Metroland has also agreed to a

35-hour work week, six-month pregnancy leave and seniority rights including chain-wide "bumping" in event of lay-offs.

Weekly wage rates in the company's offer range from \$350 for a reporter with no experience to \$585 for a two-year sub-editor. All rates would increase four per cent in the second year of the contract, in addition to employees earning a progression increase based on experience.

The company has also guaranteed a five per cent wage increase in each year of the contract to all employees at or above the top grid rate for their classification.

The company has also offered two floating holidays in addition to nine statutory holidays, three weeks' vacation after one year's service (raising to six weeks after 25 years) and an improved benefits package.



As you can see the parking problem can be solved!



Vandals start fire

Firefighters responded to a blaze Sunday night at an abandoned house at 221 Wellington St. East, Markham Fire Chief Ken Beckett said the fire, which caused \$10,000 damage, was due to vandali-

sm. The vacant building, on the site of a future medical centre, was slated to be moved to another location.

— Bill Lanning