

## Catalog entices civic gifts

**TAKE YOUR PICK: City's parks benefit from your donations.**

By ROSEMARY SHINOHARA

Anchorage Daily News

*(Published: December 24, 2005)*

The city parks department hopes you'll give your sweetie a picnic table for Christmas.

It will be installed in a park on a concrete slab, and maintained. Price tag: \$5,275. Not a stocking stuffer.

The department, through the Anchorage Park Foundation, has produced a gift catalog to make it easier for people to donate to parks.

Many of the items are unexpectedly pricey -- for example, the \$3,375 spring-mounted playground duck that little kids could bounce on, and the swing-set for \$36,500 (two swings) or \$47,500 (four swings).

Part of what drives up the price is that it covers the equipment and also the soft-surface play area it sits on, and installation and some upkeep, said Beth Nordlund, development director for the park foundation.

But a bollard, the sturdy fencelike posts that border many parks, may be had for \$300, and a dog refuse station, plus a recognition sign and maintenance for a year, is only \$350.

Park benches with backs, suitably engraved as a memorial, or with the donor's name, cost \$3,300 to \$3,600.

The benches are meant more as a remembrance for someone who has died, said Nordlund.

"It is really beautiful to have something people can contribute to as a memorial for them and their family," she said. "If they choose sites we've determined we need a bench in, it's great for the whole community."

Susan Sullivan of Anchorage and her sister Kathy Madison Kevrekian of Eugene, Ore., plan to invite three other siblings to chip in for a bench in honor of their parents. Their dad, Russ Meekins Sr., was a member of Alaska's first state Legislature and was a well-known lobbyist for many years. Their mother, Adele, worked for the state in the vocational rehabilitation section.

Their dad advocated for parks and youth sports, particularly football, said Kevrekian. Their mother loved to visit Westchester Lagoon with her grandchildren and feed ducks, she said.

"The big issue is which park to put it in," said Kevrekian.

Nordlund said she can respond quickly with contribution cards to pass out to relatives and friends, if someone calls and requests a memorial. The parks department will help decide where to put the bench, she said.

Half a dozen people have already said they intend to create park memorials, though the gift catalogs are still being sent to park supporters and donors, said Nordlund.

There are some less expensive goods in the catalog that one may purchase and take home: zipper pulls for \$5 each, a green bumper sticker with a swirly "Anchorage Parks" logo for \$2, sweatshirts, T-shirts and water bottles.

For skateboarders, a \$20 poster by artist Rick Schanche shows a skater in mid-flight, seemingly well above the ground. Profits will go into a fund for building a skate park.

The catalog is online and at City Hall, park chalets, recreation centers, and the Parks & Recreation office on Bragaw Street next to Clark Middle School, Nord-lund said. Some of the small items, such as bumper stickers, are available at the Department of Parks and Recreation office. To buy an item for a park, people may call Nordlund at 343-4492.

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Daily News reporter Rosemary Shinohara can be reached at [rshinohara@adn.com](mailto:rshinohara@adn.com) or 257-4340.

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