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Postal Museum Announces Owney Look-Alike Contest Winners

The Smithsonian's National Postal Museum today announced the winners of the national Owney the Dog Look-Alike Contest. More than 70 dogs across the country lounged on mailbags, dressed up in letter-carrier uniforms and posed by mailboxes, competing to be the modern-day Owney the postal dog's look-alike. The nationwide contest sponsored by the National Postal Museum and the Washington Humane Society logged 8,284 votes from the public to select the three dogs that best represent the spirit of Owney.

Owney was a scruffy mutt who became a regular fixture at the Albany, N.Y., post office in 1888. He loved the mail and began to ride with the mailbags on Railway Post Office train cars across the state and then the country. In 1895, Owney even made an around-the-world trip, traveling with mailbags on trains and steamships to Asia and across Europe. The RPO clerks adopted Owney as their unofficial mascot, marking his travels by placing medals and tags from his stops on his collar. He has been preserved and is on display at the National Postal Museum in Washington, D.C.

"Bently," a 4- or 5-year-old terrier mix from California who somehow became homeless—just like Owney—was the contest winner, receiving 1,662 votes. Second and third prize winners were "Jordy" (from Virginia) with 1,607 votes and "Murphy" (from Ohio) with 998 votes. Winners will receive prizes and have their photos displayed in the museum next to the real Owney for two weeks. The top prize is an iPad2, on which the winner will be able to view Owney's new interactive e-book, *Tails from the Rails*, being released by the museum later this fall.

"This has been an exciting year for Owney and his fans," said Nancy Pope, historian and curator. "We presented Owney, fresh from his 'makeover' in a new exhibit that allows visitors to learn even more about their favorite mail dog. Owney's online friends can browse through his entire tag collection and learn more about his life and travels via the museum's Owney Web page (www.npm.si.edu/Owney)."

The National Postal Museum is devoted to presenting the colorful and engaging history of the nation's mail service and showcasing one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of stamps and philatelic material in the world. It is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue N.E., Washington, D.C., across from Union Station. The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (closed Dec. 25). For more information about the Smithsonian, call (202) 633-1000 or visit the museum website at www.postalmuseum.si.edu.

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NOTE: Images and additional information about each of the three winners can be found at this location:
<http://npm.si.edu/owneylookalikecontest>