

Fame comes to Amigo and three other potcakes on new Bahamian commemorative stamps

By Jim Kerr

Potcakes will have their 'day in the sun' this spring as the subject of four commemorative postage stamps based on paintings by renowned Bahamian artist Alton Lowe (for more about Alton's career, see the feature in the Fall/Holiday '08 issue of *Abaco Life*). It's the first time the much-loved mutt has been the subject of a four-stamp commemorative issue, designed to give them overdue recognition as a national treasure and significant part of the island landscape going back centuries. A native son of Green Turtle Cay and a potcake lover himself, Alton has designed more than 150 stamps with subjects ranging from Bahamian scenes to his renderings of flora and fauna. Through active promotion of these unique and historical stamps, the artist hopes to help the plight of homeless potcakes. The stamps honor four outstanding representatives of the breed, each with its own unique story:



TURTLE

She Likes to Fish

Turtle was born under an upturned boat in a yard on Green Turtle Cay in May 2001. Her father was 'Lucky,' a retriever/chow/potcake mix, and definitely the 'dog about town' at the time (See "Lucky" on page 30.) Her mother was the very eligible 'Sassy,' a shepherd-looking potcake who was renowned for her beauty and known all over the island. Turtle's hobby is chasing fish in shallow waters. She will spend all day at this, if allowed. She also loves to chase curly tail lizards lounging in the sun. Her family is very proud to have her represent one of the varieties of potcakes in this stamp series, and hopes that everyone will become more aware of the breed and choose to adopt a potcake of their own.

OREO

A Loving Personality

Along with several siblings, Oreo was rescued from the Treasure Cay dump on Abaco and brought to Green Turtle Cay, where she was adopted from a laundry basket full of potcake puppies being driven around town in a golf cart. Oreo, owned by part-time GTC resident Lee Linton, resides at Linton's Cottages. Always friendly with guests, she was involved in a hit-and-run accident in 2008 which resulted in the loss of her right hind leg. It may have slowed her down some, but her loving personality hasn't changed. She remains an important part of the lives of her owners on Green Turtle Cay, and is a wonderful example of 'potcake potential.'





TRIPOD

A Three-legged Herder

Tripod was a small, feral, potcake puppy when she was found with a shattered leg on the side of the Great Abaco Highway near Marsh Harbour, probably hit by a car. A passerby rescued her, and with generous help from another animal-lover, Tripod's leg was amputated. She eventually found a home on Green Turtle Cay with Alton Lowe's brother, Vertrum. Tripod has the laidback disposition and personality of a golden retriever and the intelligence and herding ability of a border collie, two breeds she resembles.

AMIGO

A Bahamian Superstar

Amigo, who appears on the cover of this issue of *Abaco Life*, is a 'rags to riches' story; a journey from starving, diseased and homeless potcake pup to Bahamian superstar and 'Icon of Hope' for challenged animals in general and potcakes in particular. He began life on Grand Bahama Island, spotted sitting on the side of the road by Frances Hayward, a passionate animal activist and then-head of The Humane Society of Grand Bahama. Little more than skin and bones and covered with mange, ticks and fleas when he crawled out of the bush, Amigo managed to convey a sweetness, confidence, high intelligence and extro-verted personality that would eventually lead to stardom as a celebrity representative and poster dog in a major campaign for spaying, neutering and rescue that Mrs. Hayward initiated and was about to launch.

Amigo was chosen as 'Story of the Year' by *The Nassau Tribune*, and soon he was adorning posters, hats, t-shirts, car stickers, newspaper ads and tourist magazines as the 'face' of the Humane Society of Grand Bahama's "Crusade Against Animal Suffering on Grand Bahama Island" and a national awareness campaign dealing with the care and treatment of animals throughout The Bahamas. Taking his message abroad, Amigo lived an amazing, madcap, purposeful life, hobnobbing with celebrities, starring in the Humane Society of the United States BEKIND Campaign, appearing on Fox News, CNN, MSNBC and in magazine and newspaper articles. He received the Ambassador of Goodwill award from ARF (Animal Rescue Fund of the Hamptons) presented by film star Alec Baldwin;



starred in two Mardi Gras Parades; and appeared in Public Service Announcements with Humane Society of the U.S. President Wayne Pacelle and Hip Hop Impresario Russell Simmons. He received the Hollywood Life Breakthrough Award from actress Alicia Silverstone, then went on his own rescue mission with "The Amigo Express" after Hurricane Katrina. Finally, he became the dog that walked the catwalk in fashion shows to benefit homeless animals. Amigo died in September 2007 after a brave battle with cancer, but a recently-established fund in his name will keep his legacy alive by giving others like him a chance. The Amigo Commemorative Stamp will be an additional tribute to a gallant potcake.

Information on the new Bahamian commemorative stamps is available by writing the Bahamas Philatelic Bureau, P.O. Box N-8302, Nassau, Bahamas, or by e-mail at: Bahamasphilatelic@bahamas.gov.bs. The stamps can also be ordered in person at the main building of the General Post Office in Nassau and at the Welcome Center at Prince George Dock. A set of signed limited edition prints of the "Amigo" painting will also be available, thanks to the artist. All proceeds will go to Amigo's Fund to benefit animals of The Bahamas. For further information visit: www.amigosfund.org.