National Postal Museum to Host Family Fun Day

*May 10 Event Celebrates National Train Day and Chinese Heritage*

The Smithsonian’s National Postal Museum is hosting Family Fun Day Saturday, May 10. The event will celebrate two different yet uniquely connected themes: Chinese heritage and National Train Day. Through special exhibits, programs and events, the museum will showcase how trains and the people of China have long shared a very special place in American history.

The museum will offer a variety of educational activities and demonstrations throughout the day, providing visitors of all ages opportunities to learn, engage and take part in fun-filled activities. Visitors can participate in a special celebration of the 145th anniversary of the completion of the intercontinental railroad as the museum honors the Chinese immigrants who built it.

Special programs, events and exhibits to celebrate trains and Chinese heritage will be offered throughout the day from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m.:

**Lion Dance Performance**—Normally seen at Lunar New Year celebrations, Lion Dancers are always crowd pleasers. These lions will showcase comical moves to festive music at noon and 3 p.m.

**Story Time with the Author and Illustrator of Coolies**—The children’s book *Coolies* tells the story of Chinese transcontinental railroad construction workers in the 1860s. Award-winning author Yin and her award-winning illustrator husband Chris Soentpiet will tell the story at 1 and 3 p.m., followed each time by a special book-signing event. The book will be available for purchase at the museum’s store.

**Model Railroad Demonstrations**—Members of Rappahannock Model Railroaders will display miniature-sized mail trains running on a model railroad in the museum’s atrium. Adults and children will enjoy seeing the amazing detail and realistic look of the model trains, some of which emit steam from their smokestacks.

**Chinese Paper Cutting Workshop**—Chinese paper cutting is a form of art—beautiful and intricate. The U.S. Postal Service’s Lunar New Year stamp series depicts stunning examples of it. Many designs are produced only by skilled crafters, but there are simple designs that novice paper cutters can easily make. Teachers from the Confucius Institute at George Mason University will demonstrate their master work and also help participants create simple designs of their own.
**Play Ping Pong**—As any stamp collector knows, a good way to learn about another country is to see what subjects they choose to put on their stamps. One item that appears on Chinese postage stamps is table tennis, or ping pong, as it is known to many. The sport is very popular among the people of China. To celebrate this popular sport, the museum will set up multiple ping pong tables for visitors to learn and play the game. Family members and friends can enter a free drawing for a chance to win one of the tables at the end of the day.

**Toot Toot, Train Whistling 101**—Not many people know that trains whistle for a reason. Railroad workers use “whistle code” to communicate important messages as they travel the tracks. Just like Morse code, long and short toots combine to signify intentions and particular meanings. Visitors can find out what a “short toot” means in train language. Every child will receive a free train whistle to learn the special whistle code.

**Mail Sorting Challenge**—The transcontinental railroad was the first method of delivery that made cross-country correspondence affordable and fast. The speed by which trains traveled was dependent on the movement of the train and the work being performed by railway mail clerks riding the rails. In many cases, mail pieces were sorted as they were being transported. Many clerks were required to sort 600 pieces of mail in one hour. Visitors can pretend that they were the Railway Post Office clerks onboard the mail train by seeing how well they can sort pieces of mail into tiny cubby holes.

**Stamp Collecting Corner**—At this special station, visitors can select up to six free stamps to create their own stamp collection. Visitors will be encouraged to build a topical or themed collection on subjects of particular interest to them. Museum staff and volunteers will help visitors find stamps related to trains, China or other passions that visitors may share.

**Stamp Design Studio**—The U.S. Postal Service’s Lunar New Year stamp series features Chinese Zodiac animals. Visitors can find out which animal corresponds to the year of their birth and come up with their own design for the Chinese Zodiac stamps. Freestyle designs or coloring outlined stamp designs are available at the station.

**Pacific Exchange: U.S. & China Mail Exhibit Tour**—Today China and the United States are the world’s two largest economies, major powers that often cooperate strategically. They also share a complicated history. Using mail and stamps, this temporary exhibit brings a human scale to Chinese-U.S. relations in three areas: commerce, culture and community. Museum docents will be on hand to help visitors appreciate this captivating exhibit.

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.

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