



08/02/2010

## **Congressional Stamp Exhibit a Huge Success**



*From the Philately Department*

Imagine staging a stamp show for people who don't collect stamps and then discovering that every person who enters the room is excited about stamps, wants to learn more, and is eager to take some stamps home. This was exactly what happened at the three-day Congressional Stamp Exhibit last week, organized by Ian Gibson-Smith, member of the Smithsonian National Postal Museum's Council of Philatelists, and Phil LoPiccolo, Smithsonian liaison to Congress.



Crowds enjoy the exhibits and discussion.

Six members of Congress exhibited selected stamps and covers from their collections, and the American Philatelic Society exhibited eight frames about stamp collecting. Exhibitors included Senator Carl Levin of Michigan, “Signature Philately”; Congressmen Gary Ackerman of New York, “the 9-11 Semi-Postal Stamp”; Robert Aderholt of Alabama, “Alabama Philately and General Collecting”; Joe Pitts of Pennsylvania, “Presidents, First Ladies and Astronauts”; Silvestre Reyes of Texas, “Anti-American Politics in North Korea”; and Pete Sessions of Texas, “The 2010 Celebrate Scouting Stamp.”



Congressman Joe Pitts of Pennsylvania with his exhibit of autographs on stamps and covers.

The room was decorated with stamp posters, rotating images on large computer screens, games to play, and bowls of stamps to sort. Yes, the signs said “Free Collector Stamps,” and the self-service activity was a huge success with families and adults, all of whom selected stamps to take home. Cheryl Edgcomb organized two days of Stamp Camp, and the young, budding collectors added lots of

excitement to the event. Becky Squier and Wendy Cady staffed the postal station, offering a special three-day postmark and cacheted envelope.



The four tables with free stamps always had a focused group searching.

Ian, Phil, NPM staff, friends of Ian, plus Janet Klug, Steven Rod, and Omar Rodriguez (members of the Council of Philatelists) greeted visitors to explain the exhibits, answer questions, and spread the joy of stamp collecting. Visitors included many members of Congress, congressional staff, NASA officials, school administrators and teachers, members of the foreign service, boy scouts and their families, and tourists from across America and overseas. Congratulations and thank you to all involved. Local philatelic clubs throughout America should replicate this model!



Stamp Camp graduates met Congressman Glenn Thompson of Pennsylvania.