



# San Jose Stamp Club Newsletter



Whole number 142

February 2010

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## Northern California Trivia

- Q. What town was laid out on a portion of the Rancho Bolsa Nueva del Cojo in 1864?
- A. Castroville.
- Q. Where was Governor Jerry Brown born?
- A. San Francisco.

From *Northern California Trivia*  
by Ernie & Jill Couch

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## Gung Hay Fat Choy

### Gung Hay Fat Choy

**G**ung Hay Fat Choy means "Best Wishes and congratulations. Have a prosperous and good year."

Chinese New Year marks the end of winter and the beginning of spring. It is a time for family reunions, for honoring ancestors and for thanking the gods for their blessings.

Families make great preparations for this special celebration. Before the new year, families settle debts and buy new clothes. The house is cleaned and food is prepared. Homes are filled with flowers and fruit. Oranges, tangerines, and pomeloes are picked and displayed. The colors symbolize good luck and joy.

Blossoms symbolize longevity and courage. Some Chinese believe that if flowers bloom on New Years Day good fortune will be theirs for the next year.

Trays of candied melon, coconut, lotus seed and watermelon seed are offered. They signify growth, good health, abundance and togetherness.

Scrolls or couplets are hung on walls or doorways to carry messages of good health, luck, long life, prosperity, and happiness. A popular one reads "May everything be according to your wishes." Children behave impeccably because they are warned that what happens the first day of the year may decide events for the coming year. Everyone takes care to say and do the right things and think good thoughts.

On the seventh day of the New Year everyone adds a year to their age no matter when they were born. In traditional China individual birthdays were not considered as important as the New Years date.

Information is from the internet.

## REMEMBER

After February the newsletter will not go to those who haven't renewed their membership. If you are not going to renew please advise us—if you are, please do so promptly—thank you.

### Boy Scout Stamp Collecting Merit Badge Workshops

**W**orkshops for Boy Scouts to earn the stamp collecting merit badge where held at Westpex, Filatelie Fiesta and PENPEX in 2009.

It is wonderful to see young people excited about stamps. There were a total of 45 boys attending the three workshops and 19 have completed their merit badge.

Boy Scouts is open to boys starting in the 6th grade through their 18th birthday. The ranks of Tenderfoot, 2nd class, 1st class, Star, Life and Eagle are earned through a combination of outdoor activities, life skills, and service to the community. Boys earn a minimum of 21 merit badges to earn the rank of Eagle Scout. There are over 120 merit badge choices of which 12 are required and the balance are the boy's choice.

Unfortunately, stamp collecting merit badge has fallen to be one of the five fewest earned badges with only a little more than 1,000 boys earning it in 2007. It is apparent from the response that the problem is a lack of opportunity to earn the merit badge due to the materials needed and the lack of counselors.

Given the opportunity, young people are interested in learning stamp collecting. The stamp collecting merit badge requires the boys to learn the basics of philately including stamp identification (definitive, coil, commemorative, airmail, booklet pane, etc), use of the basic tools (tongs, hinges, perforation gauge), and some history of stamps. The final requirement is to create their first stamp collection. It can be world-wide, a country or a topical. The most popular choice is to build a topical collection which requires 75 different stamps on the selected subject. As one might expect, the most popular topics are those boys stereotypically like including: airplanes, space, animals, cars, trains, and cartoon characters. It is also popular for boys to build a collection of 100 stamps from

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