

### A Message From Our President Wes Speake

Dear Members:

Spring 2021 is upon us. Springtime in Corona is one my favorite times of the year. Unfortunately the days of the aromas of lemon and orange blossoms wafting through the entire area are gone. You can still get that feeling at a few of the groves that are still scattered around town. The best place you can go, legally, is Corona’s Heritage Park. I like to take a stroll among the trees at the park a couple of times of year to remember what it was like to live in Corona in the years past. Just don’t pick the lemons. The Park sells its crop every year to help fund its preservation efforts and programs.

Since we can’t meet in person, for our 1st Quarterly Meeting we will be presented via a ZOOM virtual meeting: “1949 Corona, a “Snapshot in Time, in Color” on March 20th at 10 am. More information will be provided at the end of this article and an email notice will be sent with the “link” information, before the meeting.

#### Forgotten Developments

Corona has been the place of wild dreams of development, plans and profit since its inception in 1886. Robert Taylor advertised Corona as this utopia of affordable land, plentiful water and the promise of profitable ventures no matter what you wanted to do. Various development projects have great names like Eagle Glen, Sierra Del Oro, Fairview Estates or Corona Hills! However, for every fanciful name that has stuck, there are tracts that were planned, some built, some not, but the names vanished; like the Speedway Tract on West 11th street from Grand to Vicentia, subdivided in 1915 and developed between 1917 and 1939, after being used as the pits for the 1913 and 1914 Road Races. Its development was most likely the reason the start/finish line was moved to northwestern part of Grand Boulevard for the ill-fated 1916 race. The Bungalow Park Tract, subdivided in 1909-13, located at the north east corner of Buena Vista and 6th Street. It was later purchased in 1913 by the School District for its 2nd High School built in 1923.

#### Corona’s Wilderness for Sale

However, one development was subdivided in 1924, sold parcel by parcel to “city folks” in Long Beach and Los Angeles as a getaway into the Wilderness of Corona. There was the 236-lot subdivision known as The Wildwood Glen Cabins Sites marketed in 1924-1927 as an area to get away from the city, “plenty of wood and fresh mountain water” all for \$50-\$75 for each 1200 to 3000 sq ft cabin site parcel. The Boy Scouts regularly hiked to the area in the 1920s starting



Wildwood Glen site in 2021



Wildwood Glen cabin site in 2021

out at American Legion hall on Main Street to Wildwood Glen for picnics. Parcels made their way back on the market from 1928 to 1935. Few actually built small cabins. The number of cabins on topographic maps from 1947 to the 60s never showed more than 7 small cabins, but most remained undeveloped, but all sold. Fires were frequent in the area, and it burned in 1926, 1935, 1947 and 1972.

#### The Tax Man Cometh and Secession?

Just like today, regardless of whether a property was improved, you still have to pay property tax, in those days you paid both to the County and the City. The people who bought these parcels seemed to be unaware of this fact, taxes ranged from \$ .88 to just over a \$1.00 per year. In 1926, over 26 of these parcels received delinquency notices and were to be sold at auction. Several are featured in auctions through the 1920 and 30s. These assessments were seen by the owners as outrageous seeing that there were no paved roads or other city improvements. In May 1935, a petition signed by 12 owners of Wildwood Glen Cabin subdivision, all from Long Beach, demanded to be un-incorporated from the city of Corona.

“We did not ask for incorporation. Some property between our area and city has no city tax. The county taxes are high enough to cover all cost of the upkeep of the roads, etc., in the area. The property is not used for production or profit-making. When fire broke out in this area, the city would not and did not give assistance. No city water, gas, electricity or city-controlled roads within two-miles of the area.”



#### Tract Owners Would Reject City Jurisdiction

Corona Courier Headline, Friday, May 19, 1935

The notion of annexation was quickly struck down by City Attorney Walter Clayson and City Clerk Hinkley. This area was always a part of the city. A week later, the City attorney reported back to council: “The road to dis-incorporation is a long, arduous trail for those who would secede from a municipality and those who would escape from a municipality boundary and can only do so with the consent of the majority of all residents.”

The city attorney advised the petitioners of the requirements

## President's Message continued

and the issue promptly died. So, this begs the question, what happened to this subdivision? As properties defaulted over the years parcels were consolidated and subdivided again. The 236 original lots now make up 5 large parcels. Only three original parcels remain in the original configuration. Block 7 lot 11, is the largest at 55 ft by 100 ft and two tiny 30' by 80' lots on Block 8. One house is currently on the site, but it was built in 1972.

Sadly, no cabins remain but standing at the edge of the Canyon you can imagine what it must have been like in 1924 being driven up miles of dirt roads through dense groves to a very remote area staring at the recently formed Cleveland National Forest. Today, it's virtually the same untamed area.

Sincerely,

WES



## Virtual Quarterly Meeting

Saturday, March 20<sup>th</sup> at 10 am.

*"1949 Corona, A Snapshot in Time, in Color"*

CHPS will present a ZOOM event for all our members!

Various color film images/slices of life in Corona in the summer and fall of 1949, including Sixth Street, Main Street, the Corona Theater, City Hall and the City Plunge and other locales will be seen.

An email with the link will be sent to all CHPS members a week before the event.



## A Corona Hidden Figure: Mary Alice Sutter By Shaylene Cortez

Last year the question was posed to a Corona social media group: Who was the first female judge in Riverside County? Many responded with Janice McIntyre who was appointed in 1981, which is exactly what Google and Wikipedia reported. However, that is not quite true. It seems Corona has its own hidden figure. Her name is Mary Alice Sutter.

Who is Mary Alice Sutter? After much research, it was confirmed that she presided as judge of the Corona city court, as well as justice of the peace of the Temescal Township justice court in the 1940s and early 50s. Having been a paralegal in the Riverside area for over 30 years, I was immediately drawn in by her and admired how a woman in that era could hold such a position – and not even be an attorney or have any formal legal education. Not only was it unheard of for a woman to hold such a position, but it was obvious she was well respected by everyone in the community and was afforded a "seat at the table" at various events where normally only a man would be accepted.

During that time, Corona had two courts: the city court (sometimes referred to as police court) and the Temescal Township justice court. The city court handled matters filed by the Corona Police Department, which primarily appeared to be citations for intoxication, drunk driving and vagrancy. The justice court heard matters occurring outside the city limits including citations issued by the local game warden and the highway patrol. Judge George E. McCauley not only sat as judge of the city court, but also sat as justice of



Courtesy Corona Public Library

the peace of the justice court. Both courts were located in Corona City Hall.

In the late 20s, our hidden figure came out to California from Indiana with her husband and two children where they settled briefly in Hemet. Wallace C. Sutter was active in chamber of commerce work at that time and Mrs. Sutter was the secretary of the Hemet Chamber of Commerce. In 1934 Mr. Sutter was noted as the head of the Riverside County Welfare Bureau in Beaumont and was very active in local business

matters there.

The family moved to Corona in 1930. Their daughter, Winifred, was a concert singer and graduated from Corona High School in 1931. Mrs. Sutter was active in the community as the secretary for the Corona Business Men's Association.

Her marriage seemed quite interesting. The 1930 census notes her as divorced/head of household and her 27-year-old daughter Winifred lived with her. An article in the newspaper made a big deal about her buying the E. L. Toolen property at 103 Southeast Boulevard as a single woman, and that she lived there with her daughter and mother. She later bought a home at 1104 Sheridan. The 1944 voter registration and documents thereafter note Wallace living there with her.

When the reporter interviewed her in 1966, she was living at 506 E. 8<sup>th</sup> Street. She was an active member of the First Church of Christ Scientist.

In January 1935, Mrs. Sutter was installed as clerk of



# Mary Alice Sutter continued

the Temecula Township Justice Court. She was appointed by Justice George E. McCauley. The following year, she filed her papers to run for city clerk in Corona. While she did not win the April election, moss did not grow under her feet. She was quickly elected president of the Riverside County Republican Women's Club. She was also the first president of the Corona Soroptimist Club.



Mary Alice Sutter's home at 1104 Sheridan Street

In July 1944, Mary Alice Sutter was appointed to act as judge as Judge McCauley was granted time off to attend the Lion's Club convention in Chicago. Because it was impossible to have two persons serve at the same time, Judge McCauley resigned effective July 28 with the city council noting he would be reappointed to the position when he returned. For the next couple months, Judge Sutter heard misdemeanor matters and carried out sentencing in a very fair manner. And, of course, after a few months off, Judge McCauley returned to the city court bench with Mrs. Sutter returning to her duties as clerk of the justice court. So take that Google: The first woman appointed as judge in Riverside County was Mary Alice Sutter in July 1944. Due to his failing health, Judge McCauley realized he needed to slow



Photograph of Judge McCauley  
Courtesy Corona Public Library

down. He stepped down from his duties as city judge and happily passed them on to Mary Alice Sutter. The local newspaper strongly endorsed her for the position.

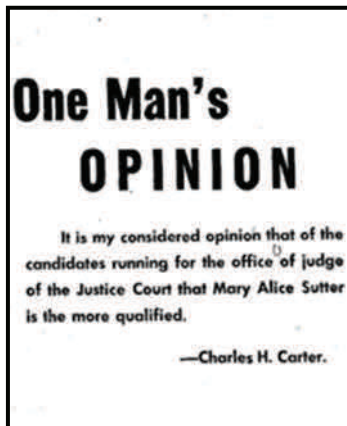
Judge McCauley lived in Norco until he was "strong armed" into selling his farm – located at 5th and Western, to the U.S. Navy. He moved to Corona at 924 Park Lane. Then in 1948 he

lived at 821 E. Grand Boulevard.

On July 1, 1947, at the age of 57, Mary Alice Sutter assumed her new duties as city judge and an office at city hall was remodeled for her. McCauley continued as justice of the peace of the Temescal Township justice court which was located next to her office. In the months following, the local newspaper documents how very busy she was. In 1948, she even presided over a jury trial. Thereafter, she would

further preside over Judge McCauley's cases when he needed a day off. In March 1950 Judge Sutter took McCauley's place in the Temescal Township justice court after he became ill and suffered from exhaustion. The local newspaper noted how capable Judge Sutter was in assuming these duties.

Sadly, on May 5, 1950, Judge McCauley passed away at the age of 80. The justice court came to a standstill. The temporary appointment of Mary Alice Sutter as acting justice of the peace of the Temecula Township justice court automatically ended with his passing. The justice court clerks were also terminated as they are appointed by the justice of the peace. However, Judge Mary Alice Sutter continued in her position as city judge. It was now up to the County Supervisors to fill the justice post left vacant by the death of Judge McCauley. Once again, the community supported Judge Sutter.



## One Man's OPINION

It is my considered opinion that of the candidates running for the office of judge of the Justice Court that Mary Alice Sutter is the more qualified.

—Charles H. Carter.

Local attorney and former School Board Trustee, Charles Carter published this endorsement of Mrs. Sutter

The local newspaper stated, "the justice of the peace is a position of vital importance – much more than realized." Unfortunately, a few days later, on May 15, the County Supervisors appointed Alexander M. Rowell as interim justice of the peace.

Alexander M. Rowell served as justice of the peace until January 8, 1951, when he was appointed by the Riverside County Superior Court

# Mary Alice Sutter continued

as receiver for the Springborg Hotel. W.S. Caudill was subsequently elected justice of the peace of the Temescal Township justice court.

The newspaper was correct. A January 1951 report notes that, during 1950, when Mary Alice Sutter sat on the bench, a total of 1,784 cases were heard in justice court and \$23,688 in fines collected. Of those, 1,019 were traffic cases; 49 felony cases; 168 fish and game violations; and 140 miscellaneous misdemeanors. Small claims cases totaled 360 and civil suits numbered 48.

In the beginning of 1951, Chief Justice Gibson, of the California Supreme Court, spoke to a civic group in Corona about the court situation. He stated, "The present system is too complex; that the courts over-lap and duplicate each other and that many operate on a part-time basis." He further explained that in November California would vote on re-organizing the lower courts. If the law passed, as appeared likely, candidates for positions corresponding to the present justice of the peace and city judge will have to be attorneys or pass qualifying examinations. The new law would be effective January 1, 1952, and only one judge would be elected for Corona. Judges would be elected for six-year terms and not appointed as city judges are now.

The newspaper editor noted, "We believe Mary Alice Sutter would be able to handle the combined position for the 18 or 19 months until the new law becomes operative."

In January 1952, it was noted that Judge Sutter and Justice Caudill would not be required to take the qualifying examination if they so chose to run for their incumbent seats in June. In February it was noted that Mary Alice Sutter announced her intention to run for Temescal Township Justice of the Peace against three others: W.S. Caudill, Alexander Rowell and attorney James Angell.

The June election was held and Mary



**17 YEARS OF  
EXPERIENCE  
IN COURT  
IN CORONA**

- ★ Five years in judicial capacity as City Judge.
- ★ 12 years previously with the late Justice of the Peace George E. McCauley.

This training and judicial experience properly qualifies

**MARY ALICE  
SUTTER**  
to be JUDGE OF THE  
JUSTICE COURT OF  
TEMESCAL JUDICIAL  
DISTRICT.

Alice Sutter won her place in a runoff with W.S. Caudill in the November election. She had 2,047 votes; Caudill 1,797; Angell 1,537 and Rowell 902.

But alas, in December 1952, the final tally for the election was Willie S. Caudill, 5,700 votes; Mary Alice Sutter, 4,000. W.S. Caudill won the seat for the Riverside County Superior Court, Temescal Judicial District Court justice.

On January 5, 1953, the records of the city court were turned over to Judge Caudill as newly elected justice of the Temescal Judicial District Court. Judge Sutter responded to the election loss with, "While the work at times has been arduous and every judgeship admits of grave responsibilities, yet there has been a joy in service and a remuneration far in excess of a dollar and cents value."

In 1966, the local newspaper interviewed the 77-year-old Sutter. Her daughter, Winifred, was married to the Corona police chief, Joe Greer, and her son, Charles, worked for Paramount Studios. The reporter described that she was, "Sitting in her rocking chair, pearl earrings glowing quietly under the soft wave of her grey uncut hair." She described being the police judge was the best as, "It calls for the highest and best in you, because it is a serious thing to deal with people's lives."

In the March 8, 1973 *Corona Daily Independent* she wrote, "Corona has always worn a crown. From her inception, being founded on the finest and fairest of values, she has been known as "The Circle City." Her foundation is securely entrenched. With clear vision of high and lofty ideals, honest toil, sacrifices of times demanded, she has always remained open to safe and reliable progress. Her foundation cannot be shaken nor her good impaired. With all the progress, development and growth that lie ahead, let's keep in mind the basic values of "A LITTLE TOWN" - and use

them as a nucleus around which to

## AL GANAHL TO THE VOTERS:

In my opinion Judge Mary Alice Sutter should receive the majority vote for Justice of the Peace at the coming election. She made an outstanding record for efficiency and integrity as Clerk of the Justice's Court, under the late Judge McCauley, during twelve years from 1935 to 1947, then served with distinction as City Judge of Corona during the next five years.

Her 17 years of faithful service rendered to the people of this district in these two courts call for the approval of the voters. In the primary the vote for her was 2236; the vote for her opponent was 1805.

Without disparaging in the least the good work done by her opponent in his two years in office, I regard it as my duty to recommend earnestly a majority vote now for Judge Sutter.

A. E. (AL) GANAHL

Another example of the support of other members of the community was this endorsement of Mrs. Sutter by noted local attorney A. E. Ganahl as seen above.



# Mary Alice Sutter continued

build. If we are to continue to be a most desirable place in which to live and work, "togetherness" is an essential. Respect for an orderly city, strength in business and social structures, appreciation of work and its attendant provisions-these and other fine qualities are requisite and worth striving for."

Mary Alice was always referred to as "Mrs. Mary Alice Sutter.."

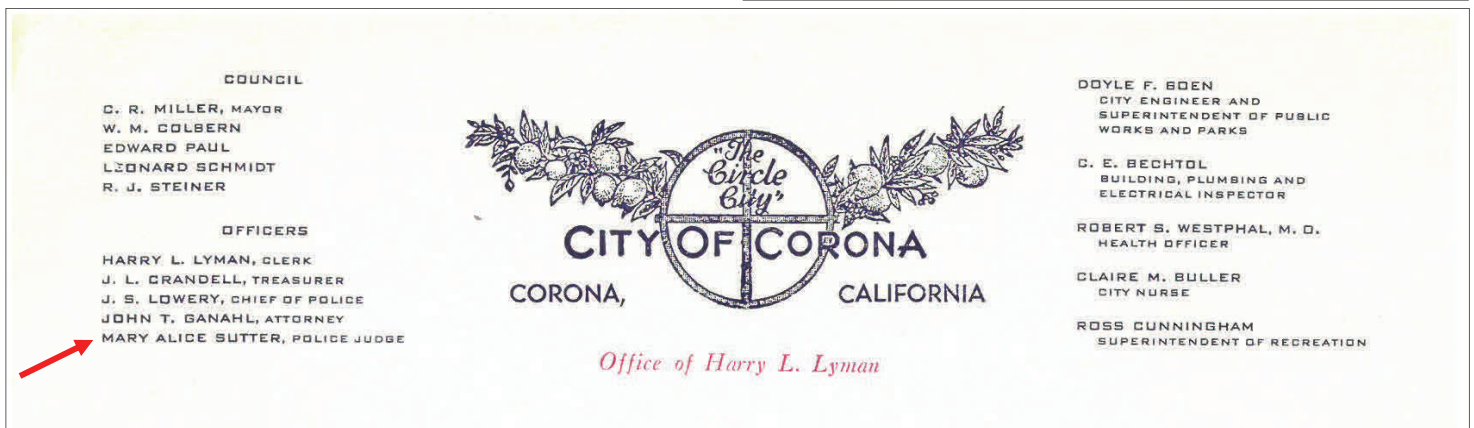
**Mrs. Mary Alice Sutter**

Mary Alice Sutter died at the age of 94 in 1984. Her picture hung in the Corona court until it was donated to the Corona Public Library's Heritage Room for archiving. Newspaper articles throughout her years note her participation in the League of California Cities and various groups. Of interest is, while all women in the newspaper articles were referred to using the format "Mrs. Wallace Sutter"

Mary Alice Sutter Corona City Court 1947 - 1953	Willy S. Caudill Corona Justice Court 1953 - 1961	J. William Mortland Corona Municipal Court 1969 - 1976
Michael F. Flynn Corona Municipal Court 1976 -	Robert J. Timlin Corona Municipal Court 1976 - 1980	Charles F. Pendleton Corona Municipal Court 1981 -

This memorial plaque with the names of all the judges of the city court was removed from the old City Hall at 719 South Main Street, when it was demolished, and placed in the custody of the Corona Public Library for safekeeping.

Below is the official letterhead of the City of Corona from the City Clerk's office in 1949. It is important to note that Mary Alice Sutter is listed as the police judge. Courtesy City of Corona Clerk's office



Described from left to right, Corona Police Officer Bob Talbert, Police Chief Joe Greer, and Officer Dave Semple congratulate each other. No date was provided. Courtesy Corona Public Library

This home below at 506 E. Eighth Street is where 77 year old Mary Alice Sutter resided in 1966 when she was interviewed by the local newspaper mentioned on page 4. Her daughter Winifred was married to Corona Police Chief Joe Greer.



# Riverside County History Symposium

The Riverside County History Symposium is scheduled for **Saturday, March 6, 2021**. It was initially scheduled to be held in Corona at the historic Corona Theater building at 211 East Sixth Street. Unfortunately, California's COVID-19 pandemic gathering restrictions made that impossible.

We have been informed that the Symposium scheduled for **Saturday, March 5, 2022** will be an in-person symposium to take place here in Corona with all the particulars to be announced in December of 2021 or January of 2022. Of course, we will provide details in this *CHPS Newsletter*.

**A virtual History Symposium is planned through a ZOOM meeting.**



**REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN HERE:**

[www.riversidecountyheritageassociation.org](http://www.riversidecountyheritageassociation.org)

**Please log-in to ZOOM early to ensure you can 'get in' to access the symposium.**

**Questions?** Contact Steve Lech at 951.686.1476 or email him at [rivcokid@gmail.com](mailto:rivcokid@gmail.com)

## Presenters:

**10:00 A.M.** - "Willie Boy from Native American Voices" - By Dr. Clifford E. Trazfer (Distinguished Professor of History at UCR) and Rupert Castro (Chair in American Indian Affairs at UCR)

**11:00 A.M.** - "Edna Hall Swanguen" - Portrayed by Michelle Elling. Edna Hall Swanguen was a wife, mother, and owner of Hall's Café, the first restaurant in Temecula. Edna was also the switchboard operator for the entire Temecula area for over 25 years.

**11:30 A.M.** - "E. Hale Curran" - Portrayed by Mindy Johnson. E. Hale Curran was a business woman who grew up in the Fountain House Hotel and was employed at Guenther's Murrieta Hot Springs Resort. During her 99 years, Mrs. Curran lived a fascinating life.



**11:00 A.M.**

Edna Hall Swanguen will be portrayed by Michelle Elling.

Edna owned and ran Hall's Café, the first eatery in Temecula.

Also, for 25 years Edna was the switchboard operator for the entire Temecula area.



**11:30 A.M.** This was Fountain House Hotel in Murrieta where the fascinating E. Hale Curran grew up. She will be portrayed by Mindy Johnson.

# Membership Information

**When joining or renewing your membership, please make your  
tax deductible check payable to "CHPS"**

Individual Member \$30.00  
 Family \$40.00  
 Student \$15.00  
 Business \$60.00  
 Patron \$125.00  
 Life \$600.00

**I'd like to volunteer!**

Hospitality refreshments   
 Newsletter writing articles   
 Vintage Home Tour  
     docent / volunteer   
 Board of Directors

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Gift from \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Status: Renewal  New

**Please complete and mail to:**

**CHPS**

**P.O. Box 2904**

**Corona, CA 92878**



## We Welcome Our New & Continuing Members

Janis Dority  
 David & Sharon Hall  
 Patricia Johnson Knoeckel  
 Georgia Lambert Randall  
 Nathan & Roberta Reed  
 Akio & Helen Yoshikawa

## Home Preservation Grant Program

The CHPS Grant Committee along with the Board of Directors of the Corona Historic Preservation Society would love to assist local homeowners in making exterior improvements to their historic homes.

We will process any application within 60 days after submittal. Once a grant has been approved and reimbursement limits established, funds will be made available upon completion, inspection and onsite final approval.

Take this opportunity to do some fixing up and have part of the material cost covered by CHPS. Remember we are interested in helping people beautify their homes for others to see, so applications are primarily for curb appeal projects. If you have a place that you feel needs help, either your own



or a neighbor's, please contact CHPS Home Preservation Grant Program Coordinator Rich Winn at [rwinn141@gmail.com](mailto:rwinn141@gmail.com)/714.328.0010. We will assist you in any way possible to provide the information you need to complete the application process.

Grant applications are available at the Community Development Department at Corona City Hall at 400 South Vicentia, and at the Heritage Room of the Corona Public Library.

More information and grant applications may also be downloaded from our website:  
[<http://corona-history.org/grants.html>](http://corona-history.org/grants.html)

***Please share this information with others!***





Corona  
Historic  
Preservation  
Society

## Board of Directors

President - Wes Speake  
Vice President - Eric Bergreen  
Secretary - Shaylene Cortez  
Treasurer - Richard Winn

### Directors

Janis Dority  
Chris McCoy  
Paula Muñoz  
Amelia Nieves  
Mary Winn

### Advisors

Marla Benson  
Ted Taylor



To contact us call  
**951.898.2044**

*Please leave a message*



## Our Mission Statement

The Corona Historic Preservation Society (CHPS) is an active nonprofit tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization dedicated to the PRESERVATION, PROTECTION and PERPETUATION of Corona's historic sites, buildings, neighborhoods and resources. We do this through education, community events, preservation projects and tireless advocacy for the benefit of present and future generations.

## Monthly Meetings\*

CHPS Board meetings are held each month to transact Society business, discuss issues affecting the Society and preservation of local historic resources. [\*During the COVID-19 Pandemic while Stay-At-Home orders are in effect, meetings may be held via electronic means.

Contact CHPS President Wes Speake if you wish to be included in an electronic meeting.]

**All members are invited to attend.**

The next meetings are scheduled for:

**Thursday, Mar. 18, at 6:30 p.m. at CHPS office**  
**Thursday Apr. 15, at 6:30 p.m. at CHPS office**



[www.Corona-History.org](http://www.Corona-History.org)



Corona  
Historic  
Preservation  
Society

P.O. Box 2904  
Corona, California 92878-2904



*It's always great fun to ride in style!*