



# AORTA Bulletin

A publication of the  
Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates

Issue 123

Aug 2000

Since 1976

## 2nd Cascades begins Oct 6

*Salem-* A second *Cascades* train begins service between Eugene and Portland Oct 6. The new train will depart Eugene at 9:30 am, arriving in Portland about noon. The southbound train departs Portland at 5:30 PM, arriving in Eugene about 8 PM.

*Cascades* train #750, which currently departs Eugene at 6 am, will leave will depart 15 minutes earlier, and arrive in Portland about 8:20 am. Southbound departure from Portland for *Cascades* #755 will be 9 PM.

A third train, Amtrak's *Coast Starlight*, and two Amtrak Thruway buses, also provide service between Portland and Eugene.

Disappointing to **AORTA** members, the Eugene-Portland corridor will lose one of the three round-trip Amtrak Thruway buses. Frequency of service is very important for building patronage in the corridor, according to **AORTA**'s Fred Nussbaum. "While **AORTA** is pleased with added rail service, this should be an opportunity to increase frequency to promote ridership growth." Nussbaum serves as **AORTA**'s representative on the Oregon Passenger Rail Advisory Committee.

While the change will not increase frequency of service, ODOT's Bob Krebs expects the train to eventually attract about three times the number of passengers as the bus it replaces.

On September 20, Amtrak Thruway bus service was added between Portland and Astoria. The bus will connect northwestern Oregon coastal communities with the Cascadia corridor in Portland (*see story on page 4*).

For information on current schedules, fares, and to make reservations, call Amtrak at 1-800-USA-RAIL or visit Amtrak on-line at [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com).

## AORTA Annual Mtg Oct 28

*Portland-* **AORTA**'s Annual Membership Meeting is scheduled for 11 am, Saturday, October 28 at First Congregational Church, 1126 SW Park Ave (corner of Madison and Park) in Portland.

Featured speaker will be Gene Skoropowski. Skoropowski is the manager of the highly successful *Capitol Corridor* system, which serves the area from Sacramento to San Jose. He has demonstrated success in working cooperatively with Union Pacific Railroad to establish frequent rail passenger service without compromising freight operations.

He is a former vice president of the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) and currently serves as a NARP Director from Region 12 (California). Gene has worked for Southeast Pennsylvania Transit Agency (SEPTA); Fluor Daniel, an engineering and consulting firm; and the Florida High Speed Rail Project (FOX) that was killed by the state's governor.

Skoropowski is based in Oakland, California. He is an excellent speaker according to **AORTA** Director Art Poole.

*Register Today!*

**AORTA**

**Annual Membership Mtg**  
**11 am, Saturday, Oct 28**

First Congregational Church, 1126 SW Park Ave  
*featuring Gene Skoropowski*

\$14 Meeting Registration  
includes Potato Bar and Soup Luncheon

The **AORTA Bulletin** is published 4-6 times a year by the

**Association of  
Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates**  
PO Box 2772, Portland, Oregon 97208-2772

A nonprofit citizen advocate group working to educate the public about the need for safe, fiscally responsible, environmentally sound transportation. Incorporated as the Oregon Association of Railway Passengers (OreARP).

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**Annual Membership:**

Introductory/senior/student/low income	\$ 10
Regular (family rate, add \$5/additional member)	20
Sponsor	100
Govt/corporate rate (budget under \$100,000/yr)	50
(budget over \$100,000/yr)	100

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Help build better transportation for tomorrow.

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## Bombardier, Inc. ventures off-track

An Aug 9 article in *The Wall Street Journal* claimed that Bombardier Inc. (Canada) was pressuring the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to take the Northwest's Talgo trains out of service because they do not meet brand new FRA safety standards. On Aug 17, the paper carried a much smaller article on page 2 retracting the statement, but it is clear to northwesterners that the Canadian-based company played a significant role in delaying FRA approval of Talgo equipment.

An editorial in *The Oregonian* Aug 16 stated "It would be criminal to force a half a million people off demonstrably safe trains onto demonstrably deadlier highways."

"If one railway equipment manufacturer chooses to sabotage or engage in activities detrimental to the interests of another, that conduct is bad for the rail industry," stated **AORTA** President Dan McFarling.

"Rail is an inherently safe form of transportation. Bombardier's recent actions in the Pacific Northwest have not made any friends among rail advocates or government officials. Bombardier makes a quality product. That is what they should be talking about."

"The market for rail equipment and the industry as a whole will suffer if rail manufacturers choose to sabotage the efforts of each other. We need to recognize our common interest and promote safe, efficient rail transportation, both passenger and freight, stated McFarling.

## AORTA seeks office, part-time staff

**AORTA** is soliciting proposals for shared office space and for a part-time employee.

Shared office space is sought, preferably with a non-profit, compatible, transportation-oriented or environmental organization. Preference will be given to central locations in the Portland metro area with frequent access via public transportation.

Part-time or shared staff would provide assistance in organizing and publicizing meetings, events, exhibits for both the state organization and chapters; fundraising, membership growth, grants; help with the Bulletin; serve as a recording secretary when needed, correspondence, etc. If interested, write to **AORTA** at PO Box 2772, Portland, OR 97208.

## NARP Pres Jack Martin passes away

Long-time NARP president Jack Martin died September 3. Martin served as President since 1979. He will be missed. Martin was 64.

Martin recently retired from Coca-Cola Company, where he served as Senior Counsel.

During a visit to California in August, the long time rail advocate was admitted to San Jose Medical Center for a quadruple bypass heart surgery.

Alan Yorker, one of four Vice Presidents for NARP, was elected by the Executive Committee as the new President Sept 7. Yorker is from Decatur, Georgia. Yorker will finish the remainder of Martin's term, which ends April, 2002. Yorker is a retired family therapist.

## Steam returning to Coos Bay

The Oregon Coast Chapter of the National railway Historical Society is working to restore a 1922 Baldwin locomotive, Number 104, to service. The non-profit group is based in Coos Bay.

The steam locomotive was built in Philadelphia, PA, and pulled log trains, sometimes as many as 100 cars, from the Powers and Fairview areas to the McCormick log dump in Isthmus Slough (Coos County) from 1923 to 1954. In 1956 #104 was sold to Georgia-Pacific and moved to Toledo, OR, where it remained on stand-by duty until 1960. It was then donated to the Coos County Historical Society. It has been on static display in Simpson Park, North Bend, ever since.

The Oregon Coast Chapter of NRHS is one of four NRHS chapters in the State of Oregon. The other chapters are based in Portland, Medford and Toledo.

Donations for the locomotive restoration project are tax-deductible and should be mailed to:

OCCNHRS -Restore #104  
c/o Art Poole  
1450 Evergreen Drive  
Coos Bay, OR 97420

### Join WashARP

One of the ways you can help improve rail passenger service in the Pacific Northwest is by joining **AORTA's** sister organization, the Washington Association of Rail Passengers (WashARP). Regular membership in **WashARP** is \$20/year. Memberships should be sent to:

WashARP  
PO Box 70381  
Seattle, WA 98107

## Train of Thought ... an editorial Questions to ponder dan l. mcFarling

In April Congress approved **\$40 billion** cash to help add runways and finance modernization of the air traffic control system over the next three years. That's over \$13 billion per year. Amtrak, on the other hand, is seeking one-quarter that amount (\$10B) in bond authorization to upgrade its infrastructure over the next ten years, or \$1 billion per year, and running into fierce opposition by some members of Congress.

**Question:** Why is it when Congress approves funds for air, highway or waterway modes, the term "subsidy" is almost never seen or heard. But ask for a relatively small amount for rail and the term "subsidy" is almost always used?  
**Answer:** There is no "good" answer. It is a distortion of the truth.

**Question:** Where do fuel taxes on aircraft and highway vehicles go? **Answer:** Almost always into a dedicated fund to expand and maintain air and highway transportation.

**Question:** Where do fuel taxes imposed on Amtrak and the freight railroads go? **Answer:** Into the general fund, which is used to build more highways and airports.

**Question:** Where do taxes imposed on airport terminals and runways, and on roads and highways go? **Answer:** Essentially all airports and all roads are lavishly funded by public treasuries as public works. Consequently, they're subject to no taxes. Their users contribute only a fraction of the funds expended on behalf of airports and roads.

**Question:** Where do taxes on railroad rights-of-way go? **Answer:** With very few exceptions, railway rights-of-way carry a very significant burden, and help fund local schools, fire districts, law enforcement, roads and airports.

**Question:** Which modes of transportation receive the most subsidy? **Answer:** If you don't already know, start at the top of this column again. And don't stop here. There is much more to be said about how long-standing government taxes, regulations and policies have subsidized, favored and promoted off-track transportation modes to the detriment of a safe, sensible, environmentally sound, fiscally responsible, transportation.

### **Amtrak Thruway bus to Astoria**

Astoria- Amtrak Thruway buses began service between Portland and Astoria Sept 20. The bus departs Astoria at 8 am, and arrives at Portland's Union Station at 10:15 am. Intermediate stops include Warrenton (8:05 am), Gearhart (8:15 am), Seaside (8:25 am), Necanicum Junction (8:35 am) Elsie (8:45 am), Manning (9:10 am) and Hillsboro MAX at Adams Ave (9:45 am).

The west-bound bus departs Union Station at 5:30 PM, Hillsboro MAX (6 PM), Manning (6:15 PM), Elsie (6:45 PM), Necanicum Jct (6:55 PM), Seaside (7:25 PM), Gearhart (7:30 PM) Warrenton (7:40 PM) and arrives in Astoria at 7:55 PM.

The Portland-Astoria route has been repeatedly abandoned by several other operators, leaving many northwest residents without any inter-city transportation.

Oregon's Department of Transportation is working with Amtrak to provide and bring stability to this important transportation link. For fares, reservations, call 1-800-USA-RAIL.

### **Willamette Valley Whistles**

#### **Philomath bus service off to good start**

*Corvallis-* The Philomath Connection began providing bus service between Philomath and Corvallis on April 24<sup>th</sup> and right from the start, it's proved to be a great idea. During the first week, 325 people rode the bus! Riders say they most often use the service to get to work or school.

The bus service connects downtown Corvallis, the OSU campus, and downtown Philomath, with six runs per day, Monday through Friday. Two runs are offered in the morning, two mid-day, and two in the late afternoon. The service is coordinated with the

Corvallis Transit System to allow for transfers at the Corvallis downtown terminal at 5<sup>th</sup> and Jefferson. Riders are also connecting with the Linn-Benton Loop to attend classes at Linn-Benton Community College.

The fare is 50 cents for a one-way ride. Transfers between the Philomath service and Corvallis Transit System are free and children under six ride free. Twenty-ride coupon books are for sale at the Corvallis and Philomath City Halls.

This project has truly been a community effort. Funding for the bus service comes primarily from the City of Philomath and an Oregon Department of Transportation grant for a trial period through June 30, 2001. Benton County is helping to pay for the leased bus and City of Corvallis staff are assisting with the implementation of the service.

More information may be found on the web at <[www.ci.corvallis.or.us/pw/cts](http://www.ci.corvallis.or.us/pw/cts)> or call 766-6998 for schedule and route information. If you have comments or suggestions, you can e-mail them to [cts@ci.corvallis.or.us](mailto:cts@ci.corvallis.or.us) or call Bernadette Barrett, Transit Manager, at 766-6916.

#### **CTS sets new ridership record**

*Corvallis-* The Corvallis Transit System (CTS) is celebrating a new annual ridership record. Four hundred seventy nine thousand four hundred seventeen (479,417) rides were provided during 1999-00. This is more than a 14 percent increase over the old record of 418,963 set in 1998-99.

That's good news for all Corvallis citizens. Assuming an average bus trip of 2.5 miles, those 479,417 rides represent 1,198,542.5 vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Because these trips weren't taken in an automobile, CTS has kept 1,181,886 pounds of pollutants out of the air. Also, thousands of gallons of gasoline and other non-renewable resources have been saved, and automobile congestion and demand for parking has been reduced. People without transportation options can get to their jobs, medical appointments, shopping, and leisure activities.

A number of factors contributed to this

ridership increase: (1) increased awareness of the bus service and its benefits through the City's Employee Transportation Coordinators (ETCs); (2) continuation of the OSU/ASOSU group pass program; (3) increased visibility and convenience through the addition of bus passenger shelters throughout the community; and (4) community events such as "Get There Another Way Week" and "Try Transit Week".

CTS began operating in February 1981 and provided 153,735 rides during its first full year

of operation. This year's ridership record highlights transit's increased role in solving the community's transportation issues. With the continued rise in gasoline prices, this is an ideal time for commuters in Corvallis to consider trying transit at least once each week to get to work or school. CTS would like to encourage Corvallis residents to adopt transit as their preferred transportation choice.

For more information contact Bernadette Barrett, Transit Manager at (541) 766-6916.

### *Shortlines and Quotes . . .*

- "Nearly one of every five shopping malls standing in 1990 will be out of business by the end of this year, according to 'Emerging Trends in Real Estate,' an annual report for institutional buyers of property... California, which pioneered so many of the drive-by conveniences that marked the auto age, is leading the charge in trying to develop old malls into places where the [automobile] is obsolete." *The Sunday Oregonian*, Jan 9, 2000.
- Your editor purchased a copy of a new book at the Oregon State Fair titled *The Saga of Pacific Railway & Navigation Co.: Punk Rotten & Nasty*. Written by Oregon author Paul Michael Clock, the 120+ page book describes in high quality pictures and in words the early history of the Tillamook Branch line. The book is available from Corbett Press, PO Box 80343, Portland, OR 97280 for \$29.95 + \$4 p&h, and at The Camera Bag in Hillsboro, Camp 18, and the Naval Air Museum in Tillamook.
- "On days when gridlock paralyzed Newark Intern'l Airport this year, Continental Airlines resorted to putting some of its short-flight passengers on Amtrak trains. Such pragmatic improvisation made sense, but also raises the question why anyone would choose to fly from Newark to Baltimore or Providence in the first place. At a time when the nation's air traffic system is strained to its very limits, it is a question gaining added urgency.  
"Congress could enhance Amtrak's ability to ease the burden on the nation's congested skies and highways by passing the High Speed Rail Investment Act before it adjourns next month." *New York Times*, Sept 21.
- While Americans complain about the "high cost of gasoline," we pay far less than people pay in Europe. **The Oregonian** reports that in the United Kingdom, for example, the average price is \$4.31. This price includes a tax of \$1.12/gallon. In Norway the average price is \$4.30. In France, the price averages \$3.81. Germany has the lowest average price reported in the article at \$3.50/gallon, still more than double the average price in the United States. *The Oregonian*, Sept 13.
- In 1970 there were 190 million automobiles around the globe. Today there are 510 million. We are already rapidly depleting the earth's limited fossil fuel. Combine the current rate of consumption with the increasing number of automobiles and trucks, and the picture for fuel and fuel prices looks very grim. This trend is not sustainable.

## State of the rails in Western Oregon

Ken Skach-Mills

At **AORTA**'s annual membership meeting in 1999, members heard an interesting presentation by Bob Melbo, President of the Willamette and Pacific (W&P) and the Portland and Western (P&W) Railroads, two western Oregon short lines with headquarters in Albany. Squarely facing the challenges of old, poor track and low freight volumes, Mr. Melbo and his railroads work hard to serve shippers in western Oregon, shippers who the larger railroads such as UP and BNSF do not serve. The following descriptions of track owned or operated by the W&P and the P&W, is condensed from Bob Melbo's talk.

The track from Corvallis south to Monroe and Dawson is deteriorating rapidly and is in danger of abandonment. In August, 1999, the W & P applied to ODOT for a grant (from TEA-21 money) to replace 19,000 ties, which would preserve the historic rail line, keep it open for another 10 years, and give W&P a chance to grow its customer base there. The Albany - Corvallis - Toledo line, built in 1888, has 200 curves between Corvallis and Toledo. Georgia Pacific, the only customer beyond Philomath, ships 12,000 - 13,000 cars per year and recently invested \$150 million in its Toledo plant, which should ensure freight traffic for another 10 years at least. If anything happened to GP, the line would be closed at Philomath. The W&P interchanges its freight with UP in Eugene, thanks to track rights on 40 miles of UP track from Albany to Eugene.

Since W&P took over the West-Side-Line, Corvallis - McMinnville, in 1993, it has replaced 25 miles of 75-pound rail with 100-pound or 113-pound continuous weld rail, bringing this line to Class 2 and Class 3. The 5-mile spur to Dallas has 90-pound rail, but needs upgraded ties, and now handles freight only up to 10 mph. The 18-mile segment to Willamina has 80-pound rail, and not enough business to install heavier track. 27,000 ties were installed a couple years ago, but the poor angle irons earn this section FRA's excepted status. W&P moves freight at up to 10 mph here. The segment from

McMinnville to Newberg had ties replaced in 1999, and is Class 2 with 90-pound or heavier rail.

W&P and P&W took over the Milwaukie - Hillsboro line in 1995, after SP installed 23,000 new ties as part of Tri-Met's West-side Light Rail agreement to get BN out of Washington County. This Class 3 rail handles 40 mph freight. The 75-pound track on the Hillsboro - Stetson Farm spur is in bad shape. But the Stetson Lumber Co has committed to 1500 cars per year, and hopes to begin shipping 15,000 cars per year to Toledo, which will allow investments to improve the track. The Forest Grove line is also in excepted status, with 70-pound rail and fair ties, but has potential for increased business, especially with Stewart Stiles truck lines. Hillsboro - Banks is the weak link in the railroad's core route. P&W leased 10 miles of it from the Port of Tillamook Bay, and rebuilt it to Class 2. P&W plans to upgrade the rest of this segment in 2000.

The Cornelius Pass Line closed in 1994 when a bridge burned. But P&W bought it in 1997, rebuilt the bridge. The line was reopened from Banks to United Junction in July 1998, tying together W&P's Astoria Line, which it acquired in 1997, to the rest of its Oregon network. This was an important connection, increasing the potential for much intrastate freight traffic.

In 2000 or 2001, P&W plans to build a 2100-foot connection at Wilksboro (near Banks) to allow direct turns there.

Ninety percent of freight traffic on the Astoria Line is between St. Helens and Linnton. An ethanol plant will open at Port Westward in 2001, shipping about 20,000 cars per year, and a new plaster board plant in Rainier will begin shipping about 2000 cars per year in 2000. Two corporations are interested in Tongue Point; one wants to open a shipyard there. Such a customer would solidify the Astoria line to its end, enabling P&W to serve other, smaller customers in Astoria. P&W will be investing \$6 million in the Astoria line over the next 2 years, to prepare for the opening ethanol plant. Melbo noted that ODOT's Hwy-30 Corridor plan was recently

*continued on page 7*

## Acela certified by FRA for operation

*Acela Express*, America's new high-speed trainsets, have received certification by the Federal Railroad Administration to begin revenue operations. This applies to all train sets.

The FRA certification allows Amtrak to operate the new trains up to 150 mph in the NE Corridor. Maximum authorized speed in curves is 130 mph at this time. [report unconfirmed]

### State of rails *continued from page 6*

approved by Multnomah County, with the caveat that the rails of the Astoria Line should be used for commuter rail into Portland.

Since building a new, 1.5 mile spur from Hopmere to Reed Quarry, the Upper Oregon Electric Line now serves the Morris Brothers' Rock Train, which runs 2 or 3 times per day, 23 miles to Tonquin, and sometimes to Hillsboro and on to Deer Island Quarry. Morris Brothers wants to open a new quarry at St. Helens, and a new aggregate facility at Linnton.

This line would be used in the Wilsonville - Beaverton Commuter Rail project, which Melbo supports. However, he wants commuter rail operations not to compromise his freight, and is concerned about getting liability protection for his companies.

P&W wants to buy more of the BNSF's Oregon Electric Line to Salem, Albany, or even Eugene. P&W plans to make BNSF an offer in 2000. Mr. Melbo thought that, should commuter rail service start, it would make more sense to begin the route in Salem, where a larger population base is, instead of Wilsonville.

In closing, it is clear that these two short line railroads are important to the economic health of many of western Oregon's businesses, and to the state in general. **AORTA** wishes success to the P&W and the W&P, in maintaining and improving their track, increasing their customer base, and remaining a healthy rail presence in Oregon.

Year  
2001

Invitation to  
join **AORTA**

Introductory  
Rate: \$10

If you are not already a member,  
we invite you to join today.

Send someone a gift membership

## VP Customer Services & Operations named

*Oakland-* Bill Duggan was named Vice President of Customer Services and operations in Amtrak West effective September 1, 2000.

"Bill will have direct responsibility for all Amtrak West product lines, including Pacific Northwest, California, Coast Starlight and Southern California corridors, Las Vegas, the Los Angeles station and the Los Angeles mechanical operations," stated CEO Gil Mallery.

"Bill has more than 27 years of extensive railroad experience. He was Regional Director of Passenger Services in Detroit, Michigan and Oakland, California, as well as District Manager in Seattle. He moved to Washington DC in 1988 to become Regional Director-Southeast. From there it was on to Chicago, Illinois as General Superintendent of the Midwest Division. He was promoted to General Manager of the New England Division in Boston with the Northeast Corridor where he was responsible for all aspects of passenger rail."

## Vote "NO" on 2, 7 and 91

The **AORTA** Board recommends a "No" vote on November 2000 Ballot Measures 2, 7 and 91. The Board finds that each of these measures is a clear and powerful threat to our cause of assuring a balanced and sustainable transportation system:

**Measure 2** - Challenge to administrative rules: provides an easy way for growth management opponents to rescind Oregon's exemplary land use and growth management goals and rules, which, among other things, encourage development of rail and public transportation.

**Measure 7** - Compensation for Effects of Land Use Regulations: threatens application of zoning restrictions and public infrastructure requirements that support sustainable transportation.

**Measure 91** - Full Deduction of Federal Income Taxes: would result in immediate major reductions in the State General Fund. Inasmuch as most of the state rail and transit programs (e.g., the Willamette Valley HSR program) are exclusively funded out of the General Fund, this would likely kill these already chronically underfunded transportation programs.

Contact the Committee for Our Oregon at (503) 231-0609 or [www.ouoregon.org](http://www.ouoregon.org) for information.

## Trucks should bear costs of mishaps

The following is a previously unpublished *Letter to the Editor* which was submitted to *The Oregonian*:

"The most recent in the unending series of injuries -- fatal and otherwise -- and of severe damage to property which incompetently driven trucks inflict prompts this letter.

"Trucking companies characteristically have no assets, other than vehicles, vulnerable to court judgments awarding reparations to the victims of that inflicted harm. Value of those vehicles is oftentimes miniscule in comparison with proper reparation.

"To remedy that situation, public agencies which oversee trucking should establish an adequate reparation fund by supplementing the registration charge for vehicles using costly public property to engage in business. Truckers from out of state should not escape that charge.

"Proprietors of trucking companies achieving mishap-free records for several consecutive years beginning with establishment of the fund should benefit from reduction in the supplemental charge.

"Were such charge applied, prevalence of bad driving practices and of faulty equipment would strongly tend to diminish, and with them, the amount needed to keep the fund solvent."

Ken McFarling

**Support balanced transportation in Oregon by joining AORTA or renewing your membership for 2001.**

**Give an introductory membership to a friend. The cost is only \$10.**



## AORTA TimeTable

Thursday, 6:30 PM, October 19

**AORTA Portland Chapter meeting**  
Portland Union Station, Room 208

Saturday, October 28, 11:00 am

**AORTA Annual Membership Meeting**  
First Congregational Church  
1126 SW Park Ave, Portland

An **AORTA Board Meeting** will be held following the Membership Meeting (approximately 2:30 PM).

### South Corridor Open House meetings:

Oct 23, 7 PM, 2310 SE 13th, Portland

Oct 24, 7 PM, 3200 SE Harrison, Milwaukie

Oct 30, 7 PM, 615 5th St, Oregon City

**AORTA's** Portland Chapter normally meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month in Room 208, Union Station. The Board normally meets on the 4th Saturday of the month in Portland, Salem or Eugene. Please call (503) 642-4077 to confirm dates/locations.

Special thanks for assistance with this **AORTA Bulletin** go to Bernadette Barrett, Ken McFarling, Ray Polani and Art Poole. Contributions, especially news for "News around the state," are always welcome.

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## Registration Form

Mail not later than Oct 23. Late reservations may be made by telephone: (503) 642-4077.

**AORTA Annual Meeting**  
11 am, **Saturday, Oct 28**  
Featuring Gene Skoropowski

Registration	11:00 am
Luncheon starts	11:15 am
Program	11:40 am

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Print Name(s)

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Phone Number

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Number  
in party

Please include check in the amount of \$14 per person. Make checks payable to "AORTA."