

Happy New Year Northern Arizona Trail Runners!

Hope this note finds everyone set for another great year of trail running. NATRA will turn 10 years old at the 12th Running of Soulstice. Ten Years!!!! The heart of NATRA continues to be the Saturday morning group runs, post run coffee at the Seasoned Kitchen, and we added a few new trails to our repertoire. The web page had another record year with just under 40,000 hits, about a 10% increase over last year. Next week marks 9 years since NATRA.org went live and sometime in the first half of 2011, the page will receive its 200,000th visit! In only its second year, the Flagstaff Trail Running Blog also remained popular with more than 8000 visits. We even added video shorts of our runs!



As most of you know, NATRA has been free to anyone who shows up since its inception in October 2001. All of the proceeds from the Soulstice Mountain Trail Run support various running/trail related events in our local community. The biggest part of the support is from many of you who run races, help with timing local events, staff aid stations, construct and maintain local trails, and help with fundraising for various local charities.



Community Support: In February 12 NATRA volunteers again staffed Aid Station 5 at the Sedona Marathon; NATRA fielded a team of bowlers who raised \$500 at the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flagstaff Bowl for Kids Sake; Soulstice runners raised more than \$3000 for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flagstaff, thus helping the organization's mission of helping children succeed by matching them with appropriate adult mentors.

Race Support: NATRA donated timing services or the timing clock to the three Kahtoola snowshoe races, the inaugural Team Run Flagstaff Snowbowl Hill Climb, the second annual free Four and the Fourth fun run, the Sedona Marathon (and staffed Aid Station 5), the Flagstaff Marathon, the Grand Canyon Marathon and of course all six Blue Cross Blue Shield of Flagstaff Summer Series races. NATRA continued to coordinate, time and sponsor the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona Summer Running Series with great help from Gail at Virtualroster.com (more on that in a bit). The Series saw an unprecedented jump in participation from 140 runners in 2009 to 194 last year (up 38%)! That is just under 200 runners that pre-registered for all six series races! The races again saw record participation with over 3000 participants as word continued to spread about how much fun and camaraderie our challenging races provide non-local runners. Also, thanks to my friend Josh Steinlage, we continued to provide thousands of free downloadable race photographs on NATRA.org. Our friends at Hopi

continued to invite all Flagstaff runners to their traditional trail runs, and I'm really pleased to see that local runners are making their way up to these great races on the Reservation. September's Water is Life Run drew rave reviews from many NATRA folks.



Trail Construction and Maintenance: NATRA helped sponsor the 50 miles of FUTS Celebration this past summer. In November we sponsored Make a Difference Day by buying Fratelli's Pizza for 60 volunteers who cleaned up and built rest stops on the Urban Trail near Fox Glenn Park. We again partnered with Flagstaff Biking Organization to sponsor food for volunteers who help "Close the Gap" through the Arizona Trail Association's trail building efforts in Northern Arizona. We continued to be Arizona Trail Stewards for the Arizona Trail Association.



High Country Runner: NATRA runners regularly contributed to The High Country Runner Arizona Daily Sun column on Sundays. What a great resource for our community! Thanks to Karen London for continuing to keep articles fresh and coming in from different writers over these past 18 months.

Racing Scene: Salomon Sports continued their generous contributions to the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona Flagstaff Summer Running Series with 30 pairs of Salomon trail running shoes for the top runners! AVDomotics contributed TWO Blue Ray Players to a raffle for runners who completed all 6 summer series races! Congratulations to Open Division champions Chris Gomez and Sara Wagner and to Master's Division champ John Bogen and Grace White Daly! Salomon again awarded \$2500 in cash prizes to the



winner of the Salomon Flagstaff Mountain Trail Championship! Kudos to winners Jared Scott and Michelle Wesson (Long Courses), and Janie Bohn and Ryan Stevens (Sprint Courses). The first Sunday in October brought on the 30th annual War Dog Run and 20 made their way to the top! To finish off the trail racing season we had a picture perfect Soulstice. Jared Scott and Sara Wagner (Open) and John Bogen and Chris Purslow (Masters) won the long course races while Chris Gomez and Janet Nelson (Open) and Steve Rhode and Grace White Daly (Masters) took the sprint course titles. The greatest victory was celebrating Cory Sheeley's triumphant return to racing by finishing Soulstice alongside her dad Tom and fiancé Gene. Once again, special thanks to the Pay 'n Take, Aspen Sports, Boyer Metal, Salomon Sports, Super Salve and our own artist David McKee for their continued support of the race. How about those Pay n' Take running gloves? Many of you also pitched in great raffle items to make the prizes even better this year!



Virtual Roster.com: I would particularly like to thank Gail Hughes for her data and event management skills. Her virtualroster.com website has greatly increased efficiencies for the beneficiaries of all the local races. So remember, when you register for races, please do so online at Virtualroster.com. The small surcharge on your credit card goes a long, long way towards helping our non-profits!

2011 is already shaping up to be another fun and exciting year. Announcements will soon be made about the 7th Annual Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona Flagstaff Summer Running Series. Registration for the lottery to enter the October 8th 2011 Soulstice Mountain Trail Run opens on January 1! There are 20 Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flagstaff fundraising spots available. Pledge to raise more than \$250 and you will secure a spot in Soulstice! Flagstaff Marathon registration is now open, and don't forget the Kahtoola Snow –or No Snowshoe race on January 9th.

In Memoriam: At the beginning of last year, Dale Shewalter, long time Flagstaff teacher and the founder of the Arizona Trail passed away. Dale was a good friend and thanks to him, we have endless miles of beautifully designed trails on which to run. The next time you are running in Buffalo Park follow the short foot trail in the park just north and east of the entrance. This trail leads to a beautiful plaque that commemorates Dale's legacy. Take a look at the Peaks, and know how lucky we were to have had Dale as a member of our community.



Happy Trails to all, Neil W.