

ALERT TOP STORY

HIGH COUNTRY RUNNING

# High Country Running: An ode to Erin Strout's community legacy

NEIL WEINTRAUB Special to the Daily Sun 26 mins ago



Last week, I wandered into an overflowing Pay ‘n Take for Erin Strout’s Going Away Party where it seemed every runner in town attended to bid farewell to one of our running community’s ringleaders.

After 16 years in Flagstaff, Erin is returning to her Pennsylvania homeland to work for her beloved alma mater, Penn State University, as an editor for the renowned Bellisario School of Journalism.

Erin has left an indelible mark on Flagstaff. She served as the executive director of Team Run Flagstaff (TRF) and as an editor and writer for Runner's World, Running Times and Women's Running magazines. She also worked as a volunteer coach for both TRF's Step into Running program and Girls on the Run of Northern Arizona

Erin's first High Country Running column, "It takes a village to get to the starting line," was published on Oct. 24, 2010, accompanied with the byline, "Erin Strout is a freelance journalist experimenting with life in Flagstaff. When she's not chasing editors or stories, she's usually chasing marathon dreams with the Run S.M.A.R.T. Project and Team Run Flagstaff."

When Erin arrived in Flagstaff she was excited to learn about the trails. According to her website, she was already a self-proclaimed "evolving running nerd." In 2011, coached by Mike Smith, her mentor and co-conspirator in all things Team Run Flagstaff, Erin placed sixth in the GoreTex Transrockies three-day race. She was also a two-time Soulstice Mountain Trail Run finisher and even conquered Team Run Flagstaff's challenging Snowbowl Hill Climb.

As TRF's executive director, Erin helped organize countless fundraisers, including TRF's 24-Hour Run on Heritage Square, the Snowbowl Hill Climb and Flagstaff's biggest race: the July 4th Downtown Mile.

In 2017, Erin co-authored her first book with Bart Yasso (of Yasso's 800s fame) "Runner's World Race Everything: How to Conquer Any Race at Any Distance in Any Environment and Have Fun Doing It." She followed that with co-authoring last

summer's groundbreaking "The Price She Pays: Confronting the Hidden Mental Health Crisis in Women's Sports - From the Schoolyard to the Stadium."

With Erin's return to Pennsylvania, much of Flagstaff's community will feel a huge loss, while Happy Valley's will undoubtedly feel a great gain. I, personally, will miss Erin and our periodic community running brainstorming sessions, but am grateful that my home away from home is in Erie, Pennsylvania, and just a few hours from Happy Valley -- so no doubt we will catch up in the Keystone State sooner than later.

On behalf of myself and the greater Flagstaff running community, we want to say a heartfelt congratulations and thank you to Erin for her 16 years of experimenting with Flagstaff and making our beloved running community even stronger. Mission accomplished!

*Neil Weintraub co-founded the Northern Arizona Trail Runners Association (NATRA) in 2001. He will voluntarily direct the Aug. 9 Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flagstaff Dave McKay Memorial Half Marathon/5K and the Oct. 11 Soulstice Mountain Trail Run for the 24th straight year. Registration for both races is open on [natra.org](http://natra.org).*

*Rachel Smith is the coordinating editor for the High Country Running column. You can email her at [rachscheid18@gmail.com](mailto:rachscheid18@gmail.com) to contribute to this column!*