

In October 2012, NATRA *entered its second decade*, and I want to thank everyone who has either participated in a group run, race, helped at a race or volunteered for trail maintenance or Flagstaff Urban Trail System cleanup day. I would especially like to thank **Paul Brinkmann** and **Scott Frost** of the *Pay n' Take*, **Jerry McLaughlin** and **Dave Barnett** at *Aspen Sports*, and **David McKee**. Their support and enthusiasm for Soulstice has been limitless. As many of you know, the Soulstice Mountain Trail race provides the extra income that NATRA puts entirely back into our community.

Soulstice: The 13th Running was most memorable this year with the Blackledge/Langham nuptials! Not to be overshadowed, Sara Wagner won Soulstice for a 6th time despite having run the Chicago Marathon just six days before! Running a much shorter distance than usual, Jason Wolfe took his first title. Between the wedding, Elvis, zombies, and a rampaging Bigfoot, this was truly an unforgettable Soulstice. I would also like to thank Steve Rhode and conspirators for catching me off guard by presenting me with the beautiful *"Godfather" of Flagstaff Running Award*.



FREE Group runs are still the core of NATRA and we continue to host them every Saturday (except race/special event days). We also helped host several special FREE runs including July 4 on the 4th, War Dog, the Flagstaff Road and Track Club's Turkey Predictor Run, Christmas Day Run, New Year's Run and of course, the epic *virtual Mayan Apocalypse 5K*.



Races Supported/Clock and Photography: Sedona Marathon, Run for the Mountain, Sacred Mountain Prayer Run, Run for Life, Gaspin in the Aspen, the free Four on the Fourth, Shadows Foundation Hearts 911 Run, Team Run Flagstaff Snowbowl Climb, Team Run Flagstaff 24 Hour Run on Heritage Square, Soldiers Trail Run, Dave McKay Memorial Half Marathon, Flagstaff Marathon, Go Big For Parkinsons, the Turkey Predictor run, and finally, the run to end to all runs, the epic Mayan Apocalypse 5K Free Fun Run. At the Sedona Marathon, NATRA's Aid Station 5 won best aid station award for our Zombie volunteers and Flagstaff Katzen's polka music!



Trail Maintenance/Cleanup Days: In July, five NATRA runners donated 30 hours to helping maintain the Fort Valley Trail System. NATRA partnered with Flagstaff Biking Organization and donated \$250 that helped feed over 100 hard working volunteers. At October's *Make a Difference Day*, NATRA fed 75 volunteers who cleaned up another proposed stretch of the *Flagstaff Urban Trail System* off Lone Tree Road.



Web Page: For the fourth straight year, **NATRA.org** had over 30,000 hits, and recently surpassed the quarter of a million mark! The Flagstaff Trail Running Blog is now the home for our weekly trail run video hosted at Flotrail.com.

Fundraising Efforts: Donations of Soulstice guaranteed entries, NATRA SweatVac Gear, and event sponsorship *raised over \$6000 for various causes*. These included Run for the Mountain Shirt Sponsor; Team Run Flagstaff's 24 hour run; Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flagstaff (10 Soulstice Spots and gear raised over \$4,000); Travis Manion Foundation (via Albie Masland's run across the country); Bowl for Kid's Sake Lane Sponsor; BBBSF Golf Tournament Hole Sponsor; Big Night Out; food for Make a Difference Day; and Flagstaff Biking Organization/Arizona Trail Maintenance. We were also especially proud to see that the documentary we helped fund production for, *Racing the Rez*, won best sports documentary at the Flagstaff Mountain Film Festival! Congrats to our friend Brian Truglio for putting together such an outstanding film!



SweatVac Gear: A special thanks again to SweatVac for continuing our Northern Arizona Cooperative Race group discount. Their race shirts and head gear are second to none and their dye sublimation process makes their race shirts the most colorful and comfortable of any t-shirt around. Remember, these shirts retail for \$28 making your race fee nearly worth the shirt alone!

Facebook: At year's end, the *NATRA page on Facebook* surpassed **950**



likes! The social network proved invaluable to the success of NATRA's December 21st Mayan Apocalypse 5K Virtual Run. 350+ runners across the globe joined us by donning their Ramble Brothers Mayan Apocalypse 5K shirts and sharing their run location on Facebook. In Flagstaff we hosted our largest group run ever in Buffalo Park!



High Country Runner Column: The Arizona Daily Sun continued to support Sunday's High Country Runner Column, now almost 4 years running. Thanks to my many of you who continue to keep the column fresh by contributing stories. We also hope to see Dear Running Guy and his guests answer many more esoteric running questions in the near future!

Thanks to *Salomon Sports* and *Virtual Roster* for their generous support of all of our events. Salomon gave the Flagstaff Summer Running Series 20 pairs of their newest trail running shoes, 20 sweet hydration systems, (more than \$6000 retail) and \$2000 to help support timing at Series races. Virtual Roster's Gail Hughes and her timing and race management services continue to ensure the sustainability of the Flagstaff Summer Series.

Salomon Flagstaff Mountain Trail Championship: By having the fastest times at all three races, Tom Viskocil (sprint), Chris Gomez (Long), and Janel Lanphere (Long) won free 2012 entry into Gaspin in the Aspen, Flagstaff Marathon and Soulstice Mountain Trail run.

Flagstaff Summer Running Series: For the 8th straight year NATRA coordinated the package of the six oldest running races in Flagstaff. A new record of just over 3000 runners registered for all races and since last year, we had a remarkable 40% increase in runners from 162 to 224 Series participants! Chris Gomez won the Men's Open Division for this third straight title while Michelle Grey won her first! Rob Decot edged out John Bogen for his first Master's title. Sara Wagner became the first Masters champ to have the highest overall women's score. Jonathan Hall and Cassidy Christiansen took the first ever youth titles! The Series also funded the first ever printing of 2500 Northern Arizona Running Calendars. This was widely distributed across the state and to all participants at the Sedona Marathon and included non-series races as well.



Picture Canyon: Finally and most proudly, after nearly a decade of grass root cleanup efforts and tireless community volunteer preservation efforts, the *City of Flagstaff purchased Picture Canyon* at auction at the end of October! Along with acquiring one of the most important archaeological sites in the region, Flag residents will have access to an extension of the Flagstaff Loop Trail and the Arizona Trail! Thanks to David McKee for mobilizing the forces for the first NATRA Make A Difference Day in 2005 that kick started an effort that many believed impossible! Never say Never!



I have lived and run in Flagstaff for 27 years and the strides many folks and groups continue to pioneer have made Flagstaff a healthier community! Do not forget to register for the Soulstice Lottery on January 1st at VirtualRoster.com! The Summer Series will be announced soon after the New Year and I hope to see the continued increasing participation of our Flagstaff youth! Happy Trails to 2013!

Best, Neil Weintraub