

Happy New Year Northern Arizona Trail Runners!



Hope this note finds everyone set for another great year of trail running. In 2009 the Saturday morning group runs continued as popular as ever. NATRA.org smashed its own record finishing with more than 36,500 hits, or just over 100 hits a day! This was up 50% from last year and reflects the growing interest in Flagstaff's ever burgeoning running community. Most notably, we also added the Flagstaff Trail Running Blog page that highlights our group Saturday runs with free downloadable photos. By

year's end we even posted a video the first annual NATRA Polar Bear Plunge in Beaver Creek! The Trail Blog became very popular and received over 7500 hits. Our addition of the NATRA Facebook page also proved to be a valuable resource for local runners to network and most importantly, to easily find and exchange Soulstice spots. This was also a ground breaking year as the Daily Sun inaugurated Sunday's "High Country Runner" column. So far, ten local runners and coaches have contributed works and we look forward to additional writers this year. We also established a great new post Saturday run meeting spot – the Seasoned Kitchen. Tony Mangine has generously allowed us to socialize and have coffee and baked treats in his shop after runs. We copyrighted the NATRA logo and now even have NATRA fleece outerwear available!



In February, NATRA fielded three teams in the 3rd Annual 202 mile Ragnar Relay from Prescott to Scottsdale. This year, against a much larger and competitive field of 101 coed teams, the NATRA Competitive Team 3-Peted (23:47:15) in the Open-Mixed Division. Not to be outdone, the NATRA Elevation Deprivation team (26:51:14) took 6th Place and the NATRA Pine Cone Smashers (28:23:39) came in 14th.

This year again saw Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona sponsor the Summer Running Series and we added the very popular Hospice Downtown 10K. This sponsorship allowed the Series of 6 races to remain a great value at \$150. In addition, Salomon Sports continued their generous contribution to the Flagstaff Summer Running Series with 40 pairs of Salomon trail running shoes for the top runners and even greater race swag this past year. AVDomotics again contributed TWO flat screen TVs to a raffle for runners who completed all 6 summer series races! Congratulations to Open Division champions Eric Bohn and Sara Wagner, and to Master's Division champs Lisa Loughran and Richard



Doucett! Salomon Sports again raised eyebrows in the trail running world by awarding \$2500 in cash prizes (a \$500 increase from last year) to the winners of the Salomon Flagstaff Mountain Trail Championship! Zach Thomas and Sara Wagner took top honors with the fastest combined times at the 3 most grueling trail races in Flagstaff: Gaspin in the Aspen, Flagstaff Half Marathon, and Soulstice. Each won \$850. Ryan Stevens and Jennifer McCarthy each won \$400 for winning the Sprint course titles.



The first Sunday in October brought on the 29th annual War Dog Run and once again, adverse weather. To finish off the year, Soulstice had a picture perfect day. Sara Wagner's 1:25.15 smashed the women's long course record by 37 seconds. More notably, Sara defended her title and became the first runner to win Soulstice 3 times! In his first Soulstice, Michael Smith's 1:09.24 (TransRockies champ and runner up at Imogene) was a mere 14 seconds shy of breaking Jared Scott's course record. On the

Master's side, 2002 overall champion Michael Olson won in 1:22.39 and Margaret Grove won the women's title in 1:34.51. In the Sprint division Ryan Stevens' 42.23 and Jennifer McCarthy's 48.50 took overall top honors while Mark Thurston's 48.57 and Janice Lyle's 55.15 won the Master's division. Once again, special thanks to the Pay 'n Take, Aspen Sports, Boyer Metal, Kahtoola, Salomon Sports and our own artist David McKee for their continued support of the race! Many of you also pitched in great raffle items to make the prizes even better this year! Most recently, our 4th unofficial "Turkey Day Trot" saw a record 35 folks came that ran from the Middle School to Buffalo Park and then participated in the free Turkey Predictor run.



As many of you know, NATRA uses the entire proceeds of the Soulstice Mountain Trail Run to support some great community causes. In 2009, we continued our title sponsorship of the Big Brothers Big Sisters Half Marathon (Soulstice raised over \$5000 for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flagstaff). We donated the clock and timing services to the Kahtoola Uphill Challenge, all six Flagstaff Summer Running Series races, and July's first ever Four on the Fourth run! We helped sponsor the 5th annual Blue Cross

Blue Shield Flagstaff Summer Running Series, the 4th annual Salomon Flagstaff Mountain Trail Runner Championships and the 17th Annual Hopi 100 Mile Club to help stamp out diabetes! We again provided the largest aid station at the 3rd annual Sedona Marathon. In February, our bowling team raised over 500 dollars at the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flagstaff Bowl for Kids Sake. In August, we continued our annual support of Flagstaff Biking Organization's trail days by sponsoring an Arizona Trail Close the Gap day. We bought food for 60 volunteers who built new trail north of the Peaks. 12 NATRA runners and their families contributed 60 hours for the effort! Finally, we recently held a pasta making dinner at the Seasoned Kitchen raising \$140 for the Northern Arizona Food Bank.

2010 is already looking like a busy one. We will again sponsor an aid station at the Sedona Marathon this February 6th, with NATRA again decked out in black tie! In February, three NATRA teams will again compete in the Ragnar Relay. We will continue to organize the Salomon Flagstaff Mountain Trail Championship and the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona Flagstaff Summer Running Series.

Finally, mark your calendars for the 11th running of Soulstice on October 9th. Remember, we will be instituting a lottery so you must download a Soulstice registration form beginning January 1st and mail it and the entry fee in by no later than April 1. There are still a few Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flagstaff fundraising spots available. Pledge to raise \$250 by August 1st and you will be guaranteed a spot in Soulstice! Again, thanks to all of you who helped raise money by running in local races, helped volunteer or simply provided company on a group run in 2009! Happy Trails to 2010!

Cheers, Neil