

Happy New Year Northern Arizona Trail Runners!



Hope this note finds everyone set for another great year of trail running. In 2008 our e-mail list grew to 500+ and increase of well over 10% from last year! The Saturday morning group runs are as popular as ever and there are still few folks making the Monday runs. The web page had another record year with over 26000 hits, about a 10% increase over last year.

In February, NATRA fielded three teams in the 192 mile Ragnar Relay from Wickenburg to Scottsdale. This year, against a much larger and competitive field of 58 coed teams, the NATRA competitive team defended their title while the

Snow Whites surprised themselves with 10th place. The NATRA ultra team also seemed destined for a first place finish; however, an injury late in the race to an already reduced team forced them to drop out despite their substantial lead. This year also saw Blue

Cross Blue Shield of Arizona sponsor the Summer Running Series! This sponsorship allowed the Series to remain at the same \$125 value for all 5 races! In addition, Salomon Sports continued their generous contribution to the Flagstaff Summer Running Series with 30 pairs of Salomon trail running shoes for the top runners and even greater race swag this past year! And of course, AVDomotics contributed TWO flat screen TVs to a raffle for runners who completed all 5 summer series races! Joanne Keene and Mackenzie Lurie walked away with two mammoth 42" TVs for completing all 5 series races! Congratulations to Open Division champions Robert Krar and Sara Wagner, and to Master's Division champs Phil Wharton and Paula Aerts! Salomon raised eyebrows in the trail running world by awarding \$2000 in cash prizes to the winners of the Salomon Flagstaff Mountain Trail Championship! Kudos to this year's winners – Jared Scott and Sara Wagner (Long Courses), and Erin Young and Tom



Viskocil (Sprint Courses). The first Sunday in October brought on the 28th annual War Dog Run and 24 runners made their way to the snowy top! To finish off the trail racing season we had a blustery Soulstice! Despite the epic weather we had a record 197 finishers (remember, only 200 area allowed!) Jared Scott and Sara Wagner (Open) and Richard Doucett and Paula Aerts (Masters) cruised to wins in the long course races while Chris Gomez and Janet Nelson (Open) and Mark Ulm and Judy Blubaum (Masters) took the sprint course titles! 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! I was particularly pleased with Soulstice raising the bar

of local races with this year's high-tech racing shirt! Most recently, our 3rd unofficial "Turkey Day Trot" keeps growing. This year 24 folks came out on a cold wet morning to hit the Urban Trails around town.

As most of you know, NATRA uses the entire proceeds of the Soulstice Mountain Trail Run to support some great community causes. In 2008, we continued our title sponsorship of the Big Brothers Big Sisters Half Marathon. In addition, we donated the clock and timing services to the Kahtoola Uphill Challenge, Flagstaff Middle School, Grand Canyon Marathon, NAU's Go Big for Parkinson's Disease Run, and all five Flagstaff Summer Running Series races. We helped sponsor the 4th annual Blue Cross Blue Shield Flagstaff Summer Running Series, the 3rd annual Salomon Flagstaff Mountain Trail Runner Championship and October's Hopi Water is Life Run and the inaugural Grand Canyon Marathon! We provided aid stations at the Big Brothers Big Sisters Half Marathon and at the second annual Sedona Marathon. In February, our bowling team raised over 800 dollars at the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flagstaff Bowl for Kids Sake. We also continued our 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 east of Hart Prairie. 10 NATRA runners contributed 60 hours for the effort!



2009 is already shaping up to be another fun and exciting year. We will again sponsor an aid station at the Sedona Marathon on February 8th, 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. We are likely to see and increase in prize money for the trail series and the Summer Running Series is considering expanding to 6 races! Trail Runner Magazine is consider Soulstice as their top destination prize for the overall winners of their yearlong trail racing series. They just

announced that WL Gore is the new title sponsor of their series, so they may to choose Flagstaff as the top prize destination!

Finally, mark your calendars for the 10th running of Soulstice on October 10 Remember, registration opens 12 AM on April 1 and if past trends hold true, there is a good chance the race will sell out that day! We still have a few Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flagstaff fundraising spots available. Pledge to raise \$250 by April 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 2008! Happy Trails to 2009! Cheers, Neil