

As 2015 comes to a close, I am getting set to open the October 8th running of **Soulstice** at midnight tonight at <https://register.chronotrack.com/reg/form?eventID=18550>. With the race now held in my mom's memory, we had an amazingly beautiful day last October 10th and runners smashed the **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flagstaff fundraising record at nearly \$7500**. Special thanks to David McKee for his masterful poster artwork and heart-warming shirt tribute to mom, and of course to all of our amazing sponsors. Two of my fondest memories of last year's race were the Knights of the Soulstice Roundtable who took the "split the pot" fundraising method to new highs, and Steve Rhode organizing the Soulstice T-shirt evolution photo – we had runners wearing t-shirts from every Soulstice. As I am holding the "Legacy" qualifying at 7 years, we now have 80 runners who have reached that magic



number. However, legacy runner or not, you must register before the lottery held on April 1st. You can also secure entry with a minimum \$250 donation to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flagstaff (contact me if you are interested). The earlier you register the more chances you will have to win a free spot in Soulstice. For every 50 runners registered, I will randomly pull a name for a free spot. Prices will remain the same as last year. Visit <http://www.natra.org> for all the details and click on Soulstice.

NATRA again organized the **Northern Arizona Racing Calendar** and its record 32 events nearly doubled 2014's total. Look for the calendar at Run Flagstaff in early February, but know ahead of time that your favorite races will be back on the same weekends they always have been.

Our **special FREE events** continued their popularity, including the New Year's Day Run, Spring's Saint Patrick's Lap the Leprachaun 5K, Summer's Four on the Fourth July 4th Run, Fall's War Dog, Winter's Solstice Survivor and Christmas Day Runs. We continued to support the 34th Annual Flagstaff Road and Track Club's Thanksgiving Day Predictor Run (FRATC disbanded in the early 1990s but their legend continues with their annual purchase of the winning Turkey each year). We were also happy to partner with **Team Run Flagstaff and the Run Flagstaff Summer Series** to bring you the third annual Flagstaff Running Community Picnic, attended by more runners than ever.



We also continued our support the **Arizona Trail Association** and its fundraiser, the **Flagstaff to Grand Canyon Stage Coach Line Ultra Marathon and Relay**. NATRA supported runners at Hull Cabin Aid Station throughout the night, giving tours of the oldest cabin maintained on the Grand Canyon's south rim. If you have never participated in the event, you can pull together a team and register for the September 24th -25th epic fun at <http://www.aztrail.org/ultrarun/>.



NATRA's crazy antics continued for the 10th straight year at our **Sedona Marathon infamous Aid Station 5**. This past year Sambatuque and axe wielding Lumberjacks kept runners motivated to run their best. You can now register for the February 6th most scenic race you will ever run in your own backyard at <http://www.sedonamarathon.com>

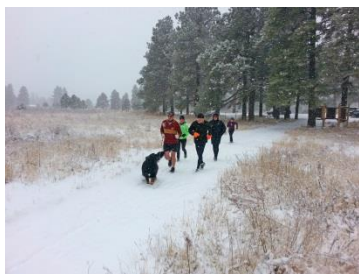
NATRA again coordinated the **11th annual Run Flagstaff Summer Series** that saw participation at record levels with 251 participants registering for the 6 race series value package. My most favorite memory of the series was of course our Run for the Mountain series opener held on the tail end of a 4 inch

May snowstorm. Not to be outdone, the monsoons raged their fury the night before the BBBSF Half Marathon with a record two inches of rain that made it even more of a challenge. Congratulations to Nick Arciniaga and Sara Wagner for repeating as overall champs, and Sara, for her unprecedented 9th straight Series title. **Nestle Purina registered 37 runners** to once again to claim the business participation award! Do you work for a company in town with a wellness program? Encourage your employer to try and get their employees running in the Series!

AVDomotics, Flagstaff Design Center and Salomon sports continued their amazingly generous support of the Run Flagstaff Summer Series with more prizes than ever. Registration opens for the 12th annual Series on January 15th and for 5+ weeks, you will be able to get the value package at the same low price it has been for the last five years, \$180 for adults and \$120 for youth ages 18 and under. Prices will rise in mid-February, so make sure you register at natra.org or runflagstaff.com before then!



The **10th Annual Salomon Mountain Trail Sprint Championship** had 8 runners complete the trio of grueling trail races that combines times of Gaspin in the Aspen, Flagstaff Marathon races, and Soulstice Mountain Trail Run. Tom Viskocil repeated in the sprint division winning his 5th overall title in 2:01:39. Janel Lanphere won the women's Long Course division in 4:54:30, while Chris Gomez captured his 2nd men's Long Course title with a combined 3:26.24.



Of course at the core of NATRA are the weekly **free Saturday group runs** which saw a noticeable upswing in attendance. We added several trails to our repertoire including Sinclair Wash/AZ Trail Loop and Rogers Lake. Thanks to those of you who have helped me maintain our **streak of never cancelling a group run in our 14+ years** of Saturdays together, no matter how brutal the weather or trail conditions. Thanks to Kelly Nicholas for her post-run baked treats, and to David Blanchard and Bruce Higgins for leading runs when I cannot be there. Make it your New Year's resolution

to join NATRA on our Saturday runs, as they are fun, free, and after all, we are really just a coffee drinking club with a running problem. I also finally wanted to thank Chris Johnson who along with his Northern Arizona University Visual Arts class redesigned NATRA.org into a much more user friendly web site.

As always, Happy Trails to the New Year.

Neil Weintraub, Director Northern Arizona Trail Runners Association