**CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT – AGM Wed 28 Aug 2019**

**Hon President, Hon Life members, Exco members and fellow Masters athletes**

**I am satisfied that over the past season, good progress has been made within WPAthletics and that we as WPMasters, as an associate member, continue to gain credibility with WPAthletics. Given our success, they have again funded the costs of stadium hire, security, medical and emergency services, and technical officials, that we require for our Masters track and field meetings. We are extremely grateful for their support.**

**We were able to hold 5 Leo Benning Challenge (‘LB”) meetings, Throws Pentathlon meeting, and our Provincial Masters Championships during the season. These events were all successful and well-attended with a season average of apprx 160 athletes per LB meeting, notwithstanding a shortage of suitable track venues and a congested ASA fixture list.**

**From a performance perspective, it was another great season as 6 new SAMA records were set by WPM athletes (Borg Stannius 3, Zelda Erasmus, Ronel Beukes & Tobias Philander – Borg incredibly set a World Masters Athletics record in the M90 Weights Pentathlon). More than a dozen WPMasters records were also set during the season. The cherry on the top was the massive haul of medals won by WPM athletes (of which 88 were Gold medals) at the 2019 SAMA Champs in Oudtshoorn – well done to all WPM athletes who made this such a memorable occasion. To the 11 WPM athletes (7 new, 4 re-awards) who were awarded SAMA colours - many congratulations for your outstanding performances. Unfortunately, the lack of qualified technical officials in Oudtshoorn resulted in poor record-keeping in certain events – SAMA have confirmed that they are looking at utilising new technology (chip recording) to address this type of issue at championships.**

**Moving forward, WPM are striving to communicate with our members through all available channels where possible, but we remind athletes that in need, the Masters section of the WPA website** [**www.wpa.org.za**](http://www.wpa.org.za) **remains an important information base for masters athletes regarding fixtures, entries, programs, results, criteria and standards. Many thanks to our secretary Leza for the work she has done here together with the WPA office.**

**We owe much gratitude to WPM member, Max Ruppert, who has done an amazing job in driving the Hytek System we are now using for our entry and results process. It has also simplified what were laborious tasks and also provided an improved statistical system that will bear fruit in the future. Max is currently exploring additional options we can add to the system to refine processes further.**

**Standards – is this not the elephant in the room ? Members have been patient here (maybe some not so patient) as we wrestle with the task of finding an optimal way of adjusting WPM standards to reflect what they should be to provide an attainable challenge to wearing the honourable WP Disa. Here again Max is comparing WP standards with SAMA medal, SAMA colours and WMA statistics to ensure we reach a fair challenge. We intend putting a member sub-committee together here to assist Max, as it is important for us to provide WPA and ASA with proof that Masters athletes be appropriately recognized for their achievements. We did see recognition this season from both these bodies in the form of masters exhibition events (M100m, W400m, M800m and W5000mWalk) being showcased @ ASA Track& Field Champs. WPA kindly funded the travel and accommodation costs for the five WPM athletes that SAMA selected to compete.**

**I need to thank the current Exco committee as well as WPM members who were co-opted for specific tasks, for their support, assistance and service, especially our retiring statistician Steve Johnston for his many years of dedication to the cause of masters athletics. The same special thanks also goes to walkers representative, Jurgen Spencer. Both these gentlemen are honorary life members of WPM so their continued input will be invaluable.**

**In conclusion, WPM would not be what it is without you the members – thank you unreservedly for your participation and support. Please let me remind you that your input is important to our organization – I know there are many sharp minds and committed athletes out there, so let me invite you to let us hear what you believe will make us not only better, but great. I wish you well for the coming season.**

**Sincerely yours**

**Bob Buck**