

Thoughts at the Turn of the Year

The year 2020 will soon be history. A year like we have never experienced before. The Corona pandemic has defined our actions since the Spring of this year. Still, time has flown by. The JGHV Executive Board met ten times this year. Video conferences lasting several hours - who would have imagined this last year - have become a common form of communication since the outbreak of the pandemic. Also, during a virtual conference, discussions were held with the representatives of the regional associations of the JGHV, the *Jagd kynologische Vereinigungen* (JKV).

The Association Meeting (*Verbandstag*) 2020 was cancelled, before legislators forced the JGHV to do so, out of responsibility for the delegates and their families. The JGHV finally felt compelled to strongly advise its member clubs to cancel the spring tests and this appeal met with broad agreement from member clubs. It goes without saying that it is not possible to please everyone. Both the cancellation of the Association Meeting and the decision not to hold the spring tests, which are so necessary for our breeding of hunting dogs, occurred for the first time since the end of the Second World War. The decision was made in close consultation between the JGHV Executive Board and representatives of member clubs and associations.

In no time at all, the test regulations "Emergency Solution Tracking - Corona 2020" were drawn up in order to ensure that all precautions were taken by the Association to prevent the test year 2020 from becoming a "bust year" in hunting dog breeding. All breed clubs worked out solutions to ensure that this year's dogs would not be lost to breeding. It quickly became clear that we are all concerned about the effective and high-performance hunting dog, regardless of the breed. Adversity brings us together!

In addition to these major challenges, there was the working meeting with the VDH and countless individual discussions with representatives from the political and administrative sectors, various statements in the context of hearings on issues regarding animal protection and hunting law, interviews with representatives of the press, issuing a wide variety of press releases and, not to be forgotten, the usual day-to-day business.

All this and much more was done for our common cause by the members of the Executive Board, our Legal Counsel, Animal Welfare Officer, Data Protection Officer, the regional representatives of the JGHV, the spokeswoman of our Competence Group on ground hunting and training facilities for fox hunting (*Schlieferanlagen*), the bodies of our association and the employees of the JGHV.

Not to be forgotten is the publication of the new edition of the "Uhde Book", in spring 2020, the organization and management of two trade fairs and last but not least the joint development of responsibilities and goals in the field of hunting dog affairs as a central task of the Executive Board. The reorganization of our IT system and the website was initiated at the same time. With the help of a tax consultant, we have eliminated past errors and were then able to turn the problems identified to our advantage. Together with the *Bundesverband Rettungshunde* (Federal Association of Rescue Dogs), the

JGHV and the regional JGHV association Baden-Württemberg (*JGHV-Landesverband Baden-Württemberg*) have initiated a European-wide pilot project on the training and use of ASP cadaver dogs, which is financed by the Ministry of Rural Areas (*Ministerium für Ländlichen Raum*). At the end of the year our Association has proudly introduced a special project: the JGHV Annual Calendar 2021 with paintings from the workshop of our Studbook Manager Peggy Dornig.

It would be dishonest to conceal the fact that the year, completely independent of Corona, also cast a few shadows for our association, which we would have gladly done without. Our Associate Member of the Executive Board Wilfried Schlecht resigned from his position in April and, in accordance with the bylaws of the Association, it was the responsibility of the President to appoint a replacement. We are happy to have found a successor in August in the person of *Revierjagdmeisterin* Anja Blank, and we are delighted that a young and competent woman has joined our team.

We would like to thank Wilfried Schlecht for his innovative ideas, his élan and his commitment, as well as our Legal Counsel Christian Fleischmann, who, taking responsibility for our common cause, performed the office of Associate Board Member on an interim basis from April to August with great dedication. Thank you Wilfried, thank you Christian!

Particularly unpleasant for the cause of animal welfare was a court decision from Hannover, which approved a non-hunting dog as a tracking dog in Lower Saxony (*Niedersachsen*). Unbelievable, and far from taking any responsibility for nature and its creatures! It was also unfortunate that the responsible ministry subsequently recognized or had to recognize the state utility tests of the ÖJV (*Ökologischer Jagdverband e.V. / Ecological Hunting Association*) Truly, not a stellar hour in the matter of animal welfare... .

Yes, the past year was very busy, incredibly busy, but doable as a team! As President of our Association, I would like to express my sincere thanks at the end of the year to all those who have contributed as part of this team. I would also like to thank all those who do the work at the grassroots level year in and year out with joy and commitment.

What would the German hunting dog movement, our Association (Jagdgebrauchshundverband), and hunting be without these hard-working people? Thank you!

Heartfelt thanks are also due to the families of our officials who work in an honorary capacity. What would we be without their support?

We, your Executive Board, have enjoyed this work and, as President of your Association, my fervent wish for these days is that we get the pandemic under control as soon as possible and that - not only for our Association - normality returns. A big wish indeed!

However, my overall positive attitude must not obscure the fact that we have major problems in the field of "hunting and dogs".

Hunting, but also its perception in society, has changed rapidly in recent years and will present us with immense challenges in the future.

The quality of our next generation deserves our special attention. Further education and training is necessary! Many talk about animal welfare - we hunters with dogs are the ones who do it! Our game has no understanding for badly trained dogs - "experts" are in demand! We urgently need to work on our practical skills as dog handlers. Handling and training hunting dogs are neither a sport nor a pure leisure activity and certainly not part of any surrogate hunting activity far removed from the needs of everyday life in our hunting fields!

The first "minor challenges" for 2021 are already emerging with the planned postponement of the Association Meeting to the summer of 2021, and there will also be a lot of other work to be done. Together we will get it done - for sure!

The JGHV team wishes you and yours a blessed Christmas and for the New Year strength, health, joy, and a zest for action, so that together we can manage the multitude of tasks for the benefit of hunting and wildlife! Stay healthy, live every day with joy.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Ho-Rüd-Ho!

Karl Walch,
President of the Jagdgebrauchshundverband e.V.

(translation by Ken Bremer)