



Dear members, friends and supporters of IGFR International,

I trust that my newsletter finds you in good health despite the continuous strain that Covid-19 places on all of us.

With this first newsletter in the (still relatively young new year), I would like to take the opportunity to give a short review of 2020 and an outlook for 2021.

2020 - a troublesome year all around

2020 was marked by the Corona pandemic, which did not leave our Fellowship unscathed. We had to cancel - for the first time to my knowledge - a world championship. Only thanks to the intensive efforts of our board member Hakim Tahri and the local organizing committee (HOC) in Morocco, we managed to postpone the planned world championship in Marrakech. Not once, but twice! Everyone who is familiar with the logistics involving reservation of hotels and golf courses and everything around that can imagine the efforts that were necessary to keep Marrakech as a venue. My sincere thanks go out to Hakim and his team for the immense efforts. Needless to say, we all hope that our world championship can take place in October, but more on this a little later.

2020 was also, unfortunately, marked by internal turmoil that severely jeopardized our Fellowship's recognition by Rotary International after the world championship in Hamburg. Fortunately, thanks to the intensive assistance of our General Secretary Lynn Lewis and the energetic support of the Board of Directors, your board were able to avert this threat and to re-establish and even considerably deepen contact with Rotary International. What have we done? We created a committee under the leadership of Bob Blum (USA). My thanks go to Carl-Heinz Duisberg (head of the Bylaws Committee) and Trevor Johnson (head of the Rules and Regulations Committee), but especially to all of you: the members

of IGFR international. You stood behind the decisions that the committee suggested and approved the work of the Board with an overwhelming majority in the first ever virtual IGFR AGM. Who would have thought we would ever need to go virtual for an AGM, let alone enjoy fellowship this way? Well, the pandemic changes things. I do want to specifically thank Peter Anderson for coming up with, and Lynn Lewis for executing the idea of going all online with our AGM.

2021 - a lot is planned despite the continuation of uncertain times

Let's put it like that: 2020 wasn't easy, but we got a lot done very successfully. And we will not sit tight on what was achieved, but we will continue our work in 2021 at the same speed. After successfully consolidating the necessary structures, the board, the general secretary and I have set our sights on the further development of IGFR International in close cooperation with Rotary International.

Update on Marrakech

The Corona Pandemic continues to put a severe strain on all of us, wherever we are. However, we continue to plan for, and organize the World Championship in Marrakech in October 23 -30, 2021 under the leadership of board member Hakim Tahri and his HOC team. We remain optimistic that we will be able to realize the great desire of our members and friends to meet again for a world championship. I have asked Hakim Tahri to update us on the plans and present to us what is waiting in Marrakech via a ZOOM meeting. Please watch out for an invitation to this meeting. Let me already make this clear: please support Hakim and his team by registering! No payment for the tournament or hotel costs will be required until the full event is 100% secured. However, Hakim and his team need to be able to plan, and therefore need to have an idea of the number of participants. You can register at www.igfr.ma, the hotel booking will be open from early March.

Update on communications

Another focus of my work and that of the Board of Directors is the continued optimization of communications with the members and friends of our Fellowship. To this end, the Committee for Communication, headed by Christian Pickel, sent out a questionnaire in January which, thanks to a gratifyingly high response rate, provides concrete information about the wishes of our members. The Board is working intensively on implementing these recommendations. Christian Pickel will report on the results and next steps at the planned virtual AGM in April.

Continuous improvement of our website is also related to this. Thanks to the great experience of our Secretary General (and especially her husband Ken), the technical possibilities of our website have been considerably extended. IGFR International can now for the first time offer active help to new local chapters and/or interested organizers of future World Championships. With board member Luc Salens, another experienced "webmaster" is intensively involved, which also leads to considerable synergies between the websites of IGFR International and GFR Europe. I thank Luc very much for his support, also because joint efforts will be of great importance in the future.

Expanding our fellowship

In the end, I am very pleased that my expressed wish for expanding our fellowship internationally is beginning to be fulfilled. Interesting applications were made by Colombia, Uganda, Russia and especially India, about which Lynn Lewis will report in detail at the upcoming AGM. The contact to India is particularly intensive due to the high motivation of our Rotarian friend Parag Sheth, who has already recruited numerous new members for IGFR International. Parag has, with great enthusiasm, recommended New Delhi as the venue for November 2022. Thanks to the intensive joint preparation with our Board member Trevor Johnson (Rules & Regulations), the Board of Directors accepted New Delhi's bid based on his approval.

The upcoming AGM

Speaking of the AGM. It is very gratifying to note that the recent survey conducted by our Communications Committee confirmed the decision for holding a virtual AGM in April of each year. Personally, I strongly support this positive vote, because this will finally give the AGM, as the most important forum of the members, the (time) frame it deserves. We will also continue to hold an information event of the Board before the respective World Championship, which will then have a more informative character.

I very much hope that I could give you as a member of IGFR International an interesting review of the year 2020 and an outlook on the year 2021, as much as we can plan it from today's perspective.

With renewed thanks for the excellent work of the General Secretary and the intensive participation of the Board of Directors and the Committees, I remain with best Rotarian greetings,

Friedhelm Zanella

President

IGFR- International



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