AMWA Members:

As our annual AWMA general board meeting approaches, now is a good time to do a year in review. It was a tumultuous year for dog sports worldwide and the AWMA experienced this as well. We felt the effects of COVID-19 on our training, the inability to hold local club training and trials, cancellation of our AWMA National IGP Championship and the AWDF National Championship, and cancellation of multiple international events including the FMBB and the FCI IGP Championships. We have chosen to have our annual general board meeting by Zoom followed by an election even though the Championship and accompanying in-person meeting were cancelled. After discussion and negotiations, the AWMA moved forward with a selection trial for the 2021 FMBB team to be held the first weekend of December to replace the team selection function of the Championship. This event is under the control of the World Championship/National Events Committee.

AWMA experienced controversy with actions taken by the board to protect the organization from legal action and to keep our members safe. The AWMA has reaffirmed our commitment to membership safety and inclusion by enacting a new non-discrimination policy.

Early this year we saw the resignation of several board members, necessitating restructuring and new appointments. Those who volunteered to fill these positions have been incredibly hard working, quickly learned their duties, and immediately began improvements to our processes. Throughout these transitions we maintained continuity for the membership and ensured that member questions were answered, scorebooks issued, memberships processed, and regular club business continued without any delays. The board remained dedicated to the business of running the AWMA and supporting the members while dealing with the added burden of controversy. The board reached out to the membership for suggestions on what should be done to improve the organization, and many of the tasks that were undertaken reflect the ideas that were received. You will see from the list of accomplishments below that our group of volunteers has been unwavering in their belief in the strength of the AWMA and the value it provides to our clubs and members. We all owe them a debt of gratitude.

As we look towards the future, the key will be to manage growth and the resulting added workload while continually improving infrastructure, providing services and resources to our clubs and members, and ensuring that we remain an inclusive organization that represents our members equally from the newcomer to the world team competitor.

In closing, 2020 has been a challenging year with COVID-19 and keeping our organization a safe place for our families and competitors. AWMA membership continues to grow as other IGP competitors look at AWMA as a safe environment with fair treatment of its members. Each member is the AWMA – you are all vitally important to the organization and the promotion of the working Belgian Malinois.

Our accomplishments are:

Growth

* 2019 approximately 350 members, currently over 420 members.
* 32 full member active clubs.
* First North Regional Championship, South Region scheduled but cancelled due to COVID-19.
* Three new apprentice judges and Randall Hoadley brought in as fully licensed AWMA judge and DOJ.
* Participation in the AWDF Helper Academy and establishment of an AWMA Helper Committee.
* First year for active involvement by Regional Directors in their regions. The Regional Directors are the communication line between the clubs and the board.

Policies

* New contract for the AWMA championship that includes oversight from the World Championship/National Events Committee.
* Policies governing the AWMA IGP Championship revised and approved.
* A clarified process for clubs to follow for retaining full club status/ability to vote approved.
* A revised policy for clubs hosting trials was created. The policy includes a reminder that AWMA clubs using an AWMA judge are entitled to a $100 rebate from the AWMA.
* Modifications to the apprentice judge program and criteria for accepting fully licensed judges from other programs completed and approved.
* A new non-discrimination statement added to the AWMA mission statement.

Financials

* Successful pursuit of converting the AWMA to a 501(c)7 organization with the IRS.
* Establishing a bank account with a nationally distributed bank to facilitate banking across the country.
* Movement of all AWMA financial records to online QuickBooks.
* Increased funding ($5,000) for the championship voted on and approved.
* Funding for regional events voted on and approved ($400)

Communication

* A new communication platform for the board (gaggle) was implemented.
* A new mechanism for voting (ElectionBuddy) for the board was implemented.
* Updated email communication format for membership has been used to disseminate information.
* New website created with revised and updated content and automatic data entry.

Updated/new forms and information, including:

* Revised judge’s forms compliant with the new IGP rules.
* New forms for membership applications/renewals.
* New forms for club applications/renewals.
* Updated forms for scorebook applications.
* Online event application form for clubs that automatically contacts all signatories/approvals.
* Trial reporting forms that automatically transmit information to a database.
* AWMA trial rules document based on the FCI IGP rules created and made available.
* Database to track clubs that includes dues payment, trial/event dates, required AWMA membership within clubs, etc.

Collaborations

* Continued interactions with the FMBB.
* Engagement with the AWDF.
* Positive interactions with the ABMC.
* Interactions with USMRA on uniforms and entries for the FMBB.
* Interactions with the agility community for entries for the FMBB.