

The Year Comes To An End – a few thoughts



What has happened in the year 2020, which is now coming to an end? Far too much, in our opinion. Nevertheless, we- the Trio behind www.pfeifenblog.de – would like to highlight a few scenarios that, like much else, are closely linked. First and foremost, the Covid-19 pandemic, which changed so much this year, created serious interferences in the way we all interact with each other and opened up so many rifts in relationships and relations that were thought to be long gone. The failure to persuade governments to enact effective dirigiste and ultimately enforceable regulations/laws to reverse global environmental degradation is totally inadequately and insufficiently described as a „tragedy“ and shows, for those who want to see it, who is in control of the world. Apart from a world war for leadership in the global economy and for supremacy in the rapidly increasing, completely dehumanised capitalism of a new type, being waged by two major powers, which is using the deliberately misguided geo-politics as a welcome platform.

At the same time, we would like to thank you for the attention you have once again paid to pfeifenblog.de this year. Almost all of the so beloved pipe and cigar rounds and gathering have become temporary victims of the pandemic, which is tantamount to a catastrophe that seamlessly follows on from much more important, worsened living conditions. Perhaps through our articles we could contribute to make solitary pipe and cigar smoking a little more bearable. Stay in touch with us ... and above all, be careful and stay healthy.

The Trio of Pfeifenblog.de

-Alexander, Bodo und Peter-

Bodo Falkenried

The Orange Man didn't make it, not the other polarised autocrats in China, Brazil, Iran and ... yes, actually, these species exist, as always, everywhere in the world, in priority positions. Covid 19 also does not and continues to be absent from it: the globe turns unchanged (it knows how to do it) and has done so in the past 12 months, unimpressed by the adversities that, diligently produced by the supposed crown of creation, have marked this particular year.

Mankind is locked away for the time being, which is not necessarily bad for the recovery of society and nature. Although the latter wouldn't need it, because it doesn't really care about us and does what it has always done and which is part of the essential nature of nature: it moves forward and does what it wants, doesn't look to the right or left, up or down. And that is why it not even wear its head held high.

Unlike homo erectus, who would not have become one without the earth's gravity having brought him into this posture. All the homo species that followed him did likewise.

And here with us: is it not incomprehensible how many errants have wanted to take possession of the street for some time now, carrying the change of our society before them as their credo, and yet are nothing but poor lunatics? Would you have believed that just 75 years after the end of the Second World War, esteemed fellow citizens, dear friends and neighbours, would again have to fear for their lives and property? That we are all confronted by radical racist grimaces with crude

ideology or simply boundless stupidity? No, among them are no „conspiracy theorists“. For whom this term is used, have no clue about any theory, are simply immersed in a nebulous ignorance in which they will hopefully soon sink. I have met people this year who are seriously convinced of QAnon and other idiocies and actually believe in the existence of a Deep State. Such things leave me stunned. As do the pandemic deniers who ruthlessly see supposed civil liberties endangered, whose highest aspiration seems to be an indispensable holiday, or who no longer find a purpose in life without big events or disinhibited parties.

What has happened in this year 2020, whose numerics have supplanted 12345 as the most commonly used password in the world of rampant, multiple intercommunication? Well, sociologically, a lot has happened and not everything is bad and unacceptable. Let me take up the return to applied smallness, which – actually more consciousness-expanding than all drugs – has created amazing things due to the current pandemic. It has been a long time since there have been so many like-minded who, for example, with clever, often very simple ideas, oppose the enormous daily destruction of food. Chefs who once again see the farmer or the just-founded garden cooperative from the neighbourhood as a gain and the increasingly returning knowledge and desire for the holistic, dignified use of fish and meat. The realisation is gaining ground, albeit still too slowly, that food means our lives and that it must not remain raped into an exclusive commodity for trade and consumption, as it is now.

The neighbourhood is being rediscovered and is standing up to the general indifference, even if contact is severely restricted, but that will hopefully change. All this is making itself felt in small ways, in our direct view. And aren't we increasingly learning common sense and frugality again?

What did we smoke in this year 2020? For me there was hardly anything worth mentioning new on the tobacco and pipe front,

what for. We have EVERYTHING and that too in an abundance and variety that nobody actually needs. Despite a large tobacco stock, I only smoke 3, maybe 5 different tobaccos and so it is not surprising that I have only „examined“ one new tobacco, which by the way is useful as a hole in the head: MacBaren Rustica. In this respect, the favourites are all still there (again). Let's enjoy them!

Alexander Broy

In special times, people very often show themselves from a particularly unvarnished side. Many seem to be first and foremost snivelling, spoiled *Schraz'n* (Bavarian derogatory for children), without any tolerance of frustration, decency and attitude.

The time is long gone when one appears in dignity dressed in a dinner jacket, accompanied by champagne and cigars (first Titanic reference) Nowadays one sits in jogging trousers (if in trousers at all) in front of a video transmission and whines around. Others clamour and howl about restrictions and compare themselves to iconic fighters or victims of dictatorships. e.g. like Anne Frank because they are not allowed to go out, Sophie Scholl because they are 22 of age, Martin Luther King because they have dreamt something as well or Jesus because their cross hurts too or something similar.

There always needs to be someone to blame: The elites, China, Bill Gates, Merkel, the Jews, the refugees or the Antifa and it also always needs a global theory of how everything is connected. Sometimes I think the dumber a person is, the more he looks for explanation. The clever one knows that these explanation only exist in the rarest of cases.

I, at any rate, will face the end of the year in spirit with John Jacob Astor IV, Benjamin Guggenheim and the gentlemen in the saloon of the Titanic – in a dinner jacket, placed in a

leather armchair, smoking a pipe, accompanied by an excellent drop ... and blaming no one for anything. Things like that happen, and about every hundred years, that's the way it is. The main thing is not to lose my sense of taste. I am able to renounce various conveniences, what the heck!

The real problem of humanity is not a virus but stupidity, ruthlessness and greed, which in this unfortunate combination is destroying its own living space. Cruises (the third Titanic reference), ski lifts, cars, plastic clothes (+infinite list please insert yourself).

We can learn so much from 2020! We know now, at the latest, what we miss the most. Let's focus on what's really important to us and simply neglect the rest. For me, it's the bars and pubs, concerts and exhibitions, family and friends. I don't miss air travel, nor do I miss cruises or toilet paper. I just want to be back with my friends at the pipe club, having a Weisswurst breakfast and sitting at the bar with my (grown-up) children.

For nowt, I just have to be patient and keep my composure . The world ends just as much if I scream and cry around, only then I lose much more than just my life. Tie on a bow tie, put on a mask, and fill the pipes, esteemed Lords and Ladies. (I trust it is was correctly gendered).

But there are not only calamities and epidemics to report from this year, but also quite pleasant things. For me personally, the year 2020 was a financial disaster, because so many things could not take place that I was looking forward to and that could have earned me money. For example, all the pipe fairs were cancelled and thus also the new HU-Tobacco catalogue. I had been looking forward to working on this very much.

But there were also successes. My Youtube channel developed excellently and I was able to gain over 6000 new subscribers this year. So many viewers wanting to see my little films about hiking, painting, beer drinking, baking and pipe

smoking, that made me incredibly happy.

It has also enabled me to sell a lot of prints, Christmas cards and also some paintings online, although private viewings were not possible this year. This is a great development and I look forward to more exciting years as a YouTuber for Art & Culture.

But also my modest and quite whimsical „lid-pipe collection“ has grown. I was able to get hold of some wonderful new lid-pipes and I will certainly report on them here soon.

I am sure that all of you who look back on your live at the end of the year will discover one or two positive things as well and if not ... bust an egg over it, the world keeps on turning and even if water stands to the neck, your pipe or cigar will proceed burning

Peter Hemmer

This annual review is definitely the article of all of my write ups in 2020 that makes me the most uncomfortable. First I need to find my position somewhere between Gernot Hassknecht (German Actor and Comedian) and Bedford-Strohm (Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria), then I do not like to sound like the Federal President and certainly not like Bavarian Prime Minister Söder. I have too much self-respect to practice narrow populism. I am not in the position to manage that either and hardly anyone notices the rest. I will try to avoid to end up just of being all wrapped up in myself.

„Read now how Corona is changing our lives!“ the advertisement yells from the radio just before the 7:00 a.m. news and I think to myself throughout breakfast, why the hell should I notice that, I`m aware of it, I realize every day, how my life and the lives of others are changing? Okay, if I want to know which new distance rule for the Inuit is changing their way

from the Igloo to the Canoe and what that means for life in the north of Greenland, I would do. Particularity since most of the arctic bears with strange behaviour will not follow any rule! Then I would have to acknowledge these information.

But for me, the presence of the counterparts in the subway or my own reflection in the mirror is enough. Certainly I do not know how the life of my seat neighbour in the subway has changed in detail, I would have to inquire, but this has to be ruled out. I know that all lives have changed in the same way: they have lost their lightness! And that weighs heavily! Why? Because we are more and more forced to apply the hesitation, the consideration, the reflection, the overthinking, briefly: the seriousness that we have always been used to apply to the supposedly important things in life, decisions such as financial investments, family planning, choice of profession and career strategies, etc., we would now have to apply this seriousness to everything that was previously perfectly natural, everyday, relaxing, fun, entertaining and sociable. That is an effort and that is exhausting! And that is the opposite of ease! But is it really such a challenging problem? It would be enough, couldn't it be understood?

Almost 20 years ago, in Rome, where we lived at the time, waste separation was introduced with great media hype, something that had existed here in Germany for many years. Instead of three black bins in the courtyard of our palazzo, there were suddenly four in different colours. We knew all our Italian neighbours and were already joking about how this would turn out. But we were completely surprised, because after some initial grumbling, they consistently separated all the rubbish more in a typical prussian behaviour than the Prussians themselves. Until the first bin was full. Then plastic was thrown into the bin where there was still space, even if it was the brown organic waste bin, etc... It is not enough to follow rules if you have not thought about and understood what the rules are good for. And that is exactly

what we have failed at as a society this year! And that's what we're still failing at, every day! That's why this is not really a good moment to look back!

For the World of Pipes, this year better will not be considered as remarkable since it prevented from so much direct exchange. So many regulars' round tables and gatherings were cancelled or at least difficult to participate, the trade fairs couldn't take place. Many activities are shifted to the internet, where one sometimes has the feeling of being in a parallel world which is brimming with abysses and distorted images. The best example is the indescribable spectacle at the launch of HU Tobacco's Rocinante.

I am following the digital pipe and tobacco scene in the internet for about 20 years, but I have never seen anything embarrassing and partly as vile as the image that some of the YouTube „community“ has shown. I was shocked by several things I had to acknowledge. Not only in terms of content, but also in terms of the level at which the arguments were conducted. This is obsolete for any lover of pipes and tobacco! Pipe makers and tobacco manufacturers would all be well advised not to let themselves become puppets of a few nerds and their media craving for recognition!

My tobacco of the year were definitely Sancho Panza and Cervantes from HU Tobacco. Sancho Panza even more as Cervantes and then -with some distance- followed by the „The Dickens“ from Munich tobacconist Pfeifen Diehl, although it was new only for me.

What do I miss?

All the current reduced personal contacts! I miss the trip to Singapore, which was actually planned for the beginning of December, to visit Mike and the pipe and cigar smokers there, because apart from the city, there is hardly anything more beautiful and interesting than the exchange with people with

whom you share a lot in common and yet who have sometimes a different view of world! And of course the concerts and the opera! I attended a private outdoor party in late summer when at one point a guest, a baritone who was rehearsing for a premiere at the State Opera, sat down at the piano aside the crowd and sang Robert Schumann's composition of Heinrich Heine's poem „You are like a flower, so bright and beautiful and pure, I look at you, and wistfulness creeps into my heart.“ When he ended, I had tears in my eyes. Not because the performance was so uniquely good, but it made me realise so much what I am longing for and what I have to do without.

2020 was a year of waive for me, but I haven't regretted it to this day and subject to my all my longings, I don't think it's too bad. I take it as a contribution. A bearable one. There's just one thing I find hard to bear: watching a politician trying to make a name for himself on the back of my renunciation!

I'll go with Max Liebermann, the important german painter (impressionism): „I can't eat as much as I want to throw up!