



## The All Nations Cup in Aachen Started More Than 30 Years Ago as a Great Idea. What Makes it so Special Even Today?

A conversation between friends: Dr. Hans J. Nagel and Klaus Beste, discussing the history and development of the All Nations Cup in Germany

By Lisa Abraham ■ photos by TuttoArabi archive

Some time ago, I had the fortunate opportunity to visit with Dr. Hans J. Nagel at his famous Katharinenhof Stud in Northern Germany. At that time, Klaus Beste, the Consultant of the Arabian Horse Center - Bait Al Arab State Stud in Kuwait, was spending time at his home in Germany, not far from where we were. During this visit, the three of us spent several days reminiscing about the lengthy history of the All Nations Cup (ANC) and its relevance to early show organization in Europe. Both men were deeply involved in its development and had important perspectives on how the ANC became one of the most important and respected competitions in the Arabian horse world.

**Lisa Abraham:** Before our modern 'halter' competitions, what were the European Arabian horse shows like?

**Dr. Nagel:** Thirty-five years ago, there was nothing comparable to what we have today. In Germany, we had a few regional shows which followed the rules established for choosing stallions in the warmblood breeds. Horses were handled by their owners, without the assistance of trainers. There were no clipping techniques, or any formal preparations required other than the horses had to be clean and not directly out of the field.

**Klaus Beste:** Like Dr. Nagel said, on the continent of Europe, our Arabian horse shows were breeding shows not

beauty contests. At that time, the idea of having a show for beauty as it is today, did not exist. Shows were strictly to evaluate and classify horses to determine if they were good enough to be used for breeding and also to educate and advise breeders.

At these shows, there was no glitter or glamour and the horses were the primary focus. The presentation arena consisted of bars which were arranged on the ground in the shape of a triangle for the horse to be inspected. The handlers were required to show the horses with specific instructions, while a panel of three judges, who were allowed to communicate with one another, made their selections.

**Lisa Abraham: Dr. Nagel, what was your start with the ANC?**

**Dr. Nagel:** *The ANC began as an independent show and existed before the foundation of the European Conference of Arab Horse Organizations (ECAHO). The concept for the ANC was developed in approximately 1978 by Mr. and Mrs. Ian and Annette Hedley (GBR) and their close friends Mr. and Mrs. Jay and Dorothy Stream (USA). It was to be a traveling show which invited entries from all over the world, as opposed to just from Europe. Show structure began to materialize as they formed a committee which included Mrs. Birgitta Foch (SWE), Mr. Michel Pitt Rivers (GBR), Mr. Pedro Salas (ESP), Mr. William Richardot De Choisey (FRA), Countess Penelope Lewenhaupt (SWE) and some others. The first ANC was held in the United Kingdom in 1980. However, soon after this time, the structure of ECAHO was beginning to take shape which created complications for the show. This is when Mrs. Hedley, who was the Chairman of the ANC Committee, asked me to assume the leadership. She felt that the show needed to adapt itself and develop a stronger structure of rules. At first, I was not interested and suggested that she remain in her position and offered my assistance as Vice Chairman. But she persisted, so I considered the circumstances. At the time,*

*there were at least ten Committee members and I was not prepared to work with such a large group. I told her that I would assume the responsibility if she could narrow the Committee to four people, maximum five. Ultimately Mrs. Hedley chose herself, Mrs. Dorothy Stream (USA), Mrs. Dorothy Wrigley (USA) and myself, and I took over as Chairman.*

**Lisa Abraham: How did the formation of ECAHO take place and when?**

**Dr. Nagel:** *It actually happened by accident. The discussions which led to the inception of ECAHO took place during the 1982 World Arabian Horse Organization (WAHO) meeting in Calgary. At the beginning of the conference, it was, and still is, standard for a representative from each country to give a 5-10-minute report about his or her country. As the representative of my country, I first explained the situation of the Arabian horse in Germany, mainly by reporting numbers. I then brought up the issue of better organization in shows. There were many shows coming up in Europe and they were very popular. But since every show was different, comparison could not be established, and each show claimed their winners to be the best horses in Europe. Jay Stream, who was the WAHO President at the time,*

## ANC and ECAHO, the first years



ANC Meeting 1985 in Frauenfeld Svizzera



1982: Informal meeting of European studbook organizations during the WAHO Conference in Cagliari, about coordinating the shows in Europe



1983, ECAHO Foundation Meeting in Svizzera



1984, ECAHO Meeting in Hamburg



quickly cut me off and said that WAHO's interest was in breeding, not shows.

However, my comments were heard by all and directly afterwards I was approached by two other European representatives: Mrs. Birgitta Foch from Sweden and Mrs. Ursula Rahm from Switzerland. They suggested arranging a separate meeting on the following day, without disrupting the conference, to discuss these concerns further. In addition to the three of us, the meeting was also attended by Dr. Luigi Lombardi (ITA), Dr. Pierre Pechdo (FRA), two ladies who represented England as well as delegates from both Belgium and Norway.

In this initial discussion, Mrs. Rahm raised a concern that she felt very strongly about assurance that horses were properly treated in the ring. After covering many subjects, our small group agreed on the following three items:

1. More discipline in the show ring which included no changes to the outside of the horse such as cutting of hairs or whiskers and/or coloring of hooves;
2. A judging system based on a point scale of between 1-10 or 1-20 in which the horse was judged against the Standard based on specific categories of consideration; and

3. A system of qualification for shows which emphasized that there would be only one European Championship.

Later that year, a second meeting was organized in Germany at Ismer Stud, and all European countries involved with Arabian horses were invited. The goal was to create wide interest in the subject of European Arabian horse show organization. At this meeting, the three categories of concern were discussed in further detail. However, the main achievement of this gathering concerned the subject of show qualification. It was proposed that the most prominent shows, which were the Arabian Horse World Championship in Paris ~ the Championnat Du Monde and the ANC were to be classified as A Shows. We also agreed to create a new European A Show which would be called the European Championships and open only to European horses. However, although the World Championship and the ANC would be open to all horses, only the horses from Europe had to qualify—qualification was not to be required of horses outside of Europe.

In 1983, there was a third meeting in Switzerland. At this meeting, a great deal of time was spent developing show





**Wolfgang Eberhardt, President of the VZAP**



**Klaus Beste**



categories and a system of qualification, which is when the classifications of B and C Shows were developed, in addition to the three A Shows already agreed upon. Also, at this meeting, as opinions were so varied, four committees were formed: A Disciplinary Committee, a Judging Committee, a Qualification Committee and a Legal Committee.

In 1984, in Hamburg, Germany, there was a fourth meeting in which details were finalized. First, the name European Conference of Arab Horse Organizations (ECAHO) was chosen. Then all four committees presented their recommendations: the Disciplinary Committee detailed how horses should be checked for show preparations as well as during the shows and what measures could be taken in instances of offense; the Judging Committee presented the 20 point system; and the Legal Committee proposed Switzerland as the legal location of ECAHO. The Qualifications Committee presented a show pyramid system which detailed how horses could qualify to the different levels of shows. The structure of the pyramid began at the top with the three A Shows which were to be the All Nations Cup, the World Championship and the European Championships; followed by the International B Shows; and, at the bottom, the National C Shows. ECAHO formation was finalized with the appointment of officials who were to comprise the Executive Committee. Mr. Pat Maxwell (GB) was chosen to be President, Mr. Peter Scheerder (NLD) was to be Vice President and Mr. Peter Stoessel (CHE) became Treasurer.

The Executive Committee Members included Mrs. Birgitta Foch, Mrs. Ursula Rahm, Mrs. Izabella Zawadzka (POL) and me.

**Lisa Abraham: What was the relationship between the ANC and ECAHO?**

**Dr. Nagel:** In the early stages of ECAHO, both the World Championship and the ANC remained independent, despite their classification as A Shows. However, as ECAHO became larger and more organized, there was pressure for both to operate as full ECAHO shows this is when our relationship began to deteriorate. Since the World Championship was organized by one individual, Mr. William Richardot De Choisey, who founded the show in 1980, operating as an ECAHO show may have been acceptable. However, the ANC Committee was keen to remain independent and agreed unanimously to continue to do so. Among other factors, we felt that it was positive to maintain competing efforts among shows as opposed to everything being run by one organization.

**Klaus Beste:** It was in 1986 when the relationship got problematic. That year the ANC was scheduled to be in Denmark. Although the Danish Society of Arabian Horses did not feel they could organize such an important show, Peer Roland of PAJB Arabians, a large breeder from Esbjerg in Denmark, felt strong enough to do so.



2002 - EL DORADA



2003 - KIDHAR

**Dr. Nagel:** *That's right. However, three days after the decision was made to have the show in Denmark, the organizing party called and said, 'Dr. Nagel, we have a problem. A member of ECAHO's Executive Committee was here and said that he did not approve of the ANC being held in Denmark and offered us a B Show.' So, the ANC in Denmark was cancelled. That is when I decided that the next ANC was to be held in Aachen and to be organized by the German Arab Horse Society (VZAP). As the Chairman of both organizations, I knew this would be possible and that we could repeat the great success we had in 1984 when VZAP organized the ANC.*

*But relations with ECAHO continued to weaken. Once the announcement was made regarding Aachen as the location of the 1987 ANC, ECAHO released a letter stating that any official who was to judge the ANC would not be eligible to judge any other ECAHO shows. So for that year I found other judges in Germany and from abroad and, to the surprise of all, the show was a success. However, in 1988, although we were committed to remaining independent, we did comply with the major ECAHO rules. At one time, I worked very hard to formulate the tenements of ECAHO and I felt that I should follow my own proposals.*

**Lisa Abraham:** *How did the discrepancies between ECAHO and the ANC get resolved?*

**Dr. Nagel:** *The strife between the larger organization and the show continued for a couple more years. Then in the late 1980's, in Paris at the World Championship, Pat Maxwell and myself came to a friendly solution to the problem. We made an agreement based solely on five points:*

- (1) *The ANC was to accept all ECAHO rules regarding disciplinary actions;*
- (2) *The ANC was to apply the same judging system chosen for ECAHO shows;*
- (3) *The ANC was to be considered an A Class Show;*
- (4) *The ANC was to apply the same qualification rules of ECAHO for the upgrading of show horses and the show pyramid; and,*
- (5) *the ANC reserved all rights to choose a panel of judges without interference or intervention.*

**Lisa Abraham:** *So, the primary function of the ANC Committee was to choose the panel of judges?*

**Dr. Nagel:** *It was the only duty of the ANC Committee and we reserved the sole right to do so without interference from*



2006 - EL DORADA



2007 - PALMIRA



2004 - LOUBNA

either ECAHO or VZAP. All ECAHO shows could choose their own judges, but ECAHO had to approve those choices. This independence to choose judges was the only factor which made the ANC different from other ECAHO shows. All other decisions regarding show management and liability remained the responsibility of VZAP.

**Lisa Abraham:** Why did you feel it critical to maintain an independent selection of the judges?

**Dr. Nagel:** We wanted to choose our own panel to suit the horses that were registered to participate and we felt we were the best to do this. Today you might say we have what could be considered a 'standard show horse.' But years ago, this was not the case. Back then, in our show arenas, we had so called 'straight Russians', 'straight Polish', 'straight Spanish', 'straight Egyptians' and one might even say the American breeding as well and each of these lines or representatives of these breeding concepts had their own specific characteristics. To do justice to these different lines within the breed, choosing a panel of officials was a critical process as judges also had specific preferences among the various bloodlines. So, we chose judges based on making sure every interest was properly represented in this group. Also, we avoided judges with extreme preferences--if their marks illustrated this,



2005 - ESCAPE IBN NAVARRONE

they were not invited back. We felt that the judges exercised a vital role in the quality and the reputation of the show and we were right.

**Lisa Abraham:** After the show in Denmark was cancelled, is this when the ANC remained in Aachen?

**Dr. Nagel:** Yes, since 1987 the show has remained in Aachen. When I took over as Chairman of the ANC Committee, along with reducing the number of Committee members, I required that we consider a permanent location once our prior show commitments had been fulfilled. Jay Stream supported this decision. He said, 'Hans you are right you should choose one place and stay there. It will be impossible to get a strong name if you are here and then there.' It was also at that early date that Jay suggested that we choose Aachen. When the time came, my Committee members and I agreed that Aachen was the perfect place due to its location in Europe and proximity to the main breeders of this region.

**Lisa Abraham:** How did VZAP factor into this decision?

**Dr. Nagel:** The German Society was a critical consideration in this decision. VZAP had already run the German National Show very successfully and had a capable team ready to take over an International Show. I felt confident that we had the



2008 - MARWAN AL SHAQAB



2008 - PIANISSIMA



2009 - SA MISHA APAL

capability to organize this show properly and, as a team, we were all interested in creating a show which was efficient, honest and had its own attraction. So, from 1987 on, the ANC became the duty of VZAP to organize.

**Klaus Beste:** The ANC Committee itself never organized the show—and this is still true. Each year they had to find an organizing team that was willing and had the ability to do this. They found groups of private breeders to organize the first shows which were in the UK (1980), then in Spain (1981), Sweden (1982) and then in the UK again (1983). However, in 1984, it was organized by a Society for the first time, when the show came to Germany. With VZAP organizing, the Committee found that there was a more objective touch. With private breeders, there was a greater risk for serving personal interest whereas with the Society, that was not a factor. As a group, we were not motivated by personal or marketing interests. Also, by providing a home for the ANC, VZAP created continuity for the show. At that time, between the years of 1980 and 1990, VZAP was the second largest Society in the world and represented around 2,000 breeders. The largest, of course, was in the United States, and then there was a gap in size, but we were the second largest. The only other time the ANC was



organized by a Society was in 1985, when the show was in Switzerland with the Swiss Arabian Horse Society. Unfortunately, they were a very small group and were unable to repeat their efforts.

**Lisa Abraham:** Dr. Nagel, what was Klaus Beste's role in VZAP and the ANC?

**Dr. Nagel:** In 1983, Klaus Beste joined the German Society as the General Secretary. Mr. Beste was tasked primarily with two things:

1. To get the registry in order in accordance to all the new technology, and then later, 2. To run the ANC which was the only show in Germany organized by the Society, besides German Nationals.

There were smaller shows run by private people, but the German Society wanted to have one International Show with total control that would be considered as fair and objective as possible. Our aim was to have absolutely no private interest or interference and it was Mr. Beste's job to ensure this.

**Klaus Beste:** When I was the General Secretary there was no such title as 'Show Manager'. It was the office of the German Arab Horse Society who organized, with me at the lead. But



2011 - SHANGHAI E.A.



2011 - WH JUSTICE



2010 - BAANDEROS

everything was done as a team and under the umbrella and guidance of Dr. Nagel who was Chairman of both VZAP and the ANC Committee.

**Lisa Abraham:** *What did you learn from the American show scene in your travels to the United States?*

**Dr. Nagel:** *At the time, although the German Nationals was the most prominent show in the region, there were many others in nearby countries. Because each was run differently, comparison between them was difficult. Also, all shows suffered from a huge variation of quality regarding the horses competing there were extremely good horses sharing the ring with very bad ones. Because of this, many of us felt that there should be qualification for shows. We were primarily concerned with the German National Show, which was considered the top show in Germany. Due to its prestige, it was felt that we needed to develop a system so that only the best horses competed.*

*In 1984, Katharinenhof Stud exchanged the stallion Jamil for Ansata Halim Shah, owned by Ansata Arabian Stud (USA). That year, both stallions were to compete at US Nationals. However, to participate, horses had to qualify through regional competitions, which were organized throughout the country. Although Ansata Halim Shah was*



2010 - EMANDORIA

*already qualified, Jamil arrived in America early so that he could also qualify. When I visited the United States to see Jamil compete, I was very interested in this aspect of their overall show structure. I felt a similar system should be developed for the larger competitions in Europe.*

**Lisa Abraham:** *Dr. Nagel, after taking over leadership of the ANC Committee, what else did you hope to achieve?*

**Dr. Nagel:** *The All Nations Cup Trophy is awarded to the Nation who earned the most points throughout the competition. Because of this, we encouraged countries to form teams in an organized effort to win. The idea was for each country to find its strongest competitors for each class and to compete in different categorized classes, not against each other in the same classes.*

**Klaus Beste:** *Unfortunately, with little exception, only the State Studs were able to achieve this with positive results. For example, the Polish State Studs formed extremely successful teams. At that time, you would not have seen horses from Michałow Stud and Janów Podlaski competing in the same classes. The State Studs cooperated to make sure Poland, as a country, was strongly represented in each class. Although it was a bit tricky without the structure of a larger*



2012 - QR MARC



2012 - FT SHAELLA



2013 - ABHA QATAR



2013 - EMANDORIA

organization, the French were also able to find some success in teamwork. In the case of the French, the breeders worked together and agreed as to who was to compete and in which classes.

In 2002, the Qatari's were also successful as a team. Although the effort was primarily organized by Al Shaqab Stud, other participating Qatari farms included Al Nasser Stud, Al Naif Stud and Al Rayyan Farm. That year they brought horses to Europe to compete in several shows most particularly the very prestigious ones which included the ANC and the World Championship. However, because they were not competing with European horses, they could not participate in the European Championships. In Aachen, they formed a team and represented Qatar. They chose their top horses and did not compete against one another. Through these efforts, that year, Qatar won the All Nations Cup Trophy. As a side note, most of the horses that Qatar won with were straight Egyptians. This was the last time such a large number of straight Egyptians won against what we would consider today as modern show horses.

We also tried to encourage the team concept by stabling farms from the same nations together so they could collaborate on decorations and presentations. The way the stables were set up in Aachen, it was conducive to this type

of arrangement. During the lunch breaks and evenings, the farms would have elaborate presentations and barn parties in which not only were the horses presented, but also, elements from the countries themselves national flags hung everywhere.

**Lisa Abraham:** *Originally the ANC was an outdoor show, why did you choose to move to an indoor arena?*

**Dr. Nagel:** *As we were always keen to learn, Mr. Beste and myself visited a lot of shows. The show that made the biggest impression on us was the World Championship. At that time, this was one of the few shows that was organized indoors. Although the hall was very big, the show attracted a lot of people, especially on the weekend. But despite the large size of the facilities, you could feel the energy of the people, especially as they crowded around the ring it was a fantastic atmosphere. Because everything was contained under a roof, the applause and cheering was amplified which impressed us very much. This is when we decided to move our show indoors, but we wanted to do it in a way that was more intimate. We felt that the experience would be better if people were closer together.*

*It was fortunate for us that the facilities in Aachen offered an outdoor arena, which we used for our National Show,*



2015 - ES HARIR



ES HARIR IN AWARDING



2014 - KUWESTURA

and an indoor arena, which we felt was just the right size for the ANC. This also solved the problems associated with weather as we were not living in the Mediterranean. So overall, being indoors created a higher degree of security as fluctuations in climate were no longer a factor and it gave us greater control over the ambiance.

**Lisa Abraham: How did the facilities in Aachen contribute to the success of the show?**

**Klaus Beste:** Although some were not happy with arena in Aachen, I felt it was perfect. An Arabian horse show will only attract a certain number of people. Some of the show arenas in the world are huge and impossible to fill with one of our events. In Aachen, the grandstands sat about 1500 people, plus the VIP area which had really grown over the years so let's say the arena offered a maximum capacity of 2000 people. Because the venue was a bit smaller, it got packed full which created an intimate atmosphere. In addition, it was easier to reach the public with the announcing and the music. In the larger show arenas, the announcer's voice sounds far away as there is so much empty space. In Aachen, thanks to the Albert-Vahlen-Halle, we were able to create a unique atmosphere cozy, circled and covered.

**Lisa Abraham: Can you elaborate on ambiance?**

**Dr. Nagel:** Ambiance is a matter of the facilities concerning the room in which the show takes place. This includes how it is prepared and decorated and the manner in which the overall sound is controlled. Offering a smaller, indoor venue for the show gave us a greater ability to control the environment and it brought the show closer to the public and the people closer to one another. We also felt that it would be better for the public to see the horses up close, as opposed to further away, such as in a large arena. This way guests had a greater ability to see what the judges were evaluating. Also, we were able to offer more effective options for sponsor advertisements.

**Lisa Abraham: What effect did VZAP have on the overall ambiance?**



LENITA PERROY WITH FERDINAND HUEMER

**Klaus Beste:** The ANC was organized with the German Arab Horse Society, which, from 1984 -2004, was myself and my colleagues. For us, the ANC was the highlight of the entire year. On a day to day basis we maintained a routine consisting of administrative matters. However, as the year passed and as we got closer to show time, the more enthusiastic we all became. I, myself, would get excited as I really loved the ANC and somehow, was able to transfer this passion to my colleagues. For all of us, it was far more than a job we were all engaged with our hearts and our minds. Every year, when we arrived in Aachen for the show, my colleagues carried this excitement with them and gave the warmest welcomes to everybody attending. Because we were so committed, we created a kind of spirit that one doesn't find at other shows.

**Lisa Abraham: In addition to the ambiance, what else do you feel attributed to the success of the ANC?**

**Dr. Nagel:** I think the stability of the show management was also an important factor. It was a group effort based on specific roles that created consistency for the show. Every important position was occupied by the proper person. Although we always had capable individuals, there were three people who played prominent roles in the history and success of the ANC. There was Mrs. Ursula Roberts, from the United Kingdom, who was the chief of the Disciplinary Committee; Mr. Jorgen Frederiksen, from Denmark, who was the Ringmaster; and Mr. Peter Hegemann, from Germany, who acted as the ringmaster in the collecting ring. However, in my opinion, the most important role of the show is that of the speaker, and Mr. Beste was outstanding in that position.

**Klaus Beste:** Thank you Dr. Nagel. Also, I would like to elaborate on this subject. It was never one person running this show, we always operated as a team. Once the show began, the communication between myself, the ringmasters and the disciplinary committee was critical and since we were all working in different places, communication was done primarily with hand signals. Due to the great



2016 - EKS ALIHANDRO



Mrs. Judith Forbis and Dr. Hans Nagel



2016 - TEHAMA BALLALINA



2016 - GALLARDO J

relationship I had with Ursula, Jorgen and Peter and our ability to cooperate in full harmony, the schedule remained very accurate and everything was always on time, for which the ANC was known. Classes would start on the very minute they were scheduled to begin.

Also, because we maintained the same team of people, year-to-year continuity increased. I'm not a fan of changing teams. If everyone worked successfully together--keep the team. Although judges must be rotated, I feel the DC's and ringmasters should remain the same. When I ran the ANC, I had my dream team. Others who made significant contributions included: Mrs. Anthea Derby (GBR), Mr. Johannes Neuwoehner (DEU), and Mrs. Susanne Poth (DEU) who did an excellent job with the music, entertaining the audience and creating excitement.

**Lisa Abraham:** It has become a tradition in Aachen that the horses of each class enter the arena to "The Triumph March", taken from the second act of Giuseppe Verdi's 1871 grand opera, *Aida* one of the most famous operas in the world. Can you share the history of this?

**Klaus Beste:** Years ago, I felt we should use a piece of music which could be identified with the ANC. I felt it should be both well-known and a classic, as well as have a rhythm which would accentuate the movement of horses. As I

searched, I listened to many different types of music such as classical, modern, pop, rock and so on. But this process was difficult, and I got a bit lost. One day as I listened to the CD with the *Aida*, I was struck with the idea that this could be the right music for the show. I proposed this idea to Dr. Nagel as well as my colleagues and we agreed together.

**Lisa Abraham:** Each year, "The All Nations Cup--Lady Harmsworth Blunt Memorial Trophy" is awarded to the nation whose entries score the highest number of points according to a predetermined scale. Can you elaborate on its history?

**Klaus Beste:** This Award was the major contribution made by the initial ANC Committee. Annette Hedley shared a close friendship with Lady Harmsworth Blunt, whose family owned *The Daily Mail*, a famous English media publication. As a result of their relationship, *The Daily Mail* sponsored *The All Nations Cup Trophy* and it was named in Lady Blunt's honor.

**Lisa Abraham:** ...and "The All Nations Cup Breeders Trophy Ian Hedley Memorial Trophy", which recognizes the country who bred the most prizewinners of the show?

**Dr. Nagel:** Since Ian Hedley was one of the initiators of the ANC, his wife Annette felt he should be remembered.



2017 - ANOOD AL NASSER

Therefore, she proposed to create this 'challenge trophy' in his memory and to be awarded to the best breeder of the show.

**Lisa Abraham:** Initially, which countries participated in the ANC?

**Dr. Nagel:** In the beginning, there were many horses from Poland, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany, followed by France and England. Then year after year, more countries attended from all over Europe, the Near and Middle East as well and from North and South America.

**Lisa Abraham:** When did the Americans begin to support the show?

**Dr. Nagel:** Until the mid-1990's the entire Arabian horse industry was booming, mainly in America. However, when the American tax laws changed, the market collapsed, and their shows suffered as well. But the European market remained strong and was able to take advantage of the horses that became readily available in the US. At that time, many very good horses were imported to Europe. So, the American horses came to Europe by way of purchases, then soon after, the Americans themselves followed.

**Klaus Beste:** At the same time, the Americans also realized that some of the Middle Eastern countries were supporting ECAHO and the European shows. Jordan was the first Middle Eastern country to join ECAHO, followed by Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. These countries felt a closer alliance to ECAHO than the American show scene, which they knew little about and was also too far away. When the Gulf countries started to organize their own shows, they were also inclined towards the European system. The very first show in Qatar was organized by the Qatar Racing & Equestrian Club with its Chairman Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Khalid Al Thani, of Al Rayyan Farm. This was a big draw to the Americans who saw marking opportunities to the Middle East, by way of Europe. However, in the mid 1990's, Count Federico Zichy-Thyssen (ARG) was the first from the American continents to send horses to compete.



2017 - MONZ ALBIDAYER

**Lisa Abraham:** How did the North and South Americans influence the European Shows?

**Dr. Nagel:** The influence by both continents was more by way of their trainers, not their horses. Early on there were some Dutch breeders and owners who had close ties to America. From the Americans, they learned more about how to professionally prepare horses to compete. Over time, this became reflective in their show strings. Their horses were extremely well prepared with advanced clipping techniques and shiny coats. Some had their ears shaved, while oil and coloring were used around the noses and eyes. As for their actual presentation in the ring, they posed their horses in front of the jury like sculptures. In Germany, many were against this and felt that the horses presented in this manner should not be allowed to compete. Overall this created a fear that techniques of this nature would lead to more extreme measures. But despite the reservations, these methods became popular, even in Germany. It was the task of the disciplinary committee to monitor the horses and to keep an eye especially on such prepared and trained horses with regards to animal welfare. However, it is a fact that the influence from America greatly improved how horses were presented as far as appearance and conditioning were concerned, but extremes had to be watched.

**Lisa Abraham:** When did the Middle Eastern Countries start attending and supporting the show?

**Klaus Beste:** Around the new millennium. One of the first, if not the first, was Sheikh Hamad Bin Ali Al Thani of Al Shaqab Stud, from Qatar. He showed great enthusiasm in his support of the show.

**Dr. Nagel:** Yes, that's true. It was primarily Sheikh Hamad who opened the door for other Middle Eastern countries to support the ANC as well as other European shows. Everybody remembers 2002, the year the Qataris, led by Sheikh Hamad, won the ANC as a team and also, when Al Adeed Al Shaqab became the Gold Champion Stallion. Sheikh Ammar Bin Humaid Al Nuaimi, of Ajman Stud, from the UAE was the next to support the show by participating with horses. As far as the Middle Eastern countries are concerned, these two men made the greatest initial impact.



2018 - AJ SAMARA

**Lisa Abraham:** Can you describe the breeding and bloodlines that have been successful at the ANC?

**Dr. Nagel:** For the past several years, most of the winning horses have been related to WH Justice, Marwan Al Shaqab and/or Versace. But, in the early years of the ANC, the variation of bloodlines represented was much larger and this was true for other shows as well. Of course there were several horses that everyone remembers in Aachen, particularly the stallions Kubinec and Plakat. However, the impact of the Polish horses must be mentioned here. From the beginning, the Polish competed in the show with groups of horses which were the most consistent in terms of quality.

**Lisa Abraham:** How has the quantity and quality of the horses improved through the years?

**Dr. Nagel:** While the quantity of competing horses has always been strong, the quality is far better. The judging system which is done against the Standard has encouraged breeders to fulfill the requirements of this measure. So, over the years, breed selection has been driven by coming closer and closer to the Standard for which there are both positive and negative points. The point system is informative for the public and educational for the breeder. With the point system, one can see strengths and weaknesses of a horse and the judges are accountable for their choices. In the comparative system, there are unknown variables and there is no accountability. However, with the point system, variation in the Arabian breed has diminished any horse who differs from the Standard, has no chance. Back when this system was developed, I didn't foresee this but I see it now.

**Lisa Abraham:** Wolfgang Eberhart had been the show manager from 2005-2009 and then again from 2012 to the present. Can you share your thoughts regarding his contribution to the show?

**Dr. Nagel:** In the course of time, the expectations of the public was growing. The VIP section was expanding as well as the demand for information throughout the show. The ANC needed a person who had enough experience to accomplish both criteria. Accordingly, the institution of a Show Manager was created, and we chose Mr. Wolfgang Eberhart, an excellent



2018 - RIHAB AL NASSER

person and connoisseur who was prepared to dedicate his efforts to these subjects.

**Lisa Abraham:** To recap much of what has been shared here what has made the ANC so special?

**Dr. Nagel:** Our aim in organizing the ANC was to create a show which worked and was as objective as possible. The most important factor to achieve this goal had been our ability to choose the judges. Their judgement had a final influence on the whole atmosphere of the show since every wrongdoing would irritate show guests and create objections. I have been quite happy that we had always found a great number of excellent judges who not only guaranteed that the top horses were awarded Championship titles, but also, whose choices were accepted and approved by the public. For me, this was the vital point. Around this consideration, the rest of the show was organized in a most proper way. We created an atmosphere where people found themselves attracted and satisfied in their expectations of a first-class Arabian horse show.

**Klaus Beste:** First and foremost, the ANC is considered to be the fairest, most objective show in the world. This has been due to the ANC Committee's commitment to choosing the right judges and the VZAP's absolute assurance of continuity and objectivity. Second, the facilities in Aachen have been ideal for the show. I believe that it is far better to have a smaller venue that is packed full, than a larger one that is mostly empty. Additionally, the show's location in Aachen, which is in the very center of Europe, has been perfect.

Also, in 2008, ECAHO created an upper tier in the show pyramid by implementing what they referred to as 'Title Shows'. The shows that were initially included in this category were the ANC, the European Championships, the World Championship and the Middle Eastern Championship, which was organized in Jordan. This elevation in the show pyramid created even greater importance for the ANC, since it was the first of the three European Title Shows. Exhibitors saw the results of their horses in Aachen as a test for the following two shows. It was a testament to the high quality of horses competing in Aachen, that several ANC Gold Champions continued their success to become 'Triple Crown Champions'. □

## *An Epilogue by Dr. Hans J. Nagel*

*Before reaching the age of 85, I decided to give up my official obligations. Accordingly, I resigned as the president of WAHO and looked for a successor as Chairman of the ANC Committee, a position I held for more than thirty years. Till a solution was found, the frictions and arguments that ensued through this process were not surprising. However, it was finally decided that Vice Chairman Mrs. Annette Hedley should assume the leadership. In turn, she chose Mr. Hassanain Al-Nakeeb as her Vice Chairman and entrusted him with the execution of the required duties.*

*During this period of transition, there were individuals who felt the show would benefit with added entertainment and a high-end auction which offered the opportunity to acquire exceptional Arabian horses. However, these new elements*

*were accepted with mixed feelings. Therefore, in this year 2019, the General Assembly of the German Arab Horse Society was asked to decide on the matter. The members voted with a great majority to cancel most of the elements and all types of auctions. Under its new leadership, the show will maintain its prestige and attraction. The All Nations Cup has always been a perfect atmosphere for breeders, judges, trainers and a great public and there is little doubt that this tradition will continue. But the highly experienced and dedicated team of the VZAP – organizers as well as executives – is going to hold together as they have done for 30 years. This unique show is in their strong hands which make sure that this All Nations Cup in Aachen continues to be one of the most prestigious and reliable shows world-wide*

