

Message From Our Chair (Erin Byars)

Here in the Sacramento area of Northern California, I was asked to cue rounds for the local New Year's Eve dance. It wasn't quite like the NYE dances of the past – it took place in the afternoon and we celebrated the New Year at 4:00 pm, along with London, England. When I and a dancer posted photos of the event, several long-time friends bemoaned how crowds had dwindled as compared to the 1960s and 1970s.

Those times, they were grand! Floors were so packed you sometimes lost track of which square you were actually in. That was our reality – then.

Now, at least in the US, there is plenty of space between squares, we struggle to pay high rental rates for dance space, and leaders often barely break even after they take out their expenses. You can reminisce and post regrets on social media, but you can't instantly change our reality.

We **must** start looking forward, and taking action in today's reality.

So what is this reality of which I speak? Most clubs and groups I know of are madly flailing – trying the same old recruitment methods. As a result most are barely hanging on to enough dancers to continue dancing.

So what do we need? We all know what that is – a huge, coordinated advertising campaign produced professionally. One that continues for at least a year so our words, our music, our laughter and our examples of teamwork make a lasting impression on everyone who is exposed to it.

Oh, did I mention this would cost millions of dollars, with no guarantee of success?

So we fall back on what we've always done. Which is woefully out of date and no longer successful.

But I believe there are some intermediate steps which will move us in the correct direction, and many of the tools are available free from The ARTS.

Check our website for display ads, flyers, videos, and other helpful items. At this year's National Square Dance Convention in Waco, Texas, ARTS officers will be presenting seminars on how to make these tools work for you.

Got a great advertising idea? Submit it to The ARTS so we can make it available to groups around the world.

We know our activity is the best in so many ways, but must spread the word or millions will miss out!

We are in this together, and together we will find those dancers who don't know what they are missing.

Erin Byars, Chair

NEWS FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am still recovering from a very serious fall I had in June 2025. I was totally "out of pocket" for 3 ½ months and have been playing "catch up" since coming home in October 2025. I am getting therapy and working on my own to get back in shape.

While in the re-hab facility I was not able to keep up with my computer responsibilities and therefore fell WAY BEHIND I have (slowly) been working to get caught up with the backlog.

This situation highlights the need to find an Assistant Executive Director to prepare for a new Executive Director. .

NEXT ARTS BOARD MEETING

Sunday, June 28, 2026

Waco, TX

9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

(Location to be determined)

Waco, TX

All Are Invited

Contact - Jerry Reed

DirectorARTS@aol.com

2026 ARTS MEETING

The 2026 ARTS meeting will be held Sunday, June 28, 2026 in Waco, TX immediately following the 75th NSDC. The meeting will be attended by ARTS Board Member representatives and ARTS Officers. All persons interested in the activities of the ARTS are invited.

Historically this meeting has been held on the Sunday immediately following the NSDC. There is always an open invitation to ALL dancers and dance leaders to attend our meeting.

During the meeting Board Members will discuss issues and items of interest to the activity in general. Additionally, issues of interest to individual Member Organizations will be discussed. Members, dancers, callers, cuers and others are encouraged to submit items for discussion during the meeting. Contact **Jerry Reed** at DirectorARTS@aol.com.

If you would like more information; OR if you would like to attend a future meeting; OR if you would like a copy of the minutes of the meeting, please contact our Executive Director, **Jerry Reed** at:

ExecutiveDirector@arts-dance.org

NEWS FROM BOARD MEMBER

(All Join Hands)

In 2025, All Join Hands (AJH) remained dedicated to helping clubs rebuild by providing approximately \$64,000 in support for a wide range of projects and programs. These efforts included funding for new dancer initiatives, GCA Callers School, club development, club meeting space assistance, and club-directed funding.

In addition, thanks to the success of the 42nd IAGSDC Convention in San Francisco, CA, AJH is proud to pay it forward by contributing approximately \$20,000 to support the next five conventions.

All Join Hands remains committed to revitalizing and strengthening our square dance community, with a continued focus on rebirth and rebuilding in 2026 and beyond.

NEWS FROM BOARD MEMBER

(IAGSDC)

The International Association of Gay Square Dance Clubs (IAGSDC) will host the 43rd IAGSDC convention in Montreal, Ontario, Canada in July 2026. The event will feature a callers' school and a full dance program at the Le Centre Sheraton Montreal, with dancing beginning on July 1, 2026.

Featured callers include **Barry Clasper, Michael Kellogg, Michael Levy, Don Moger, Sandie Bryant, Justin Russell, Wendy VanderMeulen, Ett McAtee, Vic Ceder, Brian Crawford, Ted Lizotte, Dave Hutchinson, Kris Jensen and Rob French**.

For details, visit www.montrealmix2026.com.

Future IAGSDC conventions are scheduled as follows:

1. 44th Convention – Albuquerque, NM, July 2027 (www.backtrack2abq.com)
2. 45th Convention – Denver, CO, July 2028
3. 46th Convention – Palm Springs, CA, May 2029

Mark your calendars and get ready for more fantastic dancing in the years to come!

“Giving up doesn’t always mean you’re weak, sometimes it means you are strong enough and smart enough to let go and move on..”

John Spence

VIDEO PROMOTION PROJECT

The ARTS has created videos with information about the many benefits of dancing. Links to the videos are intended to be posted and shared throughout the dancing community. Links are available on the ARTS web site. All clubs are encouraged to help publicize these videos.

We are pleased to report the first five of six 90-second videos is available online. The videos are posted on the ARTS web site under “Promotion Videos”: www.ARTS-Dance.org

Other web sites which provide important promotion & marketing information include:

- 1) www.You2CanDance.Org - includes information about the various forms of dancing
- 2) www.livelively.org - includes a wealth of information about the activity including where to dance.

FREE MONEY!!

Apply for an ARTS Education Grant

www.ARTS-Dance.org

NEWS ABOUT RE-IMAGING SQUARE DANCE

We have reached the end of this program's introductory effectiveness. Since the start of the re-branding of our "sport", and the new creative "Slogo", back in 2016, many products and much literature have been labeled with the new modern look of square dancing. We feel these new ideas have been widely accepted, and that maybe now is the time to investigate more outlets for publicizing "Modern Square Dance". Callers are doing a good job of using newer popular music, and graphics, On line videos and printed literature are showing a more modern look. It just takes time, and now people are starting to get away from what they did back in the 70's.

We need someone with new ideas about how to increase awareness of the multiple dance formats (Round Dancing, Contra and even "Modern Square Dancing"). Please give us your ideas and suggestions, and be ready to help promote this wonderful activity of dancing; we want it to continue for many generations.

Volunteers are needed to manage the <http://ReimagingSquareDance.com> website and the Facebook page. If there are a few people who would like to write a monthly article (blog) about dancing or anything relevant, contact **Jim & Judy Taylor** at: phone (303) 795-3278; or email jimta1@msn.com

During the 2025 ARTS Meeting **Jim Taylor** discussed the following VERY important issue:

"Jim Taylor - would like someone to take on the re-imaging job. Note that Judy has cancer (currently under control), but future is uncertain."

The bottom line is: there is a VERY REAL and VITAL need for a volunteer to assume the responsibilities of Chair of the ARTS Re-Imaging Committee.

"FREE MONEY!!!"

ARTS EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM

Our Educational Grant Program encourages dance organizations to conduct Educational Seminars. The seminars MUST include information about The ARTS. A Grant of up to \$200.00 (or up to 50% of the

costs, whichever is less) is available to cover the costs to present a seminar.

To apply for a grant, download and complete the Application, at www.arts-dance.org send completed form to ARTS Executive Director, **Jerry Reed** 4461 Stack Blvd, Apt D-231, Melbourne, FL 32901 OR Email - ExecutiveDirector@arts-dance.org

THE ARTS MESSAGE - HISTORY- GOALS

An information presentation has been created to provide a visual aide to assist anyone who would like to learn more about The ARTS or will be discussing The ARTS. The presentation includes how we are organized, what our goal is, what our accomplishments have been, what our plans are, and other information. The presentation has been used by various organizations during leadership seminars to meet the requirements of our Education Grant Program. We recently updated the presentation, resulting in "ARTS MESSAGE - HISTORY - GOALS Rev C, dated September 11, 2023"

EASY WAY TO DONATE!

The purpose of the "Add-A'Buck" program is to encourage organizations hosting festivals and conventions to voluntarily add and collect a small additional amount, where the dancers agree to do so, as a donation to ARTS-Dance. Each dancer would agree to add \$1.00 to the cost for a festival or convention. The hosting organization would send the donation to the ARTS.

Details, information, and forms are available on the ARTS web site: www.arts-dance.org

Please visit the site and click on "ARTS Add A Buck Program" If you have questions or concerns, please contact our Executive Director, **Jerry Reed**: ExecutiveDirector@arts-dance.org

"If you really want to do something, you'll find a way. If you don't, you'll find an excuse."

John Spence

ARTS BOARD

The ARTS brings together the major related dance organizations in the USA. Our goal is to revitalize our activity and educate the public on the multiple benefits of dancing. Quite simply, we have this wonderful, healthful, and fun activity, but with so much competition with other leisure pursuits, we need to figure out the best way to bring more people into it.

The Member organizations maintain their independence and concentrate on their individual goals and missions. Each member has an equal voice in the decisions of The ARTS and is encouraged to provide the views and input from their organization. The true beauty of the alliance is its ability to increase cooperation among Member organizations. The ARTS has been able to bring together the varied dance forms to work toward the common goal of increasing the public's awareness of the activity and to increase the number of dancers.

There are currently ten Members of the ARTS Board. These organizations include:

- 1) All Join Hands Foundation, Ltd
- 2) IAGSDC
- 3) ICBDA
- 4) NSDCA
- 5) NEC
- 6) ROUNDALAB
- 7) CALLERLAB
- 8) CONTRALAB
- 9) USDA
- 10) ^{USA}West

A complete list of Officers & Board Members is in newsletter and is available on the ARTS Web site: www.arts-dance.org

If you have questions or concerns you believe the Board should discuss, please contact your representative or our Executive Director, **Jerry Reed** at: ExecutiveDirector@arts-dance.org

DANCE FACT SHEET

The DANCE FACT SHEET is designed to help those who deal with the media to inform them of what the dancers know full well - this is a terrific activity with multiple benefits. Included is a time line of major events in the dance activity from the 1400s-1500s to 2021. The Fact Sheet was recently updated.

Please take a look at the Fact Sheet. Click on "Dance Fact Sheet" on the ARTS Web Site:

<http://www.arts-dance.org/>

ARTS TRI-FOLD BROCHURE

Looking for information about The ARTS? The ARTS TRI-FOLD BROCHURE provides details of the ARTS including Member organizations and some of our significant accomplishments.

Please take a look at the Tri-Fold. Click on "ARTS Information Tri-Fold and Membership Form" on the ARTS Web Site: <http://www.arts-dance.org/>

PROMOTION/MARKETING MATERIALS

The goal of The ARTS is to bring information about our activity to non-dancers and to help increase the number of dancers. One way we do this is to provide dance clubs and others with promotion materials they can use in their marketing efforts. Several sample ads are available. Please contact **Jerry Reed** and request the materials for use by your club as you determine is best to publicize new classes. These ads are available to ANY group free of charge, Contact **Jerry Reed** -

ExecutiveDirector@arts-dance.org

We thank **Erin Byars** for her work to create these ads. She used a formula for advertising that was sent out by **Nasser Shukayr**. He has reviewed these ads and approves.

There are several versions of each of four ads:

1. Email version (sample) -- the sample version gives an example of how the groups information could be placed on the ad.
2. JPEGs. This version is also suitable for posting on social networks such as FaceBook
3. Print version (sample) -- this version is designed to print two half-size flyers on 8.5 x 11
4. Print version -- the 2-up print version with space for individual group information
5. Print version BW (sample) -- same as #3 in black and white
6. Print version BW -- same as #4 in black and white

**ARTS MEMBER ORGANIZATION
EVENTS IN 2026**

For Information for a Specific Event
Please Contact the Appropriate
Board Representative
(Listed in This Newsletter)

51st CALLERLAB Convention

Reno, NV - MAR 29-APR 1, 2026

68th NSDCA International Camporee

Bellville, TX - June 17-19, 2026

2026 CONTRALAB Convention

No Information

50th ROUNDALAB Convention

Waco, TX - June 21-24, 2026

75th NSDC

Waco, TX - June 24-27, 2026

44th USDA Meeting

Waco, TX -June 24, 2026

2025 ARTS Meeting

Waco, TX - June 28, 2026

43rd IAGSDC Convention

Montreal, QB, Canada - July 1-4, 2026

2026 ICBDA Convention #50

St. George, UT July 8-11, 2026

2026 USAWest Convention

Cedar City, UT - August 5-8, 2026

CALLERLAB MARKETING WEBSITE

This marketing website with free promotional videos is now live: www.livelivelysquaredance.com. The CALLERLAB Marketing Committee teamed up with Sleight Advertising of Omaha, NE to create a new professional web site and series of videos available to callers, clubs and local associations in an effort to aid the promotion of square dancing. Working alongside several members of the CALLERLAB Marketing Committee, Sleight developed a professional, well thought out web site representing marketing insights to the non-dancing public. The site includes the promotional videos that were launched at the 2022 CALLERLAB Convention.

ARTS MARKETING COMMITTEE

Creation of an “ARTS Marketing Committee” have been discussed. The goal of this committee will be for ALL related dance organizations to work together to exchange ideas and collect & report activities and results. If you are interested in helping contact Jerry at:

DirectorARTS@aol.com

ICBDA MARKETING PLAN

The International Choreographed Ballroom Dance Association recognizes membership for dance clubs has been declining, especially for square and round dancing. They know it would be helpful to collaborate on strategies for increasing membership. All aspects of the dance community face similar obstacles, ie. ageing population, competing activities, health issues, lack of public awareness, and others.

The ICBDA is encouraging all related dance associations to work together to share information and change the trajectory of collective memberships:

The ICBDA Marketing Plan is aimed at increasing membership of the local dance clubs. This Marketing Plan is applicable to all related dance organizations. The plan is available from The ARTS - contact Jerry Reed at DirectorARTS@aol.com The plan will also be posted on the ARTS web site.

The ARTS MISSION STATEMENT

The ARTS mission is to generate public awareness and promote growth and acceptance of contemporary Square, Round and Traditional Folk Dance by encouraging and assisting a coalition of allied dance groups. The ARTS will provide leadership and resources necessary to create an achievable marketing program. The ARTS will encourage, promote and support healthy lifestyles through dance programs and events that provide fun and effective exercise for both mind and body, all within a unique system of social interaction.

ARTS Board and Officers
2025-2026
(As of January 2026)

The list below is the list of ARTS Officers and Board Members.

List of ARTS Officers:

Chairman – Erin Byars (cuer4dance@yahoo.com)
Vice Chairman – Barbara Connelly (touchwright@juno.com)
Treasurer – Edythe Weber (eweber10@kc.rr.com)
Secretary – Jim & Judy Taylor (jimta1@msn.com)
Executive Director - Jerry Reed (DirectorARTS@aol.com)

List of ARTS Board Voting Members:

All Join Hands - Gordon Macaw - (gordon@gordonmacaw.com)
CALLERLAB - Betsy Gotta - (gottahavearts@optonline.net)
National Square Dance Campers - Barbara Connelly - (touchwright@juno.com)
CONTRALAB - Dottie Welch - (dwelch@eastlink.ca)
IAGSDC - Gordon Macaw - (gordon@gordonmacaw.com)
NEC - Louis & Angie McClure - (l-amclure@charter.net)
ROUNDALAB - Paul Connelly - (dancerman2005@gmail.com)
USAWest - Jim Maczko - (jmaczko@san.rr.com)
USDA - Ed & Lynda Willis (eandlwillis@gmail.com)