

ARTS
History- Growth - Goals
(February 2024)

The initial concept for creation of an alliance of related dance organizations in the USA (later identified as "The Alliance of Round, Traditional, and Square - Dance" (The ARTS) was submitted by Creative Marketing Services (CMS) as led by Jim Hensley. At the time Jim was the Director of Marketing for the CALLERLAB Foundation. CMS was influential in creating a Marketing Plan which came to be known as the *Phoenix Plan*.

For several months the CALLERLAB Foundation Executive Directors and the Board of Directors discussed the proposal from CMS. Discussion included both pro and con comments. After considerable discussion there was unanimous agreement that creation of an alliance, as described by CMS was an outstanding idea/concept which had the potential to bring the several leading related dance organizations together to coordinate cooperative actions with the ultimate goal of increasing the number of dancers.

In September 2001, Jim Hensley submitted a paper which described his vision for an alliance designed to provide a wide array of resources, support, and programs to help affiliated groups improve their individual programs. Another goal was to help further the health of their clubs by promoting increased participation in all forms of round, traditional, and square dancing. This alliance would bring together the major dance organization in the USA to foster cooperation among the various groups.

During the 51st National Square Dance Convention in St. Paul, Minnesota in 2002, a gathering of several dance organization was hosted by CALLERLAB Chairman Mike Jacobs. During this gathering, discussions were held to initiate the formation of an alliance of the national dance organizations. This first informal meeting between members of the CALLERLAB Executive Committee and the United Square Dancers of America (USDA) was held on Saturday, June 29, 2002. Several other major dance organizations were also represented. The initial discussion centered on establishing an understanding of the operational structures of the CALLERLAB Foundation and USDA.

In October 2002, representatives of five related major square dance organizations met in Cocoa Beach, FL for a historic meeting hosted by CALLERLAB and led by CALLERLAB Chairman, Mike Jacobs. The five organizations were: The United Square Dancers of America (USDA), National Executive Committee of the National Square Dance Convention (NEC), USA West Policy Board, ROUNDALAB, and CALLERLAB. These organizations met to discuss common issues and goals. There was agreement that one of the ways to meet these common goals is through formation and support of an "alliance" of related organizations. This alliance would provide each organizations a balanced and equal voice as they work toward addressing the challenges facing the activity.

The group met for two days of intense discussions of these issues. Many topics were discussed in great detail, ending in general agreement on several important issues. There was an atmosphere of cooperation and enthusiasm among the group. All agreements among the group were submitted to the respective organizations for review and approval as appropriate.

At the next meeting in January 2003 near Washington DC, the representatives agreed to submit the acronym "ARTS" (Alliance of Round, Traditional, and Square - Dance) to their respective organization for consideration and approval. After consideration, all organizations agreed with the ideas and goals discussed during the initial meetings.

This was the official birth of The ARTS. The alliance is now registered in North Carolina as an IRS 501(c)(3), tax exempt, non-profit organization.

The current ARTS Board includes representatives from the following organizations: All Join Hands, CALLERLAB, Square Dance Campers, CONTRALAB, IAGSDC, NEC, ROUNDALAB, USAWest Policy Board, USDA.

Each year the Board meets immediately following the Nation Square Dance Convention (NSDC) in the city where the NSDC is held. During this meeting the Board discusses items of common interest and takes action as may be needed. The Board also elects four Officers to work closely with the Executive Director, who is responsible for the day to day operations.

For many years various Members of The ARTS have been reviewing and discussing how to update the image of square dancing. It was agreed that one way to "Re-Image" square dancing is to update the image to a more modern and stylized logo. Numerous logo designed were presented and discussed. None of the proposed logos met the criteria for an updated, new, and different symbol.

During the 2013 ARTS meeting in Oklahoma City, OK, the Board created the "Re-Image Committee" and approved Jim & Judy Taylor as Chair. Jim & Judy began working ideas with the goal of updating and improving the image of square dancing.

We will be providing details of this work and other accomplishments later in this meeting.

Jim & Judy proposed a long range plan for the committee. Included in this plan was creation of a square dance logo and a square dance slogan. Initial plans included working with a professional Re-Imaging company. After much research and discussion plans to employ a professional company were discarded for various reason.

The Re-Image Committee began to work very closely with other organization which were also looking at ways to update the image of square dancing. Extensive discussion and cooperation with the CALLERLAB Marketing Committee resulted in selection and approval of a new slogan and a new logo.

Jim & Judy will provide more information about the Re-Imaging Committee's work.

Over the next several years many significant actions were completed: 1) Additional organizations joined the ARTS Governing Board, 2) Bylaws were approved, 3) The ARTS was incorporated in North Carolina as an IRS 501(c)(3) corporation, 4) Two web sites have been created and activated, 5) An education grant program was established, 6) A Dance Information Fact Sheet was created and distributed, 7) Representatives from The ARTS Board participated in education seminars during NSDCs and USAWest convention, and many more accomplishments, 8) A new project to create and distribute 90-second videos designed to help with recruiting new dancers.

During the 2018 ARTS meeting the Board approved a MOTION to create a working group to develop a plan to create, publish, and promote videos of ARTS dance forms. Michael Streby agreed to take the lead for this project.

The result of Michael's expertise and very hard work The ARTS has created 90-second videos with information about the many benefits of dancing. Links to the videos produced for this project are intended to be posted and shared throughout the dancing community. As the videos become available links will be posted, shared and publicized.

In the first 90-second video Dr. Lee discusses one of the many benefits of Square Dancing. He points to the Emotional and Psychological benefits participants gain from the activity. He emphasizes that Square Dancing provides exercise and positive socialization which is equally, if not more, beneficial.

Dr. Lee notes that the experience of dancing brings happiness to the dancers. He also notes this is only ONE of the MANY benefits of this activity. In the 90-second videos, he discusses the many benefits of dancing.

Michael will provide more information about this project and the videos.