

# THE BALTIMORE BULLETIN

ISSUE #1, FEBRUARY 2023



## 2023 Was A Big Year For Opera House Improvements

The BDRC has been (slowly) restoring the historic Victoria Opera House for almost a decade. The building is owned by the Village, but the BDRC leases the space above the Village offices.

When restoration began, the theater, balcony, and ballroom at the top (the former meeting space for the Knights of Pythias and the Masonic Lodge) had no HVAC, plumbing, or electric. The walls were various colors and filthy. Water damage, rodents, bees, and time all took a toll over the roughly 50 years that the space was mothballed.

Thanks to many volunteers, grants, donors, members, sponsors, patrons, and contractors, this historic and iconic building is now providing a multi-use space in the heart of downtown. The theater space has been painted and modern seats have been installed. The theater is heated and cooled. We went from zero to two working restrooms. We have lighting, audio, and outlets that work!

In addition, we just completed phase I of the window replacement project. The Village Council funded the window replacement, and has committed funding for the next few years to complete the work in phases. Rosati Windows is performing the work. The old windows were cracked, rotted, leaky, and dangerous. The change has been dramatic, and phase II will occur in 2024.

Volunteers made some repairs last fall on the ADA ramp on the south façade. We installed new stage lighting for theater productions and the mezzanine level restroom was restored to glory: finally, a second working restroom! This work was funded by proceeds from the Victoria Players Children's Theater and their patrons.

Finally, the ballroom floor was just refinished by Wooten Wood Floors. For decades, the original wood floor was covered by carpet. We removed the threadbare carpet and found the original pine flooring, along with an authentic 1905 basketball court.

The pine was never finished, which made it vulnerable to damage, and difficult to clean. The Fairfield County Foundation awarded a grant to the BDRC to have the floors sanded and finished. Our eternal thanks to Foundation's Janet S. Crist Fund for funding this project. The difference is remarkable!

So with all this done, what's left? Plenty! We hope to finish phase II of the window replacement in early 2024. We plan some additional HVAC repair work. The wood ADA ramp outside the building will be sealed. We hope to make some more improvements in the ballroom, and make some electrical upgrades to enhance theater productions.

Take a look at the following photos to get a better picture of the amazing progress we've made! And let us

know if you are interested sponsoring or volunteering to help with projects in 2024!

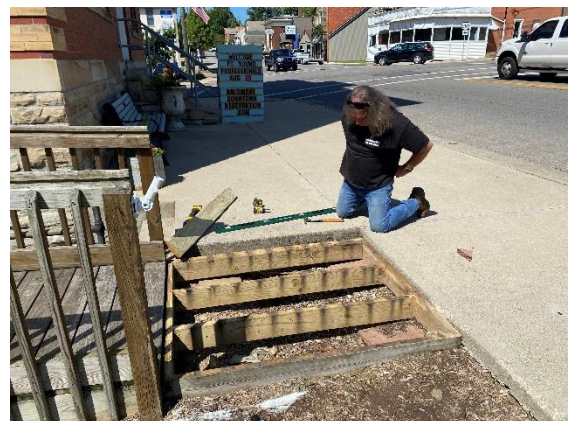




Ballroom floor refinishing, funded by the Janet S. Crist Fund of the Fairfield County Foundation. Thank you!!



The small restroom on the mezzanine level was renovated in October. Thanks VPCT supporters!



Volunteer Keith Pickens ponders ADA ramp repairs at the Victoria.





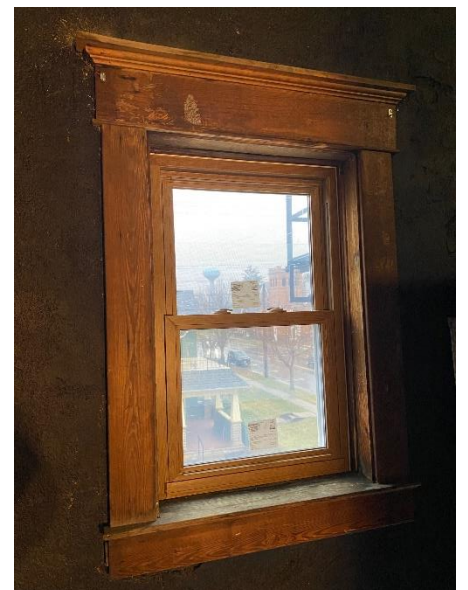
Before – missing and broken glass!



Thanks to  
Rosati  
Windows for  
their great  
work!



The Village is replacing windows over several  
phases and years.





## Holiday Market a Big Success

The Baltimore Farmers' Market had another popular Holiday Market in December. Our thanks to the Village for allowing us to use S. Park Dr. and Johnson Park for the event. And a huge thanks to all our sponsors, vendors, entertainers, and customers.

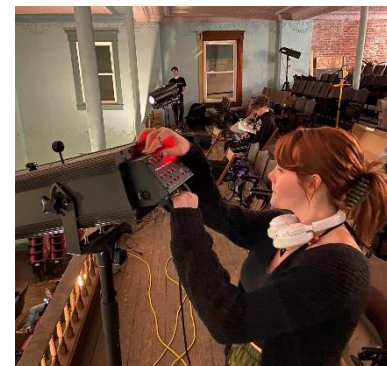


And don't fret. The regular Farmers' Market will return in June! It will again be held Tuesday evenings at Ace Hardware. Our Market Committee will be fine tuning things over the winter – let us know if you want to be involved as a vendor or volunteer!



## Victoria Players Children's Theater Holiday Show

On December 15 – 17, the VPCT performed four shows of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* at the Victoria Opera House. Congratulations to the talented cast and crew members who made this such a festive and spectacular show!



[BaltimoreOhioFarmersMarket@gmail.com](mailto:BaltimoreOhioFarmersMarket@gmail.com)

Follow the VPCT's plans for 2024 as they present two more spectacular shows this summer! Younger thespians will shine in Disney's Finding Nemo Junior June 20 - 23, and older troupe members will offer Les Miserables in July! Auditions will be announced soon.



## Thanks Lee, Jill, & Friends! 🎵

Another wonderful holiday show from these talented folks! Their Christmas music and spirit filled the Opera House and raised donations for the Victoria too. Thank you to all who performed or attended.

**Lee Crader, Jill Henwood & FRIENDS!**

**Dec. 21 at 7p.m. | Victoria Opera House** | 101 South Main Street Baltimore

Featuring:

Juliana Chianese	Max DeBaltzo	Clayton Dutton	Kyle Roby	Abby Todd	Izzy Vatter

## Need a Venue? Rent the Opera House For Your Event

No need to wait two years for your venue to be available! Make magical memories in this historic space. Contact the BDRC for wedding package options and rates. The VOH is also available for assorted parties, meetings, and rental events, offering flexible theater and ballroom spaces.



## Restoration Fitness Classes at the Opera House

Yoga with instructor Rachel Foltz has gone on their winter break. Thanks so much to Rachel and everyone who came out to practice with her this year! Proceeds from the classes help with the ongoing restoration of the Opera House. Watch for classes resuming as soon as spring arrives – and on the newly refinished floor!





## Thank You to our Opera House Sponsors for 2023

The restoration of Baltimore's historic Opera House is ongoing, and would not be happening without local support. For 2023 the BDRC would like to thank

- Park National Bank
- Sherry Looney and the Loon Crew/Howard Hanna Realty
- Schaffner's Drive In
- Keller Family Chiropractic

Their ongoing support of the Victoria literally helps fund operations, repairs and additional improvements coming soon.



## Hometown Holidays Queens Pageant at the Opera House

The annual pageant returned to the Victoria's stage November 4.



Congratulations to the Queens and Court!

- Jr. Miss Hometown Holidays Attendant - Erica Lysinger
- Jr. Miss Hometown Holidays Queen - Cicely Esterline
- Miss Hometown Holidays Attendant - Gabby Huber
- Miss Hometown Holidays Queen - Brienna Mount

## The Nostalgics Christmas Concert – An Annual Tradition

The Nostalgics Big Band hit the stage at the Victoria Opera House on Dec. 3. They filled hearts with holiday cheer. What a festive show! Our thanks to the band for gracing the Opera House stage every year before the big Lighted Holiday Parade.

Look for their return Sunday, June 2!



## Support the BDRC – Join in 2024

As a volunteer run non-profit, the BDRC depends on revenue from donations, memberships, sponsorships, and events to operate. This is what makes all our programming and the ongoing restoration of the Victoria Opera House possible!

Members are always welcome at our Board meetings (7 PM on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month at the Victoria). Memberships are available at different levels, and all new and renewing members score great custom swag.

Anyone who contributes \$500 or more per year has an annual recognition plaque hung in the Victoria Opera House! Sponsorships for the following programs and more are available.

- Farmers' Market
- Victoria Players Children's Theater
- Victoria Opera House
- Arbor Day
- Spring Tea Party
- Holiday Market
- Flag Fund (flags on Main & Market St.)
- Restoration Fitness at the Victoria
- Fall Flashlight Tour
- Flourish in Books Shop
- And more!

Our membership committee has some custom member gifts planned in 2024. These cannot be found in stores!



*Sweatshirts & hats coming this year!*

Look for membership and sponsorship renewal information in your inbox, on our website, and on social media. Your support is greatly appreciated!

If you know someone who might be interested in joining the BDRC, donating, or volunteering, please invite them to a meeting or check us out via our website -[www.balimoredowntownrestoration.com](http://www.balimoredowntownrestoration.com)

## Karaoke Night Returns in Spring

Take the stage or just listen or dance. Either way, the popular Karaoke Night will fill the Victoria with music. Come join the fun!



## Keep Up with Us on Social Media

The BDRC and its many programs are on Facebook at:



- Baltimore Downtown Restoration
- Victoria Opera House
- Victoria Players Children's Theater – VPCT
- Baltimore Farmers Market

And of course, our website is up to speed with current events and programs.

Questions? Email us at:

- [balimoredowntownrestoration@gmail.com](mailto:balimoredowntownrestoration@gmail.com)
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