



The Barnum Museum is Back from the Brink *Reopening two days a week starting April 26*

The Barnum Museum has been completely closed to the general public since January 2011 and the historic portion closed ever since the June 24, 2010 tornado hit Bridgeport. A unique exhibition called *Recovery in Action* will be presented on Thursdays and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the People's United Bank Gallery starting on April 26. *Recovery in Action* will allow visitors to gain insight into the complexities of a disaster recovery in a museum setting.

The Museum's collection of unique artifacts, including Tom Thumb's miniature carriages and P.T. Barnum's ornate furniture, will be among the many items on view. But instead of a traditional display, they will be shown in their "evacuation" spaces, where they were out loaded from the historic structure. Visitors will see how the Museum has devised a safe home for its collections while restoration of the historic building is underway. Although it will not be possible to take tours of the damaged building, visitors will often be able to observe a conservator at work on some of the artifacts that were damaged by the tornado, as well as see many items that have already received conservation treatments.

"The historic building itself is a work of art," commented Kathy Maher, Executive Director and Curator for The Barnum Museum, "and the collection it contains is part of the overall restoration process. The two are connected and must be restored simultaneously. It's now time to let everyone else witness this tremendous effort as it unfolds. The Museum continues to tirelessly plan the revitalization to reinvigorate and re-envision the Museum which houses 25,000 unique artifacts reflecting the life and times of P.T. Barnum and greater Bridgeport," continued Maher.

"We are grateful to the State Historic Preservation Office for the grant funding to present *Recovery in Action* along with a fabulous array of programs on different aspects of historic preservation and related topics," concluded Maher. "We look forward to sharing the knowledge and experience we have gained from this process."

While [Swanke Hayden Connell Architects](#) continue to work on the restoration of the museum's historic dome and other parts of the building, the Museum's staff has been painstakingly working on other aspects of the multi-million dollar project, which is expected to take two more years to complete. Grant funding from the Connecticut Humanities Council has allowed the Museum to consult with top scholars in the field in order to plan new exhibitions that will be installed once the historic structure is restored.

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The Museum is dedicated to P.T. Barnum's legacy and his genre in American history and to being a relevant institution of learning, accessible to many audiences. In addition to the exhibition, the museum will be offering lectures, book discussions, and other programs starting in May 2012. Be sure to visit barnum-museum.org or call 203-331-1104 ext. 100 for dates and times. A brochure listing these programs will be available at the Museum on on-line.

The original Barnum Institute building, designed by the architectural firm Longstaff and Hurd, was completed in 1893. It is owned by the City of Bridgeport and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

What: *Recovery in Action* exhibition

Where: **The Barnum Museum, 820 Main Street, Bridgeport, CT 06604**
Visitors are asked to enter through the double doors at the back of the historic building, where it is connected to People's United Bank. The front doors are closed.

When: **Thursday and Fridays from April 26 until further notice, between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.**

Cost: Entrance is Free

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