

# The BARNUM MUSEUM



Always Revolutionary

## The Barnum Museum Receives Grant for *Animals in American Life*

The Barnum Museum Foundation announces that it has been awarded \$1,498 in grant funding by Connecticut Humanities to support the Spring 2015 program series, *Animals in American Life: Pets, Performers and Zoos*. The grant will help support the museum's public programs to be presented in March, April and May.

Connecticut Humanities, a nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, supports cultural and historic organizations that tell the state's stories, build community and enrich lives.

This program series features a variety of topics that explore the fascinating history of human-animal relationships. Lifelong learners, families with school-age children, animal lovers and history buffs will find a selection of programs to suit their interests. Topics range from the history of pets in America, to the story of Jumbo and other 19th century elephants, the history of Beardsley Park and Zoo and zoo-keeping philosophies. Formats include illustrated talks by humanities scholars, informal lunchtime programs featuring rare artifacts from the museum's collection and a Zoomobile visit with animals.

Kathleen Maher, Executive Director of The Barnum Museum, notes that animals played a big role in P.T. Barnum's career, even before his famous circus. "The museum strives to carry on Barnum's legacy of offering fun ways for people to learn. We especially enjoy sharing the lesser known stories of Barnum's life and career and several of our programs will do just that. The *Animals in American Life* speakers are entertaining as well as expert on their topics, and we hope people will come and enjoy these presentations."

On Sunday, March 22 at 2 p.m., Dr. Katherine C. Grier will give an illustrated talk, *Pets in America: A Surprising History*, covering the story of our lives with animals at home, including pets' evolving roles as beloved companions and as pastimes. She will also discuss the variety of challenges pet owners faced in past centuries. Dr. Grier is a Professor of History at the University of Delaware, and is the author of [Pets in America: A History](#), and the blog, *The Pet Historian*.

In tandem with Dr. Grier's presentation, Jimmy Gonzalez, Co-Founder and Director of A Hand for a Paw, Inc. (AHFAP) will give a short talk about the Bridgeport non-profit's assistance programs for pet-owners. Pet food donations for the AHFAP pantry are welcome.

April programs focus on elephants in the 19th century, beginning with a museum "Sneak Peek" titled *Elephants in the Museum!* on Wednesday, April 8 at 12:15 p.m. The informal lunchtime program, presented by Curator Adrienne Saint-Pierre, will feature rare artifacts in the collection that pertain to famous elephants.

On Sunday, April 19 at 2 p.m., Dr. Andrew McClellan, Professor of Art History at Tufts University, will present *Jumbo: Marvel, Myth and Mascot*, the story of the larger-than-life



celebrity whom P. T. Barnum purchased from the London Zoo. Jumbo arrived in America on April 9, 1882. Dr. McClellan's talk will include rarely seen images relating to Jumbo's life, and will discuss the continuing legacy of this immensely popular pachyderm.

May programs will focus on zoos, and feature Bridgeport's own Beardsley Park and Zoo. On Wednesday, May 13 at 12:15 p.m., Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo *Zoomobile* will pay a visit to the museum, bringing small animals to meet program attendees. Michelle Gaudreau, Beardsley Zoo Educator, will talk about these and other animals at the zoo, and show a variety of animal artifacts that people can explore through touch.

On Sunday, May 17 at 2 p.m., Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo Executive Director, Gregg Dancho will present a program about this National Register site's early history, beginning with the gift of land to the City of Bridgeport in the 1880s, and its transformation to a professionally-staffed, accredited zoo. Dancho's talk, *Beardsley Zoo: A History of Land and Tigers*, will also discuss how zoo-keeping philosophies have changed over the years. Dancho will discuss the zoo's current work to ensure the survival of Siberian (Amur) tigers. Dancho has served as Beardsley Zoo's director since 1983.

All programs will be held in the People's United Bank Gallery located behind The Barnum Museum's historic building at 820 Main Street. Suggested donation is \$5 per person; Barnum Museum members are free and guests are encouraged to also bring a pet food donation.

For more information about the programs, please visit [www.barnum-museum.org](http://www.barnum-museum.org). For further questions, please contact Kathleen Maher, Executive Director, or Adrienne Saint-Pierre, Curator. Either can be reached at 203-331-1104 ext. 100.

