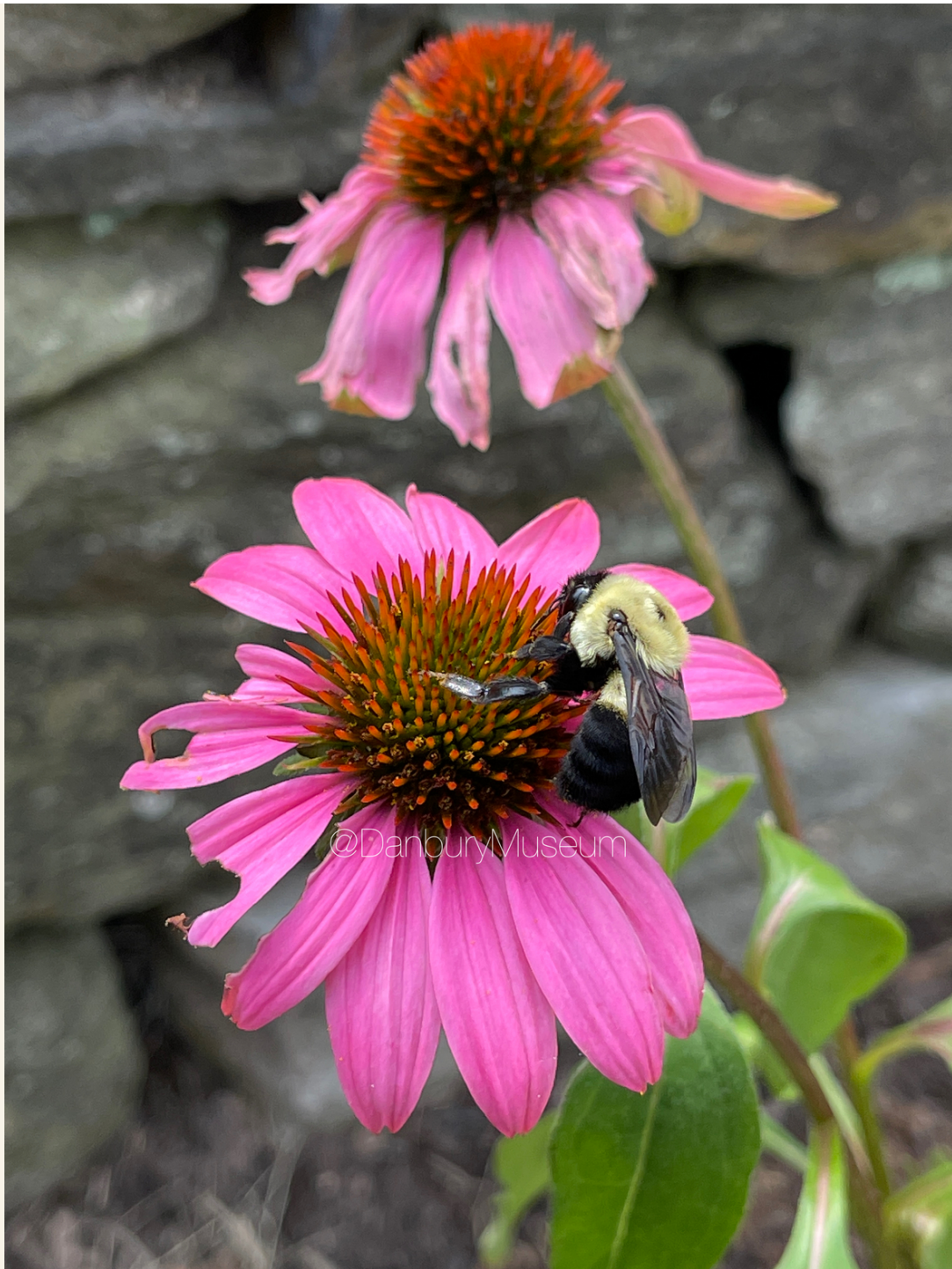


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Hello, Friends,

Labor Day looms and with it, (fingers crossed!) some cooler days lay ahead!

As summer closes we'd be remiss not to thank all the visitors--tourists, musicians, genealogists, and more--who made this season so much fun. And even though the CT Summer Museums program ends on Saturday, September 3, (with many thanks to our legislative team, CT

Humanities, and the Connecticut Office of the Arts), a generous grant from the Danbury Cultural Commission allows us to continue FREE admission through Saturday, December 17! That means FREE tours of not only the four historic buildings on our Main Street campus, but at the Ives Birthplace as well. Tours are on Fridays and Saturdays and you can book them via [Eventbrite](#). Our sincere thanks to the [Danbury Cultural Commission](#) for their support!

We have exciting programming ahead with Danbury Public Schools, the Irish Cultural Center and the AOH, and much more--stay tuned!

We're happy to have new essays from both John O'Donnell and Dr Thomas MacGregor this month. Tom writes about worts (not weeds!) and John shares a discovery from a recent visit to the nation's capital.

Our Danbury (Re)Discovered exhibit is open and FREE to all with no reservations required! Visit Wednesday through Saturday, from 12 - 4, and see some of the artifacts and stories that represent Danbury and the museum's 80 years of collecting.

Coming Friday, October 7, and Saturday, October 8, (10 - 4 both days) we'll be hosting the Friends of the Danbury Museum's "Sell Your Old Gold" Fundraiser. Mark your calendars, tell your friends, and start collecting that old/broken/no longer worn gold!

And of course, it's *never* too early to save the date for the museum's annual fundraiser, the Hat City Ball. The Ball—our first in person gathering in 3 years (!!) will be held on March 10, 2023, at the Amber Room Colonnade. We'll be "letting the good times roll" as we are all so glad to be celebrating together once again! More details to come, but keep the date reserved--it's going to be a GREAT evening.

Happy almost autumn and we'll see you in October!

Brigid Guertin (*Executive Director, City Historian*)

Patrick Wells (*Research Specialist, Social Media Manager*)

Michele Lee Amundsen (*Collections Manager, Newsletter Editor*)

Free Tours!

Thanks to a generous grant from the Danbury Cultural Commission, we are able to offer FREE tours of the Danbury Museum's historic buildings at 43 Main Street and the Charles Ives Birthplace.

Tours are Fridays & Saturdays, from September 10 through December 17, 2022.

Advance registration is required, please book via Eventbrite or DanburyMuseum.org



FRIENDS OF THE DANBURY MUSEUM

"Sell Your Old Gold" Fundraiser



**FOR THIS FUNDRAISER,
YOUR CHECKBOOK STAYS HOME...
AND THIS TIME, YOU GO HOME
WITH A CHECK IN YOUR POCKET !!!**

Please take a moment to look through your jewelry boxes at home for:

- BROKEN GOLD CHAINS AND BRACELETS
- SINGLE EARRINGS (HALF PAIRS)
- OLD SCHOOL RINGS
- RINGS WITH MISSING STONES
- OLD BOYFRIEND/GIRLFRIEND GIFTS
- JEWELRY YOU NEVER WEAR
- GOLD NON-WORKING WATCHES
- YES, EVEN DENTAL GOLD
- STERLING SILVER JEWELRY, FLATWARE, HOLLOWWARE
- PLATINUM AND PALLADIUM

THEN BRING IT WITH YOU TO:

**THE DANBURY MUSEUM
43 MAIN STREET
DANBURY, CT**

203.743.5200

Friday	October 7th	10 AM to 4 PM
Saturday	October 8th	10 AM to 4 PM

There, our good friend, Bob the gold man, will buy your "old gold" and hand you a check. Then, after the refining process, over 60% of the profits will be donated, in your name, to the FRIENDS OF THE DANBURY MUSEUM !!!

Any questions, please email: bob@libertygoldct.com



St John's Wort (Hypericum calycinum)

A Wort is not a Weed

by Thomas MacGregor

For many years I assumed that the British word for “weed” was “wort.” I came to this misunderstanding because the small St. John’s Wort (*Hypericum calycinum*) that I purchased many years ago from a nursery for my perennial flower garden is so aggressive that it annually encroaches on the space of other perennials. I have cut it back several times during this growing season only to have its stolons continue to push the garden boundaries.

Likewise, the spiderwort plant (*Tradescantia brevifolia*) that my sister-in-law gave me because I wanted a blue flowering plant to contrast with the yellows, green, and reds in my yard has had an explosive population growth. In fact, from my walks throughout Danbury, I was certain I had populated the entire city with this blue, star-like flower with its golden stamens. Spiderwort is sometimes called “inchplant” because it grows so quickly. The “brevifolia” in its Latin name refers to the observation that the flower closes up at dusk (I think that’s when it stealthily multiplies). As a scientist, I also find it intriguing that the stamen hairs change color in the presence of a pollutant, such as sulphur dioxide, or upon radiation exposure.

The small lungwort (*Pulmonaria sp.*) that I purchased years ago has behaved better, but nevertheless has multiplied from one small clump to four large rosettes. Lungwort is an herbaceous perennial with large blade leaves that emanate from a rosette that lasts through winter. It produces flowers very early in the Spring at the time of new growth. The flowers last a month giving way to marbled, stiff green leaves that make a lovely garden ground cover for the other three seasons.

So, what is a “wort” if it is not a British term for “weed?” According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the ending “-wort” is an Old English word, derived from the Germanic word “wyr̥t,” which is used to describe a plant or root. Sometimes, the plant has a perceived efficacious medicinal use referred to in the first half of the name. For example, lungwort was used as an aide for breathing; however, spiderwort was not used for spider bites. Instead, a tea from the spiderwort roots was used to treat stomach ailments. Its name is derived from the drying sap which makes spider-web-like threads when cut.

St. John’s Wort is a medieval common herb used to this day. Its complex chemistry of flavonoids and antioxidants is fertile ground for European scientists diligently studying its medicinal properties. St. John’s Wort was so named because it flowered and was harvested on the feast of Saint John (June 24th), although with global warming the yellow flowers now occur sooner in my garden. The herb would be hung in houses and barns to ward off evil spirits and protect people and livestock from illness. Interestingly, European scientists are studying St. John’s Wort for its antiviral activity against COVID-19.

The flowers of many wort plants are delicate, and the plants make nice groundcovers. However, if you choose to plant a “wort” in your garden, be sure to contain it with a physical barrier to keep it from taking over.

Perhaps I watch too much British television on PBS. I have learned a lot of crossword puzzle answers by watching British shows, but “wort” has always been associated with beer clues.

After 33 years at Boehringer Ingelheim, Dr. Tom (UConn '85) retired to his garden and piano.



Horatio Greenough by Rembrandt Peale, 1829, oil on canvas, from the National Portrait Gallery, which explicitly released this digital image under the CC0 license. (https://npg.si.edu/object/npg_NPG.82.106)

A Government Sculptor

By John O'Donnell

Recently we brought our grandson to visit Washington, D.C. for the first time. We visited the usual sights that are important on your first visit. These included the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, Jefferson Memorial, World War II Memorial, and the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. My grandson was very moved

by his visit to the Lincoln Memorial. Lincoln is one of his heroes and he was mightily impressed with seeing his memorial. However, when we went to the National Museum of American History, we were both stunned by an incredible statue of George Washington which piqued our interests. I do not think I have ever seen this statue before. He and I walked around the statue multiple times and studied it. It is on an epic scale and portrays Washington in a classical pose. We were both curious as to how long the statue took to carve and who the artist was who sculpted it. It proved to be a remarkable story.

The sculptor was Horatio Greenough. He was born in Boston in 1805 to a wealthy family and consequently received an excellent education. From an early age, Horatio was very interested in the plastic arts. He received instruction from carvers, architects, and sculptors in Boston. He was a very good student and displayed great talent at an early age. He entered Phillips Exeter Academy in 1814 and then went on to Harvard University in 1821. He was a very serious student of antiquity and voraciously devoured books on literature and works of art. But sculpture was his preeminent interest. He was also very heavily influenced by Washington Allston who lived in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and was sometimes called the "American Titian" because his style resembled the great Renaissance artist. Allston was praised by both Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Ralph Waldo Emerson. He exerted an enormous influence as a mentor and a close friend. After graduating from Harvard, he went to Italy to study for two years.

While in Italy he met the painter Robert W. Weir (whose son Julian Alden Weir was a talented artist in his own right and moved to Wilton, Connecticut and founded what is today the Weir Farm National Historic Site) who also became a major influence on Horatio. His artistic talents flourished while he was studying in Italy. He returned to the United States in 1827. His career blossomed and he became a much sought-after sculptor. His sculptures were heavily influenced by ancient classical aesthetic ideals which he imbibed from Washington Allston. He was one of the first sculptors to start to receive United States government commissions which seemed to be a harbinger for an enormously and momentous career. His talents brought him a Congressional commission in 1832 to sculpt a statue of George

Washington to stand in the rotunda of the United States Capitol. He seemed poised to take a career making step, but fate intervened and decreed otherwise.

Greenough had moved back to Italy in 1828 and had a studio in Florence. The work, called *Enthroned Washington*, is a huge marble statue which took Greenough roughly eight years to complete. The seated and sandaled wearing Washington gazes sternly ahead. The statue is based on the Greek sculptor Phidias' statue of Zeus at Olympia, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Washington is bare-chested and his right arm and hand gesture with upraised index finger toward Heaven. His left arm cradles a sheathed sword, hilt forward, symbolizing Washington returning power to the people at the end of the American Revolution. Washington appearing in Roman clothing is indicative of Neoclassical art. There is an inscription on the back of the statue in Latin which translates as: "Horatio Greenough made this image as a great example of freedom, which will not survive without freedom itself."

The statue was installed in the rotunda in December 1841. It immediately generated a fire storm of controversy with the main objection being that George Washington was half-naked. Because of this the statue was relocated to a pedestal on the east lawn of the Capitol in 1843. It was still dogged by controversy and was brought back indoors to the Smithsonian Castle in 1908. It remained there until 1964. It was then moved to the second floor of the National Museum of American History where my grandson and I saw it.

Sadly, Horatio Greenough's career never recovered from this setback. He had seemed to be on the verge of becoming the first widely recognized American sculptor, but he never came back from this debacle. He had been warned by many friends including James Fenimore Cooper that this statue would engender controversy. He chose to ignore these warnings and paid a heavy price for this. His career never recovered, and he suffered from severe depression for the rest of his life. He died December 18, 1852 (aged forty-seven) largely forgotten and ignored. He is known today more for his writings

about art (including "form follows function") rather than his sculptures. However, my grandson and I still admire his George Washington statue!

John O'Donnell first became a history devotee while in elementary school. He was raised in Brooklyn and frequently went to Prospect Park which has a Revolutionary War monument. He was hooked!



Horatio Greenough's George Washington

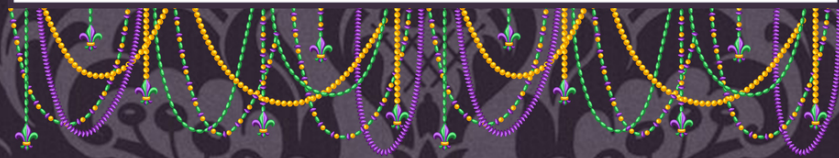


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Friday, March 10, 2023
@ The Amber Room Colonnade.

Save the date—we can't wait to celebrate together.

Laissez les bon temps rouler!



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