

# The Plant Home Pennant ...

News and Views of *The Plant Home* .... Volume Two: May, June 2008

*"This home is founded on the sincere belief that those who have lived honest and industrious lives and are without means or friends to care for them, have earned the right to be cared for. Only through the labor and expenditures of others is it possible ..."* **Thomas G. Plant, 1917**

**So ...** Mud Boots is done, and the *Screaming Blue Gerflockies* are finally over (blue, black red ... whatever your mood was in February and March), the harbor seals are back on the rocks in the Kennebec River, there are robins (*with apologies to Woody Allen*) the size of a small Buick picking winter berries from crabapple bushes, and Peony shoots are pushing their way through all the dead stalks ... and a Merry Month of May to you! We heard good comments about Volume One, so we'll try to elicit the same response for Volume Two. And please, your comments, your own stories, and your suggestions are always welcome.

By the way, if you enjoy reading this communiqué, and you think that family and friends would like the opportunity to enjoy the same, please let **This Writer (TW)** know at the following link: [mcarr@planthome.org](mailto:mcarr@planthome.org). If you are able to provide an E-mail address (with their permission, of course), **TW** will send them a link to the **Plant Memorial Home's (PMH)** website, where they can open **The Pennant**. If no E-mail address is available, we will be pleased to send a copy by mail.

**So ...** the history lesson continues ... with much appreciated input from **Barry Rodrigue**, a cousin of Tom's, and author

of the book *"Tom Plant: The Making of a Franco-American Entrepreneur, 1859-1941"*, from which much of **Tom's** history is taken. When last you heard of **Tom**, he was an apprentice shoe laster in one of the "country factories" established in Maine by Massachusetts shoe manufacturers. Lasting was the step before stitching the leather "upper" of the shoe to the sole, and in a time when the industry was attempting to mechanize their factories, lasting remained a hand crafting skill, and an opportunity to make more money than the norm of \$2.50 per week for a beginner. In 1880, at the age of 21, **Tom** left Maine for the "shoe-making capital of the world", Lynn, Massachusetts, where he settled briefly to work on shoes for the Keene Brothers Company. *"Lasters epitomized the continuity in the generation of shoemakers, because they still made shoes by hand, tugging and pulling uppers around a last with needle-nosed pincers."*, and on December 16, 1880, **Tom** was initiated into the ranks of the Lynn Lasters' Union. Unfortunately, his eyesight became so damaged by the detritus of the shoe factory, he had to leave Lynn shortly after entering the union. **Barry Rodrigue's** book reports that he may have gone to California to live with family, or he may have traveled around Cape Cod selling shoes and accessories

from a wagon. Or he may have done both -- but records do not confirm where **Tom** went. Whatever he did, he was away for three years, finally returning to Lynn in 1883, where he was joined by his brother, William. For almost two years they lived and worked together as shoemakers, then William moved on in 1885. **Tom** remained in Lynn as an edge-trimmer, "... which was one of the best paid and least available positions for machine operators. It encouraged individualism.". And in 1886, for-seeing the complete mechanization of the shoe industry, and not wishing to remain a "machine operative", **Tom** joined the Lynn Union Co-operative Shoe Company as a one-tenth owner.

... **Tom's history will be continued in Volume Three. Gotcha ??**

A *Thank You* and *Handclap* please, to recognize the members of **The Thomas G. Plant Society**. On Wednesday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, Society members will be appreciated with a dinner and donor plaques at **The Kennebec Tavern**. The dinner is meant to recognize significant donors for their contributions to sustain the vision of **Thomas Plant**. Society qualifying membership includes a one time donation of \$5,000 or more, or inclusion of **PMH** in a will or estate plan. If you are interested in more information about the Society, please call **Don Capoldo**, at 207-443-2244.

If it's **Plant Home Night** at a local eatery, it must be the first Tuesday of the month! Beginning Tuesday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, and every first Tuesday of the month thereafter, **PMH** staff, directors and supporters will "dine-for-a-discount" at a local area restaurant. The restaurant gives us a discounted choice of three complete dinners, **PMH** receives the difference between the discounted and full-price dinners as a contribution, the restaurant gets 20 to 25 diners on a historically "slow" night, the diners get a

good meal and Tuesday camaraderie, and the restaurant receives a tax break from Uncle Sam. Everyone wins! So far, participating restaurants include **The Bounty** at Holiday Inn, **J.R. Maxwell's**, **Byrne's Irish Pub**, **Mae's Café**, **The Little Wok**, and **The Kennebec Tavern**, with more signing up in May. **So ...** local restaurateurs, become a **Plant Home** supporter, and fill up one of your Tuesday evenings now and again!

**The Plant Home's** first *After-Hours Professional Cocktail Party* was held on Wednesday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. It's an opportunity to meet some of our residents, directors and staff, tour **The Home**, and learn the many ways you can support us. The cocktail parties will be held quarterly, with dates to be announced. *Join us?*

Speaking of staff, please meet **Ms. Tracy** (nee Gilbert) **Coombs**, Assistant Administrator of **PMH**, and right-and-left hands to our Executive Director. **Tracy** is a true "Mainah", a graduate of Morse High School, and a Certified Residential Medication Assistant (CRMA). She followed her mother, Kayrn, her sister Terry, and her aunt, Anna LeBourdais, to work at **PMH** in July of **1989**, beginning her 19 years with us in Food Service. Then to Personal Care Assistant, then to Head Cook, then to Office Assistant, and when **Don** arrived, to official Assistant Administrator. She now resides in Dresden and is an avid reader and quilter, holding weekly quilting classes at **PMH**. **Tracy** is connected to our residents with ties of love, grace and compassion. She says, "*They are all my surrogate grandparents. They are my blessings -- every one!*" Thank you, **Tracy**, for being part of the **Plant Memorial Home** family.

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*Income limits may apply.*