

6 月 12 日，我在 Sandusky 印刷廠拿報紙，路過 Maritime museum，我走進博物館，遞上伊利華報，服務小姐高興地說：她們主席曾經去過中國，他看到中文報紙一定會非常高興的。沒想到剛走不久的主席，因為什麼東西忘記又回來拿，真是太巧。

主席名叫 John May，他 1996 在北京師範大學讀書一年，那個時候他是部隊飛行員，他非常客氣地告訴我，很久了，他的中文講得不好，在北京他的同學給他起了中國名字梅軍，當日他給我介紹了博物館的歷史，真沒想到，俄亥俄州是第一個幫助黑人逃離美國去加拿大的，俄州也是中美建交第一州，就在中美兩國貿易戰雙方不很友好的時刻，俄州最大的媒體 The Columbus Dispatch 頭版頭條，寫了疫情中的中美兩國人民的友誼，俄州人的真誠善良有目共睹。

在 Maritime museum 博物館，John 給我介紹，1818 年，當時黑人只要在馬路上走，農場主說你是我家的奴隸，就可以把人帶走，那些無辜的人，生活在災難黑暗里，在 Sandusky 坐小船過底特律逃往加拿大，這樣的小船常常幫助黑人逃往加拿大。我看看小船大小就跟我開的 Honda Odyssey 一樣大小，通常女扮男裝，或者小男孩打扮成小女孩，需要 2 天 2 夜到達加拿大。我問 John：就這麼小的船在湖中萬一下雨颳風？我還沒有問完，我自己找到了答案：人求平等生存願望比什麼都強，因為夢想讓人可以不顧生命。



## 參觀博物館重溫歷史

離開博物館，我有一個很強的願望要去採訪錄制黑人在美國的真實故事。6 月 24 日，Cynthia，Frank 還有我，我們一起去了 Maritime museum，採訪了 John May。

衆所周知，當今美國疫情此起彼伏，來勢洶洶，抗議種族主義和警察暴行運動又風起雲湧。\$20 假票讓弗洛伊德被警察 8 分 48 秒跪壓至死，一場聲勢浩大的全國性抗議示威運動，已蔓延到全美 50 個州 2000 多個城鎮，甚至全球有 60 多個國家爆發示威遊行運動，支持因弗洛伊德事件引起的抗議。

此次抗議的直接訴求：為弗洛伊德討公道，抗議種族主義和警察濫用暴力，根本訴求：改變美國體制性種族不公。遊行示威乃至騷亂的規模與烈度為美國半個世紀以來的新高，在遊行示威中，出現了打砸搶燒等暴力與搶劫事件，出現摧毀歷史文物現象。

就在採訪 John 回家的路上，我對兒子說奧巴馬已經當上了總統，黑人的地位不低，許多事情就像種花一樣，他要一個時間。我的兒子

Frank 給我們講了二件事情：

幾年前，美國一次大水災。有兩戶人家，一家白人一家黑人，情況基本一樣，兩家人都五天了，白天在家屋頂上等人來救，兩家男主人去附近的便利店打碎玻璃闖入商店拿了一點食物，媒體說白男人是保護家人，黑男人是偷盜。一模一樣的事情因為不同的膚色得到不同結果，如今的媒體一樣還是沒有改變。

兒子繼續說我曾經在他 16 歲時送他去上過一個體驗奴隸生活的暑假夏令營。我記得我送兒子上車的時候，只他一人亞裔其他都是非裔，我知道送孩子來體驗生活的，基本父母都是醫生律師還有運動員，我想他們是不想讓他們的子女忘記他們的根，兒子告訴我：第一天到第四天，他都有不想活的念頭，因為他們年齡都不大，不是所有的苦都要讓他們去體驗，有的是由演員來演的，兒子說我們不是黑人，我們沒有辦法去體驗他們的感受，因為兒子最好朋友就是黑人，他說他沒有歧視。

兒子的話讓我思考，是角度是立場不同，但打砸搶毀壞文物還是讓人不解。兒子說那個體驗奴隸的暑假夏令營非常有意義，兒子問我是不是那個時候我並不明白這是什么一個夏令營，我告訴兒子，這是當時俄州副州長太太做的教育夏令營，兒子還講瞭：如果弗洛伊德是華人，會是什麼結果，只要你對這個國家有貢獻，誰會看你什麼顏色的。



Dear Readers,

After a serendipitous meeting between Ying Pu, publisher of this newspaper and John May, Executive Director of the Sandusky Area Maritime Association and curator of the Maritime Museum of Sandusky, she began to ponder what lessons of history this specialized museum may have to offer us today and to the wider world. Particularly intrigued as Mr. May, a former officer in the Marine Corps, had spent time both living and studying in China, she suggested we meet with him at the museum for a conversation. While the rich history provides more insights than can be covered here, we hope that you will enjoy this sampling of some of the highlights:

### Surprising Connections can Link Humanity, both Literally and Figuratively (or, You Can Get There from Here)

In our day of air travel, it's hard to image that Sandusky, Ohio, a small mid-western town on the shores of Lake Erie has been an important gateway to the world, but indeed, Mr. May explains, from the waterways of Sandusky it is possible to travel by ship all the way to China. He describes a journey from Lake Erie through the Welland Canal to Lake Ontario, connecting to the St. Lawrence Seaway, the St. Lawrence River and then sailing into the Atlantic Ocean. From there he stated, China is only three oceans away... and here we had our first lesson of history: a long, arduous journey requiring patience does not equate with impossible and can be a metaphor for other difficult endeavors we face in life.

Indeed, people as well as cargo of the 1800s traveled these waterways, which were the super-highways of that day, allowing towns and industry to spring up along the Great Lakes. A synergy developed between various industries, with timber being harvested to build ships for pleasure, commerce and fishing, and also to create barrels to store the fish, with ice being harvested from the frozen lake in the winter to preserve the fish. While the lumber, shipping and fishing industries are still alive today, are you asking: "What is ice harvesting?" This leads us to our next lesson of history.

### The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same

While a present-day refrigerator/freezer often has an ice dispensing feature, this is a relatively new luxury in the history of humankind. In the era preceding modern refrigeration technology, Sandusky, with its consistently cold winters, was well-known and highly regarded for its high-quality ice, harvested from Lake Erie. In the late 1800s, hundreds of railroad cars per day were filled with ice to be shipped across the U.S. There were specific jobs tied to the ice industry, with those who cut the ice, those who moved the ice through the

canals, those who stored the ice in ice houses which could remain frozen for up to three years, and those who delivered the ice.

The advent of the first gas operated ice cutting machine in the early 20th century eliminated work for many of the manual ice cutters, and of course, modern refrigeration was the death knell for the entire industry.

We see parallels today as economists tell us we are now in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, with many people losing employment due to technological advances. These changes are occurring at an ever-increasing rate, thus the question to ask is not whether technological advances will continue to eliminate some jobs, but how will society respond to smooth the transition, so that no one is left behind?

### Sandusky's Role in the Underground Railroad

Sandusky played a substantial role in the Underground Railroad, which was not a literal railroad, but rather a network of safe houses run by abolitionists to help enslaved people escape. Crossing the Ohio River represented a first step toward freedom although it wasn't the ultimate goal, for while the northern states were free, the laws of the country at that time allowed for escapees to be captured and returned to the south. As Canada had abolished slavery, Sandusky, situated on the west end of Lake Erie, was in an important geographic position to assist escapees to cross the waters into Canada. Oftentimes abolitionists would pay for passage on the ships. Anti-slavery sewing societies emerged to make wardrobes to replace the lower quality clothing of escapees.



A special exhibit at the museum pays tribute to Sandusky's contributions, and includes two characters from Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel Uncle Tom's Cabin, which heightened awareness of the cruelty and inhumanity of slavery. Harriet Beecher Stowe herself had a connection to Sandusky as she had a cousin living there. Her character, Uncle Tom, was based upon Josiah Henson, who made his escape with his family through Sandusky ultimately reaching Canada.

While we witness today the horrifying legacy of slavery which has spawned a movement, not only in the U.S., but globally, we are also heartened by the legacy of the abolitionists to leave no person behind as a member of the human race.

### New Life Arising from Tragedy

A discussion of Sandusky Bay would not be complete without including Cedar Point, notes Mr. May. A resort destination and one of the oldest operating amusement parks in the U.S., it once saw graceful steamers traversing the waters bringing vacationers and tourists to enjoy the summer pleasures and relaxation it had to offer. The eponymous A. G. Boeckling was one of the most beloved steamers, named for and by the businessman of German descent whose novel ideas brought national recognition and acclaim to Cedar Point.

Cherished in the waning years of the Belle Epoque and operating until the early 1950s, the sidewheel steamer was a source of fond memories for those who grew up in the Sandusky area during those times, from re-

membrances of class outings to perhaps a first kiss or engagement. When eventually taken out of service and suffering the rather ignominious fate of becoming a floating warehouse, a group of enterprising people raised money and formed an organization to restore the historic ship and bring it home. Mr. May then revealed the sad fact that the cherished steamer was destroyed by vandals during the restoration process, bringing an end to the dream. However, he noted, often when a window shuts, a door opens and a generous gift of the funds intended for the restoration along with a host of artifacts where donated to the then newly formed Sandusky Area Maritime Association. The A.G. Boeckling may be gone, but it is not forgotten, its history representing the golden age of steamship passenger service lives on through theater screenings and tales told at the Maritime Museum of Sandusky.

### Epilogue

While a highly specialized museum with so much fascinating history of its own to celebrate, Ying Pu and I also found so much to relate to the world at large. Mr. May noted that from his own experiences in China and those of his military comrades serving in such diverse locations as Yemen, Poland, Croatia and Russia, he believes that fundamentally people want the same things, to experience the same freedoms and to make choices to create fulfilling lives for themselves and their families. While relations between governments may become strained, these common human desires can form a bond of understanding among people.

Of particular interest was Mr. May's observation that he saw a level of patience in China which he believes is born of its 5,000 years of recorded history which is not generally seen to an equal degree in the west.

On a lighter note, for my part, as a millinery designer, I especially related to the ice harvesters, considering that my area of interest was essentially out of vogue before I was born! In a somewhat surreal and remarkable tribute to the ice harvesters of yore, several days after visiting the museum, I discovered a large formation of ice in my cooler which amusingly resembled a penguin and is pictured here.

For your own unique and memorable experience, Ying Pu and I highly recommend a visit to the Maritime Museum of Sandusky <https://www.sandusky-maritime.org/>

As an added bonus, the museum's annual fundraiser, the Big Splash Raffle is being held August 14 and 15, 2020 with \$250,000.00 in cash and prizes. Tickets can be purchased over the phone at 419-624-0274, or in person or by mail at The Maritime Museum of Sandusky 125 Meigs Street Sandusky Ohio 44870 Full details are available at <https://www.bigsplashraffle.com/>

—Cynthia Marek Lundeen