

Winter 2014

South Union Messenger (Winter 2014)

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SOUTH UNION MESSENGER

Vol. XLIII, No.1, 2014
South Union Shaker Village, Kentucky

The South Union Shaker Village presents the 27th annual

SOUTH UNION SEMINAR

“Adventures in Collecting:
Seventy-five Years of Searching for Kentucky Shaker”

Friday, April 11, and Saturday, April 12

You won't want to miss this year's South Union Seminar, which focuses on the process of documenting and collecting Shaker material culture from both South Union and Pleasant Hill.

The event begins with dinner at the Shaker Tavern on Friday evening, followed by a performance by the South Union Shaker Quartet at the Centre House. The seminar will resume on Saturday for a day of presentations by Timothy Mullin, Director of the Kentucky Museum; Aaron Genton, Collections Assistant at the Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, and Jean Burks, Chief Curator, Shelburne Museum and co-author of *The Encyclopedia of Shaker Furniture*.

Registration includes Friday evening dinner and Saturday lunch at the Shaker Tavern, continental breakfast at the Centre House on Saturday morning, presentations by material culture scholars and a performance by the South Union Shaker Quartet.

Register to attend by using the enclosed form or by calling
1-800-811-8379 or 1-270-542-4167.

The South Union Seminar is underwritten by
Hilliard Lyons and Shannon & Michael Vitale

WEDDINGS AT SOUTH UNION!

With nearly 500 acres of beautiful farmland surrounding a cluster of historic buildings, what better place for a wedding? For many years the South Union Shaker Village did not host weddings on site and, in fact, had a policy against it. The combination of a decrease in attendance at historic sites, including the SUSV, and a marked increase in inquiries about South Union as a wedding venue has changed our minds.

While we actually began scheduling weddings in 2012, our intentions were officially made public on January 18 by participating in the Southern Kentucky Bridal Expo in Bowling Green. Many thanks to board member Christine Sowders who chaired the project, and to Susan Gardner and Roianne Ridley who designed our booth. Dianne Howerton also created an appealing packet of materials that outlines what we have to offer at South Union. That information will soon be available on our website as well.

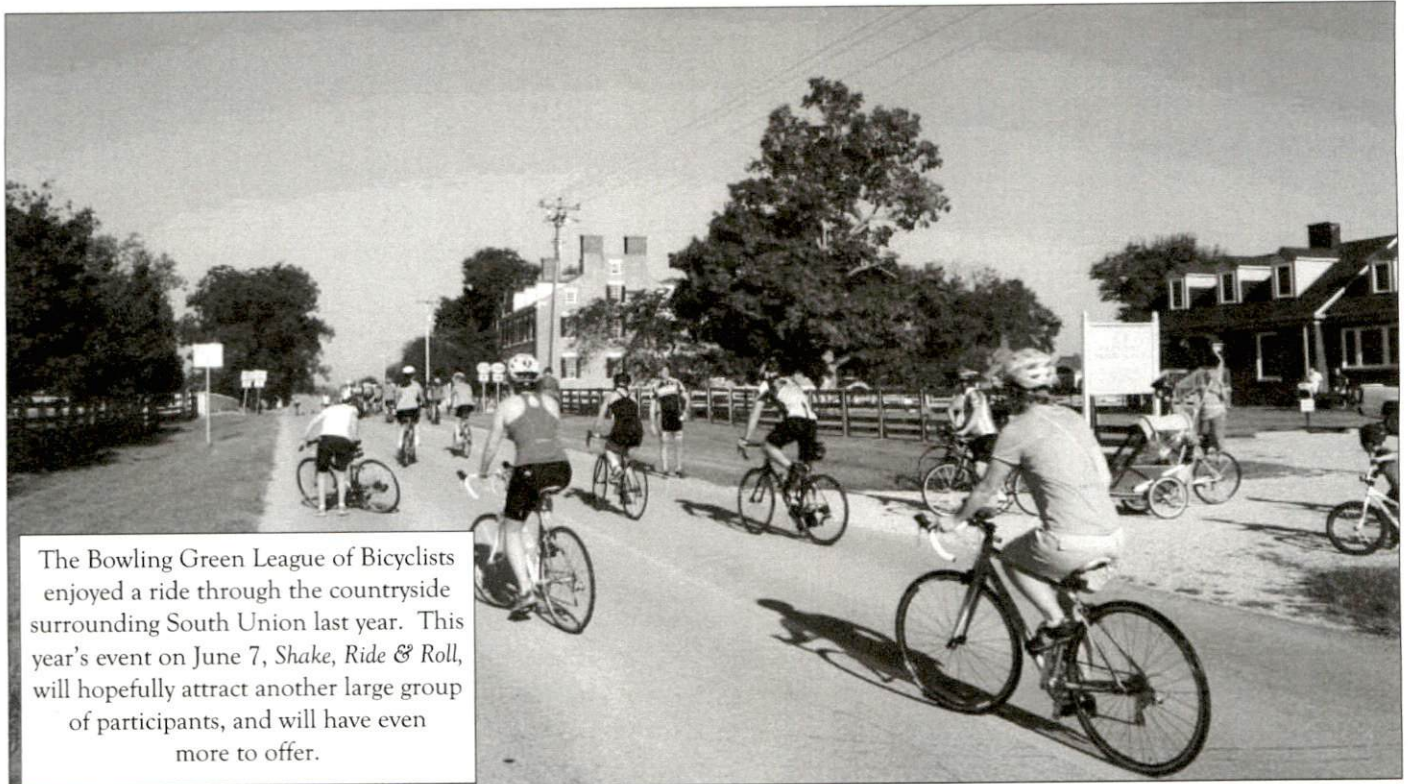


South Union currently offers a variety of meadows for outdoor weddings, with options for tent rental. The historic buildings are not accessible for events, although use of the Visitor Center comes with any rental preference. Weddings can also be booked at the Shaker Tavern where guests have access to both the yard and the building.

Thanks to all the SUSV board members who staffed the booth, and worked behind the scenes to make it a success. We are already reaping the benefits.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RECENT DONATION

Martin Brown	\$25,000.00 (general support)
Edie Bingham	\$13,000.00 (general support)
Edie Bingham	\$1,000.00 (Bus Fund)
Margy Thomas	\$1,000.00 (general support)
Pat and Mary Allen	\$150.00 (in memory of Steve Kistler)
George and Darlene Kohrman	\$500.00 (in memory of Diana Van Kolken)
Ray and Judy McCaskey	\$500.00 (collections acquisition)
Dottie Metcalf	\$350.00 (corner cupboard restoration)
Logan Aluminum	\$1,000.00 (Shake & Stir underwriting)
Shannon and Michael Vitale	\$500.00 (SU Seminar underwriting)
Hilliard Lyons	\$500.00 (SU Seminar underwriting)



The Bowling Green League of Bicyclists enjoyed a ride through the countryside surrounding South Union last year. This year's event on June 7, *Shake, Ride & Roll*, will hopefully attract another large group of participants, and will have even more to offer.

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Tommy Hines

Its going to be a busy year at the South Union Shaker Village! We are planning one of the most aggressive series of events that we have attempted in many years. Our major downturn in daily visitor traffic has led us to reevaluate the way we have operated for many years. Events bring people to South Union, so we hope to offer something for a broad cross-section of people this season. We are also looking into creative ways to get folks on the grounds on non-event days, even those people who may have little interest in history. I can't imagine, but there are lots people who do not care much for history! Take a look at our 2014 calendar on page 6.

We are currently blessed with a very talented, inventive and energetic Board of Directors. They are diligently working to find creative ways to introduce more people to the SUSV, and they do not mind being "in the trenches" to make that happen. The Board hosted two retreats last year, one in Bowling Green and the other at Pleasant Hill, and those gatherings produced ideas and enthusiasm that have not diminished. Our new slate of officers for 2014 are David Bell, President; Laura Haury, Vice-President; Lee Young, Secretary; Skip Cleavinger, Treasurer. We are all looking forward to a great year.

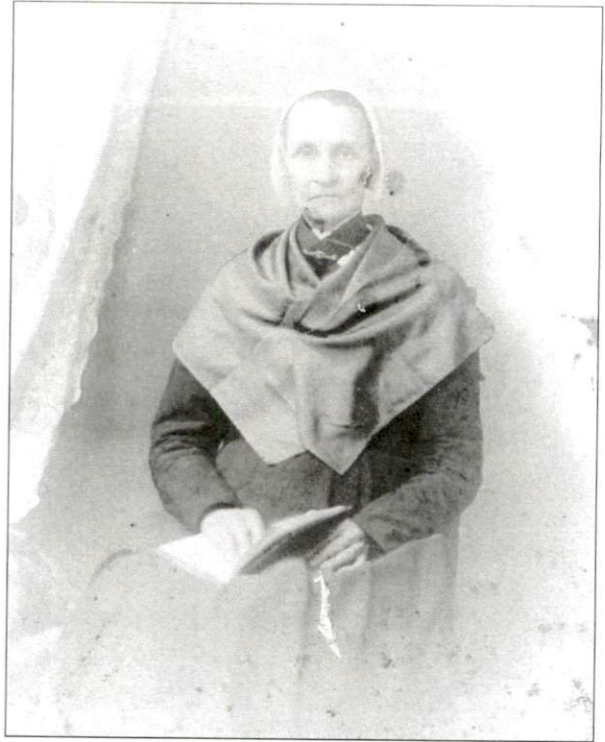
We are still raising funds for the reconstruction of the corner cupboard in the Centre House dining room. Our original goal was \$3,750.00 and at this point we have received \$750.00, thanks to gifts from Donna Hill, Ken Hatcher, Charles Hungate and Dottie Metcalf. We hope to begin this project sometime in 2014.

We at South Union were saddened to hear that our friends Susan Hughes, Ralph Ward, and Candy Parker were recently dismissed from the Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill. Their invaluable experience and tireless dedication would be a tremendous loss to any historic site, but especially at a place where their gifts were so well matched to what they did each day. We will miss them being at Pleasant Hill, as will scores of others who visit there. Wishing you all much happiness and success.

SOUTH UNION PROFILE: ELVARINE HILTON

Elvarine Hilton was born in Simpson County, Kentucky in 1818. For reasons not recorded by the Shakers she came to live at South Union in 1831, accompanied by her younger sisters, Charity and Rhoda. Elvarine is first mentioned in the South Union manuscripts six years later when she was moved with a small group of girls into the Centre Family. It was while she lived in the Centre House that 19-year-old Elvarine and 16-year-old Hortency Lightrich were "carried away in trances to the World of the Spirits," according to manuscript records from June of 1838. This experience, not uncommon to Shaker girls during this period, took place while Pleasant Hill's Ministry was at South Union for a visit.

In 1845 Sister Elvarine was given the position of overseeing the little girls in the Centre Family, a position she kept for several years. She remained in the Centre Family until 1880 when she was appointed assistant Eldress of the East Family. For the next seven years Sister Elvarine served in some capacity of leadership in the East, West and North Families, until returning as a common member of the Centre Family in 1887.



Elvarine Hilton posed for this portrait at the studio of Noel Bryon Bettison, 10th Street, in Bowling Green, Kentucky, circa 1880. She is dressed in traditional Shaker costume, including a kerchief most assuredly made of South Union silk.



Elvarine Hilton, seated center, was photographed with South Union's leadership sometime between 1880 and 1887. Seated to her left is South Union's lead Eldress, Betsy Smith.

In 1886 Elvarine and her sister Charity became

embroiled in a lawsuit, soon after the death of their brother William. According to witnesses, William had mysteriously burned a large portion of his \$250,000.00 fortune, just hours prior to his death. Before the money could be totally consumed an unnamed person rescued \$100,000.00 in government bonds from the flames. Charity and Elvarine worked diligently through the court system for the next six years, attempting to receive a portion of their brother's estate. In the end, the money was awarded to his son James, and the Hilton sisters received nothing. Charity eventually left the Shakers, suing the United Society of Believers for neglect. She also lost that case.

In 1903, at the age of 85, Elvarine fell in the kitchen in the Centre House and broke her hip. The journal notes "it isn't at all likely she will ever be able to walk anymore." She died eight days later and was buried in the South Union cemetery.

As a postscript, South Union's manuscript are filled with intriguing facts, including a May 1868 entry that references Elvarine Hilton, one in a group of five sisters who accompanied Brother John Perryman on a picnic to Franklin. "In their excitement, they went off without their Dinner. T. J. Shannon follows after and takes it to them."

A NEW LOOK FOR THE SHAKER TAVERN

The 1869 Shaker Tavern is a structure that looks out of place amongst South Union's early 19th century Federal architecture. And there's a reason for that! Its purpose was to appeal to the late 19th century railroad traveler who stopped there for meals and overnight accommodations, not to reflect the Shaker aesthetic. Today the Tavern still accommodates visitors, operating as a Bed and Breakfast, managed by JoAnn Moody, a SUSV staff member.

The Shaker Tavern was purchased by the SUSV in 1980, after serving as a private residence since 1922. Initial restoration began in the late 1980s when local benefactor Ruth Pottinger funded the installation of an HVAC system and the renovation of the massive porch columns. A grant from the Carpenter Foundation in the 1990s restored much of the interior and added bathrooms to the second floor.

One small project accomplished last year was a much needed restoration of the entry hall. An attempt was made to scale back the heavy Victorian interior design implemented in the 1990s. When wallpaper was removed, evidence of a wooden rail for coats and hats was revealed. The trim was reproduced by craftsman Roger Ryan and iron hooks, similar to the originals, were installed. The hall hopefully resembles more accurately a waiting area for rail travelers, not an opulent Victorian home.



A broader restoration project awaits grant funding. Eventually we hope to add more bathrooms to the second floor and update the current utility systems. Many elements of the original 1869 structure are missing. Some that we eventually hope to replace are exterior shutters, a set of double doors at the entrance, a service staircase, and a wooden front porch floor.



THANK YOU!

- ◆ To Advisory Committee member, Carol Rochford, who recently retired after serving for eleven years. Thank you, Carol, for graciously sharing your gifts and talents with South Union.
- ◆ To volunteer Jerri Tarpley, who not only creates but donates beautiful floral offerings for our events at the Shaker Tavern and the Centre House. Pictured to the left is the arrangement that Jerri made for our dessert table at the Holiday Market Preview Party in December. She uses only natural materials gathered from her farm, property that was once owned by the Shakers.
- ◆ To Skip Cleavinger, out-going chair of the SUSV Board of Directors. Thank you for your hard work and dedication over the last two years, and for successfully re-introducing the gala fund-raiser to our annual schedule.

2014 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SUSV LECTURE SERIES:

A BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK AT SOUTH UNION'S COLLECTIONS"

Saturday, May 10

A close look at some of the seldom seen treasures in the South Union Shaker Village collection will highlight a presentation by Executive Director Tommy Hines. Box lunch will be served.

Reservations required: \$25.00 members, \$30.00 non-members, \$15.00 students /

Time: 10:00am - 1:00pm

"SHAKE, RIDE & ROLL" BIKE EVENT

Saturday, June 7

In cooperation with the Bowling Green League of Bicyclists (BGLOB), the South Union Shaker Village will host a bike ride through the beautiful countryside, much of what was originally the Shaker's 6,000 acre farm. Special premiums and options for the day's event will be offered upon registration. To register contact www.meetup.com

FIRST CLASS PASSENGER BREAKFAST

Saturday, July 19

Experience a first class breakfast, ca. 1914, at South Union's famous railroad hotel, the Shaker Tavern. The breakfast, chosen from a 100-year-old southern railroad menu, includes pork tenderloin, scrambled eggs, fried potatoes, baked apples and sausage, yeast rolls, and plenty of hot coffee.

Reservations required: \$15 members, \$17 non-members / **Time:** 10:00am

MUSIC ON THE FARM

Saturday, September 13

Imagine how nice it will be to feel the cool fall breezes wafting through the 1875 Grain Barn, listening to live music while strolling across the Shaker farm, and enjoying afternoon dessert! Kick back in a relaxed family atmosphere and partake in some traditional Southern delicacies, including fried peach pies, apple cider slushes, and homemade Shaker Sweet Potato Pie ice cream from Chaney's Dairy Barn.

Tickets: \$15 per person, \$25 per couple, \$5 children ages 6-12 / **Time:** 2:00pm - 5:00pm

"SHAKERTOWN REVISITED" CAST REUNION

Saturday, September 13

Join us for the South Union's biennial reunion of former cast members and fans who were a part of "Shakertown Revisited," a outdoor musical drama that was performed in Logan County from 1960 to 1990. A box lunch will be served at noon, after which will be an opportunity to reminisce and to tour the historic buildings.

Reservations required: \$20 per person, which also includes admission to MUSIC ON THE FARM event from 2:00 until 5:00 pm that afternoon.

SHAKER FARM DAY

Saturday, October 11

The common farm chores of yesterday are practically lost arts today, but not at the South Union Shaker Village! Enjoy a day of interactive demonstrations where butter is made, corn is shelled, hams are smoked, laundry is boiled, apples are pressed into cider and much more. Lunch will be available.

Tickets: \$10 per person, \$5 children ages 6-12 / **Time:** 10:00am - 4:00pm

A SHAKER BREAKFAST

Saturday, November 1

A Civil War-era Shaker breakfast that promises to please and to astonish . . . featuring fried chicken, scrambles eggs, sweet potatoes, pork sausage, asparagus, apple pie, buttermilk biscuits and more! Served at South Union's famous railroad hotel, the Shaker Tavern.

Reservations required: \$22 members, \$25 non-members / **Time:** Seatings at 8:30am and 10:30am

"SHAKE & STIR" GALA FUNDRAISER

Thursday, November 20

An elegant evening of dinner and dancing to support the preservation of the South Union Shaker Village. Details forthcoming!

"CHRISTMAS AT SHAKERTOWN" HOLIDAY MARKET

Saturday, December 6

One of Kentucky's finest antique and craft markets, just in time for Christmas! Features over 30 regional antique vendors and artists, all nestled in the historic atmosphere of the South Union Shaker Village.

Admission: A canned food item or donation that will be distributed to those needful

Time: 9:00am - 4:00pm

For a "first chance" opportunity to shop, make reservations for the "Christmas at Shakertown" Preview Party, Friday evening, December 5. Enjoy coffee, cider and desserts in the most festive of holiday atmospheres. **Reservations required:** \$10 per person / **Time:** 6:00pm - 9:00pm

Broom-making demonstrations will be available on the first Saturday of each month, March - October.

REGISTRATION for the

SOUTH UNION SEMINAR

“Adventures in Collecting: Seventy-five Years of Searching for Kentucky Shaker,”

FRIDAY, APRIL 11 & SATURDAY, APRIL 12

Name _____

Phone Number _____ Email _____

Address _____

Special Needs (vegetarian meals, etc.) _____

_____ \$80 per member _____ \$90 per non-member _____ \$25 student

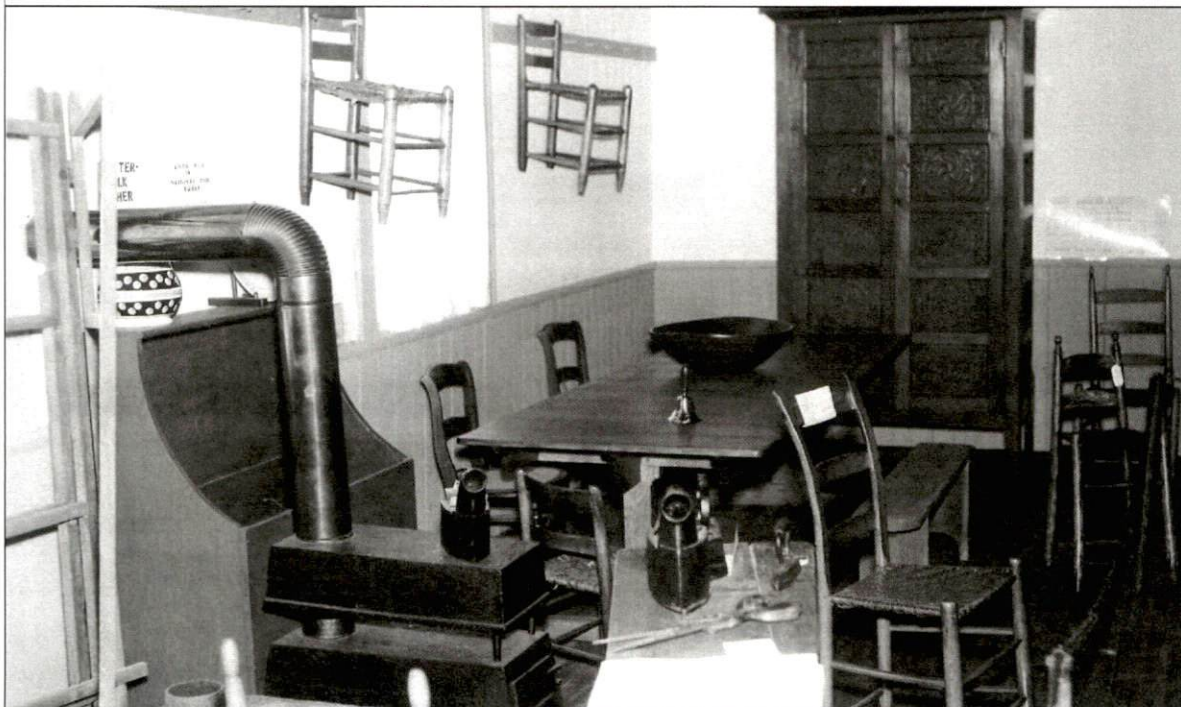
_____ Check Enclosed _____ Credit Card # _____ Exp. _____ CVV

The event begins on Friday evening at 6:00 pm and concludes Saturday at 3:00 pm. A detailed schedule of events and confirmation will be mailed to you when you register. Registration deadline is Wednesday, April 2.

Please mail to: South Union Shaker Village, P. O. Box 177, Auburn, Kentucky 42206

For more information call: 1-800-811-8379 or 1-270-542-4167

Underwritten by Hilliard Lyons *and* Shannon & Michael Vitale



An exhibit of South Union objects at the first Shaker Museum in Auburn, ca. 1962. Director Mrs. Curry Hall and volunteers began collecting in the late 1950s, a time when Shaker items from Kentucky had very little monetary value. At first Mrs. Hall was not satisfied with the number of South Union objects in the museum, so she made trips to the northeast, bringing back scores of Eastern Shaker artifacts to fill in the gaps.

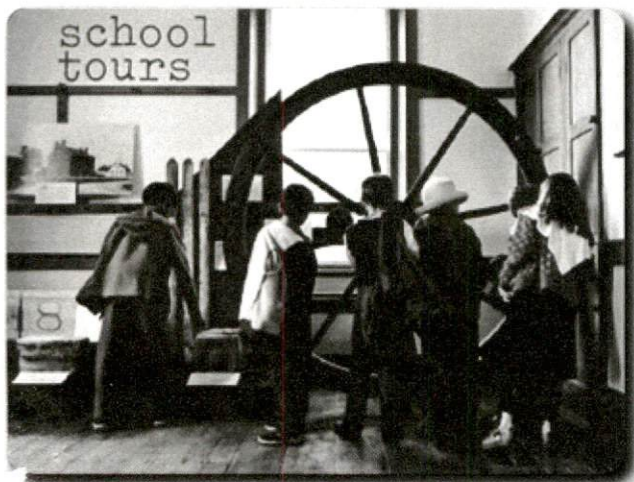
SOUTH UNION SHAKER VILLAGE

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Kentucky Library & Museum
1444 Kentucky St.
Bowling Green, KY 42101



The South Union Shaker Village offers school tours year 'round, but presents the following focused tours in 2014:

“Scientific Americans:

Shaker Invention and Technology” – May 1-30

Let's take a look at how the Shakers embraced technology in their everyday lives. A hands-on program that introduces students to innovation in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Learn how simple, practical, “green” living is not a new idea.

“To Grandmother’s House We Go: Thanksgiving in 1914” – November 3-21

Preparing a large meal in 1914 required special skills, when most dishes were still being made “from scratch.” Whether in a Shaker village or on a farm down the road, creating meals took a great amount time and energy. Learn how kitchen gadgets, modern for their time, helped make life much easier in this hands-on, multi-sensory program.

Thanks to the generosity of Edith Bingham, a Bus Fund has been established at South Union, providing \$1 per mile reimbursement for school buses bringing students to our programs.

The South Union Shaker Village is located 10 miles west of Bowling Green or 3 miles east of Auburn, just off US 68-80 in historic Logan County.

For more information: 270-542-4167
www.shakermuseum.com