



WEBFOOTER EXTRA

OCTOBER 2015

HALLOWEEN GREETINGS



WEBFOOTERS POST CARD CLUB

PO Box 17240
Portland OR 97217-0240



www.thewebfooters.com



- ◆ The Story of Seal the Seal Boy – see page 3.

SALEM COIN – STAMP & POST CARD SHOW DECEMBER 5-6, 2015

OREGON STATE FAIRGROUNDS
COLUMBIA HALL

2330 17th Street NE in Salem

From I-5: take exit 256, the Market Street Exit
Go west and turn right onto 17th Street
Go about a mile and watch for the signs to the Fairgrounds on the right

Doors

open: 10:00 am to 4:30 pm (both days)

\$3 Admission (Under 18 Free)

Free Parking

- ◆ Over 70 tables - Coin, Stamp and Post Card dealers from around the United States
- ◆ A.N.A. and P.N.N.A. Information/Exhibits/Hourly and End of Show Raffles
- ◆ Type and Proof Coins/Gold and Silver/Mint and Proof Sets
- ◆ Tokens/Currency/Stamps/Post Cards/Ancients/Books
- ◆ Free Grab Bag for young collectors/Penny squisher machine demonstration

Appraisals made on Sunday Dec. 6th at 1:00 pm

Sponsored by: **The Salem Numismatic Society**

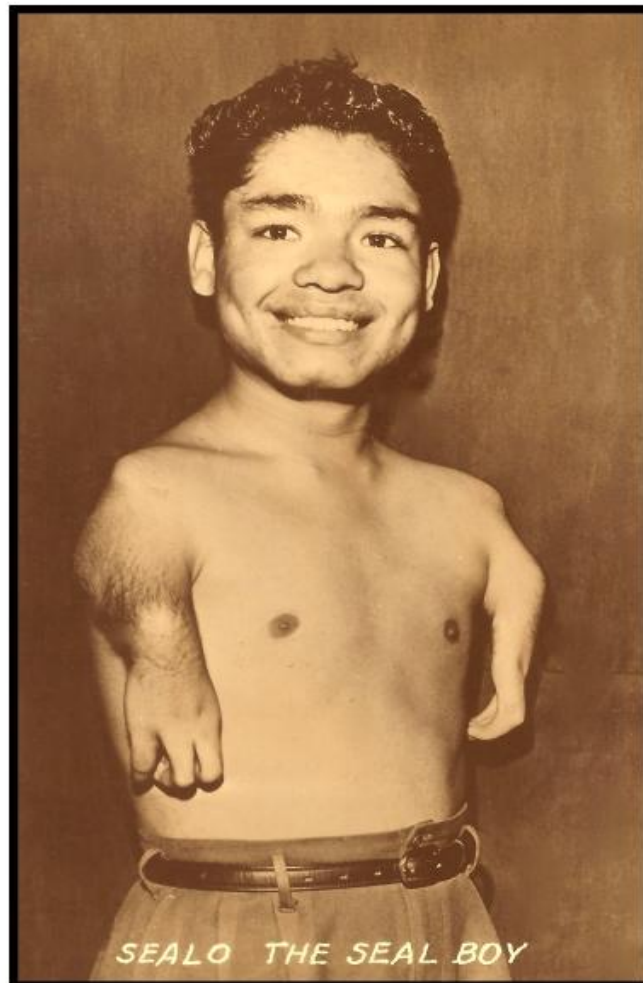
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www.oregoncoinclubs.org

(paid advertisement)

THE STORY OF SEALO - THE SEAL BOY



Photos Courtesy of Stephen Kenney

"Sealo" the Seal Boy was famous for his appearances in sideshows for many years, including several at Coney Island and with the Pete Kortess show. He toured Europe, as well as South America and all of North America. Sealo had a great sense of humor and he always stopped at the fairground gates to exchange greetings with the gate keepers.

When postcards were in their infancy, so was the entertainment industry. Early on, show and amusement park promoters discovered the relative ease and cost of using postcards to advertise their shows and events. The story of Sealo is one that was documented with postcards.

Sealo was actually born with the name Stanislaus Berent and he was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on November 24, 1901. Stanley's stunted arms, a condition known as phocomelia, was due to a genetic fault and likely not due to chemical exposure. Phocomelia is a common defect associated with exposure to the drug thalidomide. Over 10,000 children were born with severe malformations due to the prescribing of the drug during the 50's and 60's.



According to many accounts, Stanley was discovered selling newspapers. He went on to appear in every major sideshow and dime museum in the United States. Calling himself "Sealo," as phocomelia literally translates to "seal arms," his performance consisted of completing mundane tasks without the use of full limbs. An ingenious stick and hock device often allowed Sealo to complete nearly any task. Furthermore, what truly set him apart from the other limbless marvels was his spectacular personality. He was loved by everyone, from colleagues, to spectators and even members of the animal kingdom.

Despite his genetic disability, Sealo was still able to carry out feats like sawing a crate in half and shaving with a straight razor on his own, as well as molding animal figurines out of clay. He would spend the time in which he was not performing on stage selling pitch cards.

See the full color Webfooter Extra at:

http://www.thewebfooters.com/html/newsletter_archives.html



He performed at the World Circus Sideshow in 1941. He also toured around the world and performed at many other freak shows. Perhaps due to orthopedic issues, or just a matter of comfort, Sealo often stayed in hotels rather than camp on the fairgrounds like many other performers. This practice, which may have seemed elitist, was simply accepted by his peers and no issue was ever made of it. Again, his character likely got him off the hook.

While touring with Ward Hall, Sealo befriended a young chimpanzee named Toby. Sealo was afflicted with weak legs causing him difficulty on the stairs getting on and off the stage. Therefore, Sealo stayed on the stage while everyone else was working. When Toby the Chimp would come off the stage after the end of his act, Sealo would give him a cookie each time. When spectators mocked or teased Sealo, the chimpanzee was known to intimidate them and protect his friend Sealo. An avid card player, Sealo and Pete Kortez would spend hours on end playing rummy. He was proud of his Polish Catholic heritage and he enjoyed drinking boilermakers.



In 1972 Ward Hall's show came under attack from a political correctness group who believed the workers were being exploited. An obscure 1921 Florida law that banned the exhibition of the 'handicapped' was cited. Sealo, Ward Hall and a band of performers sued the State of Florida and the law was eventually repealed.

Sealo's career lasted for thirty-five years; he retired in 1976 and moved to Showmen's Retirement Village in Gibsonton, Florida. He returned to his hometown of Pittsburgh afterwards when his health started to decline. He spent his final days at a Catholic hospital there and died in 1980.