

Two of My Favorite Things

By Tuck Vosburg

Timing is everything!

Two stamps that have become a pair of my favorite things came about when our club Vice President, James Steckley, asked me to go in with him to join the American Topical Association. With our membership we receive a magazine, "Topical Times."

As our club's Auction #7 began, I, coincidentally, picked up the latest issue of the magazine to look through it. And there, toward the back, were pictures of a stamp I was sure I had just seen in the auction preview. The title of the article accompanying the pictures was "History of the World's First Postage Stamp with a Butterfly" by Vladimir Kachan of Belarus and it featured the stamp in our auction.

In the article, we learn that butterflies have formed secondary and primary themes for philatelic releases by more than 200 countries and territories of the world since the end of the 19th century.

But the "first" butterfly stamp was of Princess Liliuokalani of the Kingdom of Hawaii. While the Princess was in London for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887, she acquired a brooch in the shape of a butterfly.

It contained 159 diamonds and two tiny ruby eyes. It was made with wings set on springs, so they fluttered as she walked. She always wore the brooch in her hair.

In November 1890, a 2 cent Hawaiian stamp was issued with a picture of the Princess wearing the butterfly brooch in her hair. Thus, becoming the subject of the first postage stamp containing a butterfly.



Hawaii #52 and #57

As it turned out, I was fortunate enough to be the high bidder on the two similar stamps of the Princess that Howard Kadohiro put in the auction. So I now have this interesting little story to go along with my two Hawaiian stamps!



Tuck Vosburg is a NSSS member with collecting interests in pre-1975 US, Italy, San Marino, and Vatican City.

