

Lithophane auction to benefit Chapter 203

By **MICHAEL KAISER**

Chapter member and assistant newsletter editor Mike Kaiser (yours truly) will donate a custom lithophane to the chapter to be auctioned off as a fundraiser.

For the uninitiated, a lithophane is a carved picture that appears when lit from behind, a little like stained glass.



An unlit lithophane depicting the author and creator with his Luscombe 8A.



The same lithophane with the backlighting turned on.

The winning bidder will be able to have (nearly) any photo immortalized in an 8 x 10 inch wooden light box. No aviation content is required. It can be a family portrait, a picture of a new grandchild, or a favorite landscape.

The origins of the word lithophane are Greek and mean "to appear in stone" (litho = stone, phainein = to appear). Although the image appears odd and distorted in ambient light, it comes to life when lit from behind.

Made from translucent materials, the thinnest areas allow more light to pass and thus create the lighter areas of the image, while thicker areas block light and create the dark areas.

Lithophanes were originally molded in porcelain. They were used as candle shields, night lights, lampshades and fire screens, among other uses. In Victorian times, they were used to make tea time more entertaining for gentlemen. Girlie pictures were cast into the bottom of tea cups, and the racy images would appear once the tea was gone and the cup held up to the light.

Modern lithophanes are carved from the countertop material Corian with a computer-controlled router. The original photo is converted to a grayscale image and analyzed by a computer program, which assigns a carving depth to each pixel based on color. The program then generates the "G-code" used to control the router.

The lithophane pictured above will be on display during the August chapter meeting.

The opening bid for Chapter 203's lithophane will be \$25, the cost of materials. Similar lithophanes sell online for \$219.

To place a bid, contact Mike at skoop113@yahoo.com or (772) 219-7615. And remember, all proceeds will go to the chapter, so bid high and bid often.