

[Book Review by Tony Pope, published in *Harashim* #47, July 2009.]

***Fiat Lux, vol 1***

Jack Buta, editor

hard cover, 95,000 words (approx)

The Philalethes Society, 2009

*pre-publication price* US\$14.95 + p&p

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*regular price* US\$24.95 + p&p.



***Fiat Lux* is a *must buy* for every Masonic library, large or small, rich or poor, wherever English is spoken. Why? Because it showcases some of the best articles from *the philalethes* magazine over the past sixty years; it provides an introduction to authors and ideas that otherwise might have remained at a perpetual distance from the average Masonic reader; and because—at \$14.95 for a hardcover presentation of the work of 26 award-winning authors—there will never be a better bargain.**

Is it also a *must buy* for the individual Masonic student? I think so. I have a stack of *philalethes* magazines going back to 1992, and a 'the philalethes 50 years' CD covering the years 1946–1996, and consult both sources when necessary. If I had not been provided with a pre-publication review copy of *Fiat Lux*, I might never have opened the book—and it would have been my loss!

In it I found old friends such as Wallace McLeod ('Why St Alban?'), Allen Roberts ('Masonry under two flags'), Ross Hepburn ('Freemasonry in New Zealand'), Roscoe Pound ('What is law?'), Alphonse Cerza ('Recommended Masonic reading'), Harold van Buren Voorhis ('Two theories to look into'), Dwight L Smith ('Of landmarks and cuspidors'), Alex Horne ('Prince Edwin, 926 AD') and Charles Guthrie ('Rob Morris and the Conservators in Kentucky'). And I found authors whose work was new to me, such as Mervin B Hogan ('The confrontation of GM Abraham Jonas and John Cook Bennett at Nauvoo'), Richard H Sands ('Physicists, the Royal Society and Freemasonry') and Keith Arrington ('Iowa's Masonic magazines: the battling editors'), but the absolute gem of the collection, for me, is John Mauk Hilliard's 'The lodge as primary community' (1980).

Bro Hilliard's name was not completely unknown to me, but I had no idea of the import—or even the existence—of this essay, and ordinarily the title would not have attracted me, had it not been included in the book under review. Nearly 30 years ago, he expressed ideas which have only occurred to some of us in the current decade. What are these ideas? I'm not going to tell you. If you want to find out, access the CD, or pick up this book. Of course, the book may not be available in your nearest Masonic library because: (a) the librarian has not read, or has rejected, my advice; or (b) the book is on loan. I won't labour the point any further.

What size is the book? I cannot tell you, because my pre-publication review copy has yet to be typeset and paginated, and does not yet have an index—but it will have, and a good one, because it is being compiled by Brent Morris as I write this review, and it is hardcover, with a dust jacket. The special price of US\$14.95 is available only until 15 September; you can order it online at <https://freemasonry.org/> (click on 'Store'). Overseas postage & packing is US\$10.76 (or if you order 5 copies in one parcel, it is freight-free).

Volume 2 is planned for March 2010.