

**Don't Put Off 'til
Tomorrow...
08 May 2015**

Brothers,

I am writing this as I sit on the porch of a vacation house on Ocracoke Island (NC Outer Banks), looking out over the Pamlico Sound. My family and I have been vacationing here for over 20 years and we always find the island to be a source of relaxation and resetting from the chaos of our busy lives. This trip has been somewhat bitter sweet and has given me time to reflect on life a bit, which usually brings me back to the impact that Masonry has on my life.

My family and I have had our share of challenges lately, from car problems, to illness and too much on our plates, both work related and otherwise. When times like this occur, I tend to get caught up in the chaos and often times put the enjoyment of life on hold – knowing that it'll always be there later... unfortunately, sometimes “later” never happens.

I found out on Monday that a very dear friend of mine passed away – I was floored by this as I didn't even know she was ill.

We used to work together and we continued to get together and talk regularly after our career paths separated, but over the past year, we became quite “busy” with all the daily activities of life and we didn't get together anymore. It really wasn't an issue, right? I mean, we are both just in our 50's, we have kids in college, we have years before retirement, there's always next week... Apparently, she was diagnosed with cancer recently and it quickly took her. Now we are preparing to attend her Memorial service. I am saddened by the loss of a good friend and personally frustrated that I let time get away from me.

My Brothers, as we are taught, time is like a river – no sooner does an event or opportunity present itself, that it passes by, into oblivion. Too often, we dwell on the past, fret about the future and find ourselves simply surviving the moment in

the here and now. I have heard it said that “the Past is history, the Future a mystery and that now is a gift, hence it is the “Present”.

Now is the moment we have with our family and friends, now is the time that we have to spend with our Brothers in our Lodge, now is the time that we have to find the beauty in life. While on the island, I had an opportunity to attend a Lodge meeting at Ocracoke Lodge No. 747. I met with several Brothers whom I first met several years ago and was surprised to realize that they remembered me. I wasn't a stranger, visiting the island, I was a Brother coming back for a visit. Ocracoke No. 747 is a smaller Lodge of roughly 40 members – many of which are transient (Coast Guard, Park Service, etc.) but still, there were 10 Brothers in attendance at their business meeting (they meet twice a month). They were planning a fish fry fundraiser, anticipating the sale of about 400 plates – and every member present is playing a role in it.

As I sat with them and talked, I spoke proudly of Etiwan Lodge No. 95 and I immediately began looking forward to getting back to my home Lodge. I was reminded that being a Mason is special indeed and being a member of Etiwan Lodge No. 95 in particular is a unique opportunity I need to be taking full advantage of whenever I can. We are a Lodge of nearly 300 members and we all need to take stock of the fact that we are a very strong support network for each other and we should not squander the opportunity to meet, socialize and strengthen our bonds.

I challenge each of you to step back for a moment from the whirlwind of each day, take stock of what you feel is important in your life and take advantage of being Present.

Respectfully and Fraternally,
Bob Heck, PM