ASHLAR

14TH DISTRICT

✦

September 2026



The new year is just around the corner!

As the summer draws to a close, lodges will begin meeting again. Now is the time to plan your masonic year! We will publish this coming year's inspection calendar in all upcoming issues, so please check to see what dates work best for you. **Unless otherwise noted, all EA and FC inspections begin at 7:00 PM, with dinner at 6:15 PM.**

Before all that, though, it may seem like there's a lot of time, but we promise, it will fly by!

Between annual meetings, installations, the holidays, and Grand Lodge, the inspection season will be on us before you know it. So use this time now to plan out a year full of success and fellowship for you and your lodge.

Has your lodge done anything special over the summer? Tell the district! Send your photos and a description to **ashlar@14thmasonicdistrict.org**. We'd love to share it with the district!

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Opportunity of a Lifetime
MWB Steve Cokonougher

Over 1/2 Century ago many Brothers, about my age, were sent off to Viet Nam to fight to stop the spresd of Communism. Many did not return. Many who returned did so with harsh memories. At that time, Vietnam Nam and other nearby countries were war torn and conditions were deplorable.

Today, Viet Nam, Cambodia, and others are rich cultural and are thriving countries. Even though there was no clear outcome of the war, the vibrancy of the countries are a testament of the good we fought for.

We are planning a riverboat cruise in Viet Nam and maybe other countries, sometime in 2028. It would be on the Mekong River and include many cities we know, such as Ho Chi Min City.

Like most cruises, the bigger the group, the better the cost. **Would you be interested?** I am trying to gauge interest before getting down to details. We are thinking sometime in a September to November time frame, as this is usually the best weather. This time frame is not cast in stone at this time.

Please respond to me and let me know if you are interested. No commitments now, just interest. If the interest is sufficient from the 14th District, we could stop there. If not, I will try to open the trip to the Masons in the state. We would welcome others if any friends or families are interested.

As with all cruises with a Masonic mention, there will be no free rides and all discounts or rebates will be equitably distributed to participants.

I anticipate having more details and tentative pricing early in 2027.



We Get To Do This
RWB Chris Greise

That was the call from our Deputy Grand Master at the Rollout this past month. While he brought those words to the forefront, the truth is that this has always been the opportunity before us.

All Masonry is local. It happens in our lodges, in our communities, and in the relationships we build with one another. But we need more of us to be inspired enough to step outside our comfort zones and push ourselves to do something significant—for our brothers, our lodges, our communities, and ourselves.

It isn't enough to become a Mason by receiving our three degrees. It isn't enough to read, learn, and listen while sitting on the sidelines or only occasionally showing up. It takes real effort.

If we want a glimpse of what Masonry can become, we have to get to work.

It is about laboring together to build something powerful and transformative for ourselves and for others. That work also cannot withstand a pattern of officers completing their year in the East and then simply drifting away. We need to strengthen the foundation of our lodges by keeping our Past Masters involved and making them part of the lifeblood of the lodge.

Not by dictating **how** things should be done, but by reminding us **why** we should be doing them.

Challenge our new officers to understand why we do the things we do. Then celebrate them when they take ownership and put something together—even when it doesn't go exactly as planned. Let them build. Let them learn. Let them make mistakes. Let them succeed.



We Get To Do This, cont'd
RWB Chris Greise

My own search for light was driven by a strong desire to do more with my life and not simply let it slip away. I didn't want to reach a point where I looked back and realized I had wasted the opportunity I had been given, knowing there was no way to go back and correct my mistakes.

Masonry gives us a safe space and a framework in which we can take the lessons from our degrees and put them into practice. We have the opportunity to work together, shoulder to shoulder, and build something legendary.

Our current Grand Master has challenged us to be **Committed to the Craft.** If we want to continue enjoying the fruits of our fraternity, then we must be willing to work together to build something of value—for ourselves, for our brothers, and for those who will come after us.

When we take a deeper look at our membership, the numbers should get our attention. In the short space of ten years, we could have half the members we once had.

Father Time is undefeated.

We must have honest conversations about where we are and where we are going. We need to focus our energy and efforts on strengthening the foundation of our fraternity.

With membership at an all-time low, will we be able to support all of the lodges we have in our district? Will lodges need to continue relying on one another to accomplish all the work that needs to be done?

I beg those leaders whose officer journey is coming to a close: take a step back, but do not disappear. Our lodges need you now more than ever.

Not necessarily to carry the heavy load of running the lodge, but to become the cheerleaders, mentors, teachers, and supporters of the officers who follow you.

Far too often, brothers leave the East and disappear. Rarely are they seen again. We cannot continue this practice if we expect our lodges to survive and grow.



We Get To Do This, cont'd
RWB Chris Greise

Seven lodges have merged into neighboring lodges in the relatively short time I have been a Mason. If we don't own this challenge and put significant effort into the experience we provide our newer members, their Masonic journey may never become transformative enough to keep them engaged.

I also see members slowly drift away. Ten years pass, and suddenly they don't know anyone attending lodge anymore. When they no longer have relationships that pull them back through the door, they stop coming.

We have to find ways to make our meetings more meaningful so that everyone has a reason to be there. And that may take more than just the officers of the lodge.

It could be a tremendous opportunity for our Past Masters to reach out to brothers they haven't seen in a while. Pick up the phone. Send a message. Invite someone to dinner. Bring a brother back into the conversation. Remind him that he is still part of something bigger than himself.

If we don't make a greater effort now, we may not have much of a fraternity left to look up to in the future. So, don't be afraid to do a little work. The work we do is ultimately for others.

The stonemasons of the past worked together to construct buildings that we still marvel at centuries later. They took individual stones and, through their collective labor, built something that could stand the test of time.

What are we building? Will our labors be remembered, or will they be forgotten?

Will the brothers who come after us look back and see that we strengthened the foundation, raised the standard, and left Masonry better than we found it?

The choice is ours, my brother. The work is ours.

And the incredible thing is this: **We get to do this.**



Et in Arcadia Ego
WB Michael Emery

There is a painting that I think of from time to time: *Et in Arcadia Ego* by Poussin. The scene is simple: a few shepherds gather together with a beautiful woman in a picturesque countryside. Their clothes are brightly colored, they are young and healthy, and the sun shines down through the clouds to give the scene a dreamlike feeling...

...and they are gathered at a tomb. A famous reminder that no matter the beauty of our immediate surroundings, death will eventually find us all.



As masons, we are very familiar with the concept of a *memento mori,* a reminder that we, too, will die. Numerous examples from our rituals surely come to mind. Typically, these come with some kind of admonishment, an exhortation to consider our behavior to meet the approval of the judgment that awaits us.

Undoubtedly, these are valuable lessons. But recent events in my life have taught me to consider that there may be another lesson hiding within them.

When we confront our own mortality, it can be easy to focus on what would be taken from us or our families. Grief comes in many forms, not the least of which is grief for a future that could have been. Dying seems so momentous, so full of meaning. But it's the most common thing in the world.



Et in Arcadia Ego, cont'd
WB Michael Emery

Similar to the painting, there's a story by Henry James that has stuck with me clear since I read it back in freshman year of college. In it, a man keeps himself from getting too involved with the woman he loves, as he's convinced that a terrible fate awaits him that would take him from her. It is only when she is dying that he realizes he has wasted his life in fear of living:

"When the possibilities themselves had accordingly turned stale, when the secret of the gods had grown faint, had perhaps even quite evaporated, that, and that only, was failure. It wouldn't have been failure to be bankrupt, dishonoured, pilloried, hanged; it was failure not to be anything."

Brothers, it is this lesson that I think is hiding with the lessons of our other stark reminders of death. Certainly, we should use those lessons to remember to control our conduct. But we should also use them to remember to live, embracing the beauty around us like those shepherds so full of life, even before the shadow of the tomb.

14th Masonic District
Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of Ohio

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WANT TO BE FEATURED?

We'd love to hear your thoughts or help you advertise your event in the Ashlar. It just takes two easy steps:

1. Gather your information
   a. What's happening?
   b. Who is invited?
   c. Where is it?
   d. When is it?
   e. How much does it cost?
2. Send to ashlar@14thmasonicdistrict.org

Submissions must be sent before the 15th of the month before publication (i.e. January 15th for the February Ashlar).

January 2027 inspection schedule

Lodge	Date	Degree
Reynoldsburg 340	Tuesday, January 19th	MM*
Capital City 656	Friday, January 22nd	MM*
Hiram 18	Tuesday, January 26th	FC
Triangle 748	Thursday, January 28th	EA

February 2027 inspection schedule

Lodge	Date	Degree
University 631	Tuesday, February 2nd	EA
Neoacacia 595	Wednesday, February 3rd	FC
Canal Winchester 670	Thursday, February 11th	MM*
Magnolia 20	Tuesday, February 9th	EA
Avery 493	Tuesday, February 16th	FC
Linden 637	Thursday, February 18th	EA
New England 4	Monday, February 22nd	EA
Community 684	Tuesday, February 23rd	FC

* All MM inspections begin at 5:30 PM. Dinner at 6:15. Second Section at 7 PM

March 2027 inspection schedule

Lodge	Date	Degree
York 563	Monday, March 1st	FC
Sunrise 783	Tuesday, March 2nd	EA
Groveport-Lockbourne 801	Tuesday, March 9th	MM*
Blendon 339	Monday, March 15th	FC
Sparrow 400**	Saturday, March 20th	EA
Grove City 689	Monday, March 29th	MM*

April 2027 inspection schedule

Lodge	Date	Degree
Westgate 623	Monday, April 5th	FC
Goodale 372	Monday, April 12th	MM*
Arts & Sciences 792	Thursday, April 15th	MM*

* All MM inspections begin at 5:30 PM. Dinner at 6:15. Second Section at 7 PM
** Sparrow 400 - Breakfast at 8:00 AM, degree at 9:00 AM

Around the District



LODGE BREAKFASTS

GROVE CITY
1st Saturdays, 8-10A

GROVEPORT
3rd Saturdays, 7:30-10A

HIRAM
1st Saturdays, 8-10A
(Except July and August)

REYNOLDSBURG
Last Saturdays, 8-10A

WEST GATE
2nd Saturdays, 9A-12P



The Royal Scofield Society is the premier Masonic Educational Society for the Grand Lodge of Ohio. Membership is earned by completing a robust and unique program intended to inspire and challenge those interested in Masonic Education. It aims not to create sages in ivory towers, but rather servant leaders in Masonic Education.

Join Community Lodge 684 at their September regular meeting Tuesday, September 8 when (subject to approval) WB Robert Burgman will present his RSS masterpiece paper, "Do You Live Freemasonry Every Day?". It will be a personal reflection on how by living our Masonic values, we can have a very real impact on those around us, masons and non-masons alike.

Groveport Lockbourne Oktoberfest

Groveport Lockbourne lodge #801 is having an Oktoberfest celebration, open to the public, on September 26 from 3pm until 7pm at our lodge (5905 Saltzgaber Rd, Groveport, OH 43125) rain or shine. We will be serving Bratwurst, sauerkraut, potato salad, baked beans (and hot dogs for kids).

$10 per plate. $2.50 for an extra bratwurst. $3 per cup of draft beer. We will show the OSU game if kick off is between 3pm and 5pm.