

Centennial celebrations

THUNDER BAY
By Jeff Labine - TB Source

Members of one of the oldest fraternities arrived to celebrate and rededicate the centennial cornerstone of the Masonic Shuniah Lodge in downtown Port Arthur.

More than 15 members of the Masonic Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario met to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the Shuniah Lodge on Red River Road with a public ceremony on Saturday. The building, now located next to a parking complex and an insurance company, was erected in Nov. 24, 1911.

Masonic Grand Master of Ontario Raymond Daniels flew from Kitchener, Ont. a few days ago to rededicate the lodge. He said it's a historical moment for the lodge because it has served as a temple for the Masons for a hundred years.

"This happens to be one of the most beautiful Masonic temples in all of our grand jurisdiction and when I tell you there's 564 lodges I think I'm not exaggerating," Daniels said. "For me it's a great honour to be here to rededicate the cornerstone."

Daniels said he would rededicate the lodge by consecrating the cornerstone with corn, wine and oil. It's an age old tradition that goes back to biblical times.

The Freemasons are a philosophical society based on self-improvement and pursuit of knowledge. There's a misconception that Freemasons are a secret society but that's just not true, he said.

"It's a self improvement society," he said. "We come here not to be better than anyone else but to be better than ourselves."



CENTURY MARK: Masonic Grand Master of Ontario Raymond Daniels at the Shuniah Lodge June 4.

Robbie Manz, a 30-year member of the Freemasons, said he was excited to participate since it was his first cornerstone rededication ceremony. He said it has been an overwhelming experience being a part of one of the oldest fraternities in the world.

"Freemasonry teaches you self improvement and I'm sure I'm a better man because of it," Manz said. "Whenever the grand master comes to town is always a big day. As far as this cornerstone rededication, I've never seen one before and I'm really looking forward to it."

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