

# Pan Am flame arrives amid stormy weather to Toronto

By Dennis Hanagan

*Special to Turtle Island News*  
TORONTO-Thunder showers poured down as indigenous people including Mississauga Elder Garry Sault crossed the Toronto Harbour carrying the sacred Pan Am flame that stayed alight as he delivered it to Toronto officials at Toronto Harbour Saturday (May 30).

The tiny flame no bigger than a cigarette lighter flame was protected from the rain and wind in a special lantern not even a foot tall.

Sault held the flame high in the rain as helpers paddled him in a Métis Nation of Ontario canoe from a barge in the harbour to dockside. A de Havilland Beaver seaplane offloaded the flame - originally set alight in the Temple of the Moon, Teotihuacan just outside Mexico City - to the barge.

At dockside, Sault handed the lantern to jubilant Mis-



**New Credit Chief Bryan LaForme holds the Pan Am Flame that arrived in Toronto during a rainstorm Saturday. Holding the umbrella for him is elected Six Nations Chief Ava Hill**

shelter to escape the rain - to see.

The rain came in two

flame. The sky cleared, but then came a second downpour. The ceremony eventually began about 45 minutes late.

Six Nations Chief Ava Hill, Grand Chief Konrad Sioui of the Huron-Wendat Nation and Métis Nation of Ontario President Gary Lipinski escorted LaForme and the flame to the ceremony site that had abruptly been transferred from an outdoor stage in Canada Square to a makeshift one in the rotunda at the nearby Queens Quay Terminal building.

LaForme, Hill, Lipinski and Sioui as well as Toronto Mayor John Tory and Premier Kathleen Wynne addressed a crowd of a few hundred. Lipinski looked on the bright side of the overcast day by calling the rain

"a good omen" because it brings new life.

A last-minute temperamental sound system and the din of the crowd - that

ignored or couldn't hear the emcee's request to be quiet - made the speakers' comments imperceptible other than to those close to the

stage.

Escalators in the rotunda were turned off so those who couldn't get stage side had at least a bird's eye view of the ceremonies.

Hill told spectators she welcomed them on behalf of the Six Nations of the Grand River. She said her community has been working hard to plan many events during the Games and welcomed visitors to experience First Nations culture.

"We have an abundance" of talented people, said Hill.

A 19-day event in Toronto called Aboriginal Pavilion will take place in Garrison Common next to Fort York showcasing Indigenous arts, culture, and sports concurrent to the Pan Am / Parapan Am Games.

The July 10-26 games will take place around southern Ontario at more than 30 venues, from Welland up to Caledon and over to Lake Simcoe. The Parapan Am Games run Aug. 7-15.



missaugas of the New Credit Chief Bryan LaForme who once again held it up for the crowd, at least for those that hadn't run to nearby

downpours separated by about 30 minutes. The first came not long before the 2:30 p.m. start of the ceremony to welcome the



**Garry Sault holds the flame as others paddle in a Métis Nation of Ontario canoe across the harbour. (Photos by Dennis Hannegan)**