



## Operation Jack O'Lantern

**Every Halloween**, a violent crowd has gathered on Yonge St. opposite the St. Charles expecting to see a drag parade.

**Every Halloween**, this crowd, not content with attacking the drag queens who appear, has satisfied its lust for violence by hurling abuse and garbage at any apparently gay person attempting to use the street.

**Every Halloween**, the police have done nothing to stop these threats and violent acts against gay people. The police often encourage the mob or even join it.

**Every Halloween**, gay people have been presented with this terrifying demonstration that transvestites are not free to dress as they please, even on Halloween, and that gays have no protection against acts of criminal violence, and are not even free to walk down the main street of this city.

**This Halloween**, because of the hate campaign waged by the Toronto media this summer against the gay community, the violence may be worse than ever. Both Deputy Chief Ackroyd and Inspector H. Smith, the cop who will be in charge of the Yonge St. area on Halloween, admit that this may turn out to be the case. Deputy Chief of Police John W. Ackroyd goes so far as to suggest in a letter to the Gay Alliance Toward Equality that gays should "seriously consider keeping your activities to a minimum" on Halloween. In other words we should stay off the streets and maybe even go back into the closets. In Montreal the police, far from protecting gays, raided a bar last Friday Oct. 21 and arrested at least 147 people. In response, more than 1,500 gays demonstrated against the police repression, pointing out the need for gays to rely on themselves rather than the police for protection.

**This Halloween**, therefore, a coalition of individuals and organizations has decided that gays must take some action, however small, ourselves.

**This Halloween**, we will be taking a small initial step toward ending the Halloween Terror by providing some modest community defence measures, to be called Operation Jack-O-Lantern.

Operation Jack-O-Lantern will attempt to provide protection and support for the gay community. Our plans include the following, which will depend on the number of people who will get involved.

### Public Safety

We will organize protective groups of people to accompany people moving from the St. Charles to other bars or the subway station. We recommend that people should try to move together in groups on Halloween to help prevent harrassment. Important Note: Avoid the area in front of the St. Charles. Because the management plans to lock the front doors, there will be no easy escape route from the area. Entrance to the St. Charles will be through the back doors.

### Criminal Surveillance

We will be patrolling Yonge St. to watch for developing problems and to alert the gay community to potential danger. We will also be keeping close watch on the Halloween crowd, observing police behaviour, and possibly laying charges against perpetrators of criminal acts.

### Emergency Aid

We will be organizing quick legal and medical aid for the gay community. Lawyers, law students and people trained in first aid, will be helping us. If you need help, speak to someone with a pink armband or call 364-9799.

These are just the first steps toward putting an end to the Halloween Terror and asserting the right of gay people to walk the streets freely and the right of all people to dress as they please. We hope Operation Jack-O-Lantern will lead to a wider community defence effort in the future.

Operation Jack-O-Lantern is open to the participation of all members of the gay community. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please tell us about them. If you want to get involved in this community defence effort or if you just want further information, call MCC House at 364-9799.

