

200 attend vigil for Joe Rose

AIDS activist murdered in Montréal

MONTRÉAL—Nearly 200 men and women gathered in Montréal's city village on Tuesday, March 21 for a vigil to commemorate Joe Rose, a prominent AIDS activist murdered on a city bus the Sunday before.

The vigil which had been organized only hours before began around ten o'clock. Demonstrators gathered at the corner of Ste. Catherine and Montcalm Streets, in the centre of the men's bar-strip. As the



Main activist Joe Rose

crowd grew in size, people who had something to say stood atop a cement column and shouted to the crowd.

One mourner told the demonstrators, "Joe Rose didn't get mur-

dered because he was gay, or because he had AIDS, or because he had pink hair. Joe Rose got murdered because our society is homophobic."

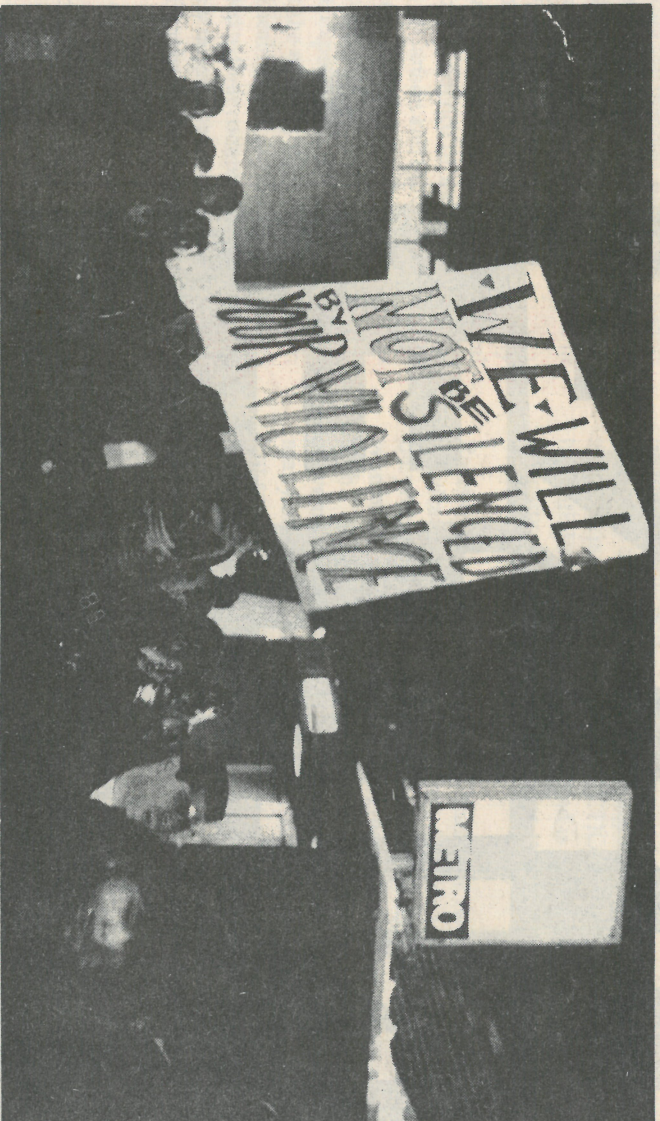
She added, "We forget that the discrimination we face is the kind that can cost us our lives."

After half an hour of speeches, the vigil's organizers asked the crowd what they wanted to do next. One organizer said, "We have no permit. We can't legally march down the street. But if we all walked out into the street together, who could stop us?"

The mourners poured onto the street and walked down the centre of Ste. Catherine St, carrying candles and chanting. When a police car drove through the middle of the demonstrators and ordered the crowd to disperse, the marchers surged around it screaming, "Where were you Saturday night?" and "Qui protegez-vous?"

After several failed attempts to disperse the crowd, the police car pulled ahead of the march and joined a cordon of about a dozen other cars two blocks up the street. About fifteen police officers carrying night sticks blockaded the street, and forced the marchers onto the sidewalks.

Demonstrators continued marching on the sidewalk chanting "We



Spontaneous vigil defies cops and permits in the centre of Montreal's bar strip.

remember Joe Rose. We won't be silenced." The police tried to turn the marchers back again, but were temporarily exasperated when demonstrators began walking the wrong way down the middle of a one-way street.

The demonstrators stopped at the Frontenac Metro and held a

vigil on the spot where Rose had been brutally beaten and stabbed to death. Rose's lover told the crowd, "This is it. This is where it happened."

Mourners tearfully joined arms and sang, placing their candles on the site where Rose's body had been found.

Police have arrested three juveniles in connection with murder.

Emma Jones

AIDS drugs — only for the rich?

ORONTO—AIDS ACTION NOW's victory on the release of promising treatments has been known to be only one step in taking promising new treatments available to People Living With AIDS (PLWAs) or HIV infection. Then drugs were made available in the United States, prices rose dramatically, which made those drugs only available to those with money or a good employment drug plan. In Canada this is also likely to happen as more drugs become

popular. Alpha interferon, a treatment for Kaposi's Sarcoma, has already exploded in cost to approximately \$46,000 per year. This shows that the government must be pressured to pay for drugs for PLWAs or people with HIV infection. This can be done either by setting up a separate system, or by making sure each province's drug card for those on special assistance covers all drugs for PLWAs and is extended to those persons in low-income jobs. Many gay men work

for the service industry, which is in this category, and they generally have few benefits.

The province is at present reviewing the special assistance guidelines mainly around what drugs will be covered on this card. At present a doctor can request a drug be put on the card by sending a request for a Special Assistance number, and it is usually accepted. However, David Reville, the NDP health critic, informs me that this will be replaced by a new system

called a drug formulary. This formulary will consist of a panel which decides first if a drug is useful before it will be covered. At present the guidelines for this new formulary are not known. Many questions still need to be answered, such as: will *Envars*, a nutritious supplement for PLWAs, be covered, and how will new drugs for HIV or AIDS get onto this card? Will a drug need to be approved? How long will this process take? Every day counts when a person is living with

Brent Southin

Lesbians unite at "fabulous" Halifax conference

ALIFAX—I went to a fabulous week conference in Halifax in arch called *Being Ourselves*. What high for me... all those women—rich beauty—such energy—such a good time. It gave me such a sense of revitalization to be amongst so many women, so many dykes!

Living as I do in the pleasant but quiet little city of Fredericton (New Brunswick), it is always a joy to hop in the car and drive those five hours down the highway to the (comparatively) thriving metropolis of Halifax and "do the town," as it were. His time was even better because my friend Lisa-from-Edmonton—a Toronto was visiting me from

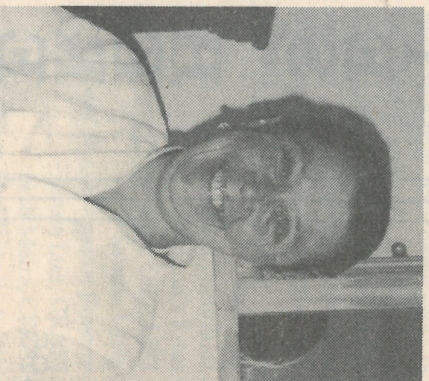
a big city, so the drive down to the conference was filled with talk

about life and feminism and love and plenty of coffee. The conversation alone would have gotten us to Newfoundland and back again!

We didn't make it in time to attend the Friday evening showing of the Boston-made lesbian soap opera, *Two in Twenty*. Instead, we drank too much wine and talked into the morning at our billet's house.

We suffered the inevitable hangovers in the morning but I awoke early anyway. I was eager to get going, anxious to meet up with old friends down at Veith House, the site of the conference.

And I was not disappointed: friends were there and greeted me



Anne Cameron attended Halifax Conference to read her work.

with warmth and eagerness. I revelled in the sense of community—that sense that springs

from long-time connections, past struggles, and plain simple friendship that weathers the trials of time and distance.

The conference was well set up and organized with plenty of information sheets and guidelines about good restaurants and places to stay laid out on tables and posted on walls. The site was accessible to women in wheelchairs, and there were interpreters for the hearing impaired. (They provided terrific visuals to us hearing women, also, during Anne Cameron's reading of her very erotic lesbian poetry!)

There were a host of workshops to choose from—Breaking the Silence on Disability, Lesbians and

the Law, Sex and Friendship, Sexual Abuse, Lesbienne francophones, AIDS and Safe Sex, Human Rights, Using Video, The Issue of Class, and Rural Women. They were billed as informal sessions in which the participants should expect to lead the discussion as much as follow the lead of the facilitator. Every room had been given a name: the general assembly area was called "The Closet" (out of which everyone had to step at one time or another!); the Cauldron, Labyrinth, Lesbos, Matriarchy, Sappho, Marie-Claire Blais, and Amazonia were workshop rooms.

In the end, I attended only one continued on page 18