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Wisconsin's Premiere LGBT News Leader

VOL. 1, ISSUE 7 | JUNE 1, 2005

# Red Hot and Revolutionary

Q Life's Exclusive Interview with Ru Paul

By Milo Miller

We caught up with RuPaul a couple of weeks ago. The shining diva of all that is glam-drag is currently touring to promote her new album, "RuPaul Red Hot," and her upcoming doll/action figure.

In between gigs and the rest of her

fabulous life, RuPaul chatted with us on the phone, prior to her engagement at PrideFest, about where she was going, independent media, and just what secret messages are embedded in her albums and performances.

Underground and Independent

Milo: From your Web site I see that you were at one time very involved in "underground" or independent media culture, including self-publishing, and performing in indie films and television. Do you ever feel a "loss of freedom" after making the move to more mainstream media?

RuPaul: Yeah, sure, definitely. I really do miss a lot of the anonymity that I had with that. I could no longer go into the men's room and create a pro-

duction in one of the stalls, because everybody would say, "Oh Gawd, Miss RuPaul! Did you see what she was doing in that men's room stall over there?"

Milo: Do you have any thoughts, ad-

**'It's more relaxed drag now, the hair is down. I wear pants.**

**It's more touchable, which is actually more revolutionary.'**

vice or suggestions for up-and-coming performers and artists who are trying to make the shift from underground, independent media? Especially since over the last 10 years of your superstardom, a whole lot has changed?

RuPaul: Yeah. As a side note to your previous question, I'm actually gearing toward more underground, guerilla tactics in terms of art. The Internet has made it easier to do that kind of thing. Plus, because I am established, I don't have anything to lose. I've

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Photo by: Mathu Anderson

## Civil Union or Marriage: Reframing the Discussion Are Some LGBT Groups Out of Touch?

By Sura Faraj

In June, State Rep. Frank Boyle (D-Superior) will be introducing civil unions legislation for the State of Wisconsin. What Boyle calls a "very significant human rights bill" for LGBT people is also a fairly unknown one. In various communications with a number of politically aware people, Q Life couldn't find anyone aware of it. The bill is on the political back burner of Wisconsin LGBT organizations, because all efforts are now being geared toward defeating the proposed constitutional amendment, which would ban both gay marriage and any civil unions, including those which could result from passage of this bill.

The bill, which contains gender neutral language, would define a civil union as being between any two consenting adult individuals who engage in a domestic partnership contract — similar to marriage between a man and woman.

Boyle, who has been introducing similar legislation for years (and was one of the first to do so in the country), says, "We allow partnership contracts for all kinds of purposes under the Wisconsin statutes, and yet we deny in a very discriminatory way that same contract for domestic partners." His motivation for this, he says, is pure and simple. "It's a human rights issue. It's an issue of economic and social justice. It's an issue of things that we ought to be standing for and very few people have the courage to."

The bill would give domestic partners the same responsibilities and liabilities as married couples, including the same tax burdens and breaks, the same authority regarding spousal benefits, division of property, and disposition of the custody of children in cases of partnership breakups. "Essentially, all of the benefits and the liabilities would be the same under a civil union contract that we currently give to

married couples in Wisconsin," says Boyle.

Over the last eight years of introducing the bill (formerly the "Domestic Partnership Bill"), the language has largely stayed the same. This time around, Boyle intends to include people who are related by blood who may also benefit from contracts covering domestic partnership. He gives the examples of a son and an aging mother or two sisters who live together. Boyle says, "If we allow benefits to only certain individuals, we discriminate. There are over 250 benefits that we give to a very select group that we sanction because of their relationship."

### Are Civil Unions Worth the Fight?

While this may sound good to our community, not all of those who advocate for LGBT causes find civil unions worth working for at this time.

Politicians and organizers seem to agree that the likelihood of this bill even making it to a vote are slim, given the makeup of what they refer to as the extremist and conservative Republican-dominated legislature. Some question the value of expending effort when the legislation, if passed, would be trumped and discarded if the proposed constitutional amendment banning civil unions and gay marriage passes.

Even Sen. Fred Risser (D-Madison), who will be introducing the bill in the Senate, says, "I think the amendment is vicious and all effort ought to be made to defeat it." But, he points out, "The bill is a proposal that some people will accept where they won't accept marriage."

Will LGBT organizations in Wisconsin be working to pass this bill? Patrick Flaherty, director of Center Advocates in Milwaukee said, "We haven't even been approached by Rep.

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## Milwaukee's LGBT Community Mourns the Passing of Lew Broyles

By William Attewell, Special to Q Life

The Rev. Lew Broyles, a prominent Milwaukee gay activist and spiritual leader, died suddenly on May 16 at the age of 50 of an apparent heart attack. Broyles died while visiting friends in Mississippi.

Broyles served as pastor for the gay-inclusive Milwaukee Metropolitan Community Church on Milwaukee's near south side. He was also a high-profile member of Milwaukee's LGBT community and was heavily involved in a wide range of community organizations over several years.

Broyles was perhaps best known for leading the annual interfaith service and gay "weddings" at PrideFest. Broyles often said he was grateful for the opportunity to bless so many gay and lesbian couples at the annual PrideFest event and at private ceremonies.

"PrideFest was one of the first gatherings where idea of the mass weddings started. That was because of Rev. Lew," said Allan Hauth, board member of the MCC church. "Lew thought this very important. He was very proud that the idea of a mass gay wedding — like the one at PrideFest — caught on all over the country."



Rev. Lew Broyles

"He was one of the first persons to make it point to invite our community to participate in the interfaith service at PrideFest," Dave Bodoh of the Two Spirit Society, a LGBT Native American faith and community group told Queer Life. "Lew wanted to include people of all different cultures and

religions in the interfaith service. I considered him a true ally and friend."

Members of Broyles' congregation were shocked by the news of his death.

"I think everyone is absolutely stunned," said Karla

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## Homophobe Watch

### Not So Strange Bedfellows?

These two staunch "family values" state legislators continue their bigoted, homophobic attacks on the LGBT community by promoting a mean-spirited amendment to our state constitution which would ban any possibility of same-sex marriages or civil unions. Recent national headlines show us this type of right-wing G.O.P. behavior is sometimes driven from the closet of internalized homophobia. All their talk of defending "family values" has spawned whispers from a number of state political insiders who are now wondering: When these two talk about "family values" just which "family" are they talking about?



Rep. Mark Gundrum



Sen. Scott Fitzgerald

# Official Pride Guide Inside