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& south  
CAROLINA



# Notes

noted . notable . noteworthy GLBT issues

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Bob Williams



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Do you consider  
yourself a have or a  
have not?  
yes . no

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Performing Arts

## Gay buying power projected at \$641 billion in 2006

New analysis shows \$31 billion  
increase since '05

by Michael Daniels

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The total buying power of the U.S. LGBT adult population in 2006 is projected to be \$641 billion, according to the latest analysis by Witeck-Combs Communications and Packaged Facts (a division of MarketResearch.com). The estimate was originally derived in a joint study by both organizations entitled, "The U.S. Gay and Lesbian Market." In 2005, the gay buying power projection was estimated at \$610 billion, comparing favorably with the African-American, Hispanic and Asian markets.

In sharing the 2006 projection, Bob Witeck, CEO of Witeck-Combs Communications said, "Estimating buying power is a standard business tool for companies and policy decision-makers. This offers us a

snapshot of the dynamic economic activity of America's diverse gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender population." Since 1993, Witeck-Combs Communications has provided expert marketing communications counsel to Fortune 500 companies in their strategies to reach the gay consumer market.

Witeck emphasized that "buying power does not equate with wealth nor can one infer that same-sex households are more affluent than others. We have seen evidence from researchers that gay men may earn slightly less than their heterosexual counterparts.

"The 2000 U.S. Census data on same-sex couples supports the conclusion, however, that gay populations are more concentrated in major metro areas, and less likely to live in rural areas — a characteristic generally associated with higher than aver-



Money, money, money!  
A new Witeck-Combs study shows that,  
collectively, America's LGBT community has  
some pretty substantial buying power.

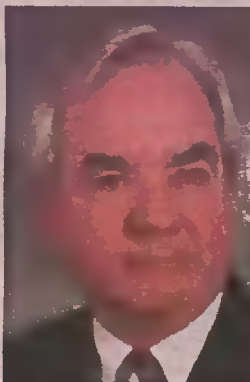
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## Mecklenburg County Commish Parks Helms receives HRC Award

Helms instrumental in introducing non-discrimination  
policy for region

by David Moore  
Q-Notes staff

A graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill, Mecklenburg County Commissioner Parks Helms' political career spans four decades.



Helms on receiving HRC  
equality Award: 'It's  
truly an honor.'

The father of three and grandfather of two, Helms and his wife Eleanor are long-term members of Park Road Baptist Church, where Helms has served as a Deacon.

In 2005, Helms was credited with successfully introducing a sexual orientation non-discrimination policy for Mecklenburg County employees.

In years past Helms was largely responsible for introducing liquor by the drink to Mecklenburg County (1978) and restoring county funding to the arts (1998).

Long-time Charlotte residents might remember the Republican debacle: following the staging of 'Angels in America'

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## A soldier's story Nerves of steel

Editor's Note: These are the thoughts of a gay soldier — a North Carolina native — who has been deployed to Iraq. Because of the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, he must remain anonymous.

We've had a few trying days here recently in Iraq. A mortar went off less than 250 meters from our compound. I could feel the concussion of the blast, as the waves of energy passed through our 12-15 foot concrete walls around our compound. It was a bit nerve-rattling.

I was running in the area where the mortar exploded not more than five minutes earlier. I had just finished and came into the compound for a cool down. I was chatting with an officer friend and then boom! Everyone was scrambling to find their gear and get to the bunkers or their rooms. Radios started squawking to get the information. It was a serious rush.

That same night I had duty at our headquarters, and had to stay up working until noon the following day. There was an Iraqi soldier killed just before my duty started, so I had to complete the paperwork in addition to my assigned duties. The radio didn't stop all night — it was crazy. Finally the morning came and I was off duty. I had no sleep in over 24 hours when I got back to our compound, but was asked to take our interpreters to the front gate.

I did as requested, as I enjoy talking and visiting with them. I got them through the badging office, then walked with two of them to the parking area. After leaving them I was approached and threatened by two local nationals with some very unkind words. They asked if I was scared walking back by myself — then they told me I should be scared. They continued with some pretty nasty rhetoric.

"I'm not scared. I have a nine millimeter to shoot anyone who even thinks about starting something," I said coolly. "I'm a very good marksman and I don't need to be tempted to shoot someone."

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