

Hip-hop tour seeks to energize city's young voters

■ ARTISTS PERFORMED
DOWNTOWN ON FRIDAY.

ELIZABETH PRANN
Alligator Writer

Passers-by couldn't resist stopping at Gainesville's Downtown Plaza on Friday when they heard the lively hip-hop music coming from artists performing at an early vote tour.

"I was just on my way to the bus," said Gainesville resident Andrea Davis, who ended up staying at the event for more than an hour.

Sponsored by The Movement

and Rock the Vote, the tour is traversing through several Florida cities, including Jacksonville, Tallahassee, Gainesville and Ft. Lauderdale before Nov. 2.

The Movement President Bridget Norvell said 2004 is the group's first election year, and it has experienced tremendous success.

"This year's election, people are really coming together," she said.

Her group began in Central Florida and has since dedicated its time to making sure people know the importance a single vote can hold.

"It's time for us to make a change," Norvell said. "That one vote could change the way you

live."

She said everyone needs to speak up and band together, as she offered the microphone to Davis, who declined the offer.

"United we stand, divided we fall," Norvell said.

**Elections
2004** Rock the Vote national field director Tom Bacote said his organiza-

tion works every day to encourage young people to be more politically involved in their community.

After hosting concerts and special events at many high schools and college campuses, young people have been totally engaged for the first time, he said.

"There is a great new political consistency between us," Bacote said. "People are beginning to realize their power."

He said after Nov. 2, the job is only half-done, and his organization plans to train and educate young volunteers to lobby at the local level, beginning Nov. 3.

"Everyone is busting people to get out to the polls, and then afterwards everyone goes into hibernation," Bacote said.

In order to change public policy, young people need to be consistent and press issues that truly affect young people, he said.

In addition to targeting young people, The Movement also does its

best to get in touch with those making a lower income.

"It's them we have to reach," Norvell said.

She said she noticed many homeless people in Gainesville and residents should ask where the tax dollars are going.

"Why are there homeless?" Norvell asked. "People need to re-check their economy."

Davis said she would like to see things change in Gainesville.

She said Gainesville residents need better healthcare, improved job prospects and to see progress in the economy.

"I want to see some immediate results," Davis said.

MULTICULTURAL

Asian-American conference aims to inform, educate

By **JEFF SIRMONS**
Alligator Writer

For Bao Phi, a featured poet on HBO's "Def Poetry Jam," poetry is not a personal art form used to transform angry feelings into rhythmic patterns of internal turmoil.

Poetry is his way of waking up an entire culture, fueling them with his prose and enlightening and enlivening a culture deemed by many Americans as "model" and "quiet."

"Often times, we Asians are not as quiet as we are being silenced by a government that

operates on fear, whether it be threats of physical violence or fear of deportation," Phi said, referring to crimes against Asian Americans.

Phi was one of the discussion leaders at the Southeast Regional Conference for Asian American Leaders. UF's Asian Student Union hosted the conference, which brought students from nine southeastern universities in order to create awareness of Asian-American cultures.

Phi led a poetry workshop stressing the importance of poetry as a communication tool.

"Poetry is a cheap and accessible art form, where all you basically need is a pad and a

pen, and if you're loud enough, you don't even need a microphone," he said.

Phi advocated against the "model minority" label, saying it both stifled his culture and subdued other minority cultures in America.

"Many people assume we don't suffer from such things as racism and segregation, but we do," he said, referring to Vincent Chin's 1982 murder by two men with a baseball bat.

ASU President Mark Villegas said the goal of the conference was to raise questions among Asian Americans and encourage them to think about what it takes to become an ac-

"Many people assume we don't suffer from such things as racism and segregation, but we do."

Bao Phi
poet

tive Asian-American advocate.

"We want to participate in the national dialogue, with the students realizing how much work needs to be done in order for America to accept Asian-American culture," he said.



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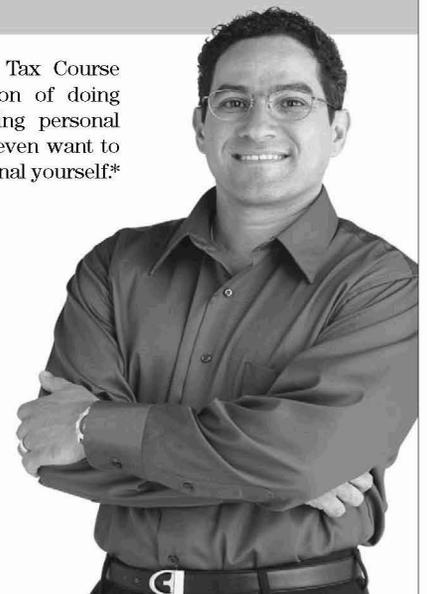
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