

AT A GLANCE

COBBLE HILL — Author John Dermot Woods will read from his debut novel "The Complete Collection of People, Places and Things" on Sunday at Freebird Books, 123 Columbia St., at 7 p.m.

Woods, a Brooklyn resident whose stories and comics have appeared in several journals has a comic chapbook, "The Remains," coming out soon. This event is free. For more information call (718) 643-8484 or visit www.freebirdbooks.com.

PARKSLOPE — Join Assemblyman Jim Brennan (D-Brooklyn) and District Leader Lori Citron Knipel for a town hall meeting on National Health Care with Rep. Anthony Weiner (D-Brooklyn-Queens) on Sunday.

The meeting will be held at Public School 51, 350 Fifth Ave., from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Contact Lori Knipel at nyattorneyatlaw@aol.com.

FORT GREENE — Bill Guttentag and Dan Sturm's documentary, "Soundtrack for a Revolution" opens on Friday at BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave.

The film covers the American civil rights movement through the freedom songs that protesters sang as they fought for justice and equality. Hear new performances by John Legend, Joss Stone, Wyclef Jean, The Roots, Richie Havens and others alongside archival footage and interviews with civil rights leaders.

Screenings are at 2 p.m. tomorrow and Sunday, and at 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Call (718) 636-4100.

CROWN HEIGHTS — A bone marrow drive will be held Saturday at Medgar Evers College to benefit Jennifer Jones-Austin, who is desperately in need of a transplant.

The drive, sponsored by state Sen. Eric Adams (D-Brooklyn), will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the college, 1150 Carroll St. Participants must be between the ages of 18 and 59. For more information you may call (718) 284-4700 or visit www.savejenaustin.com.

Gayle DeWees

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Members of the Dancewave troupe are scrambling to raise money for trip to a festival in Scotland after being scammed. Company director Diane Jacobowitz (inset) holds receipt for the money she sent the fake travel agent. Photo by Linda Rosier/Daily News



Modern dance, old con

BY BEN CHAPMAN
DAILY NEWS WRITER

TALK ABOUT a low blow.

A phony travel agent stole more than \$8,000 from an amateur Park Slope teen dance company — and now the group may not be able to perform as planned at a summer arts festival in Scotland.

"It's a setback, but I don't want people to feel pity for us," said Dancewave company director Diane Jacobowitz. "We're tough, and we're going to make it to Scotland."

Dancewave won a slot last October to perform at the prestigious Aberdeen Festival, which attracts 30,000 people to more than 70 events throughout northeast Scotland from July 27 through Aug. 7.

The only catch is that the 16-member company needs to pay its own way, and about half of

Group scammed out of \$8,000 for trip

the company's dancers come from low-income families and receive scholarships to pay for classes.

To raise money, the dancers pooled their earnings from babysitting and odd jobs, and solicited donations from friends and family.

Last month, the Daily News published an article about the group's efforts, which inspired a local businessman to pledge \$10,000 in matching donations for the trip, Jacobowitz said. And a Dec. 5 benefit raised \$1,500 for the journey.

Acting on a recommendation from a dancer's parent, Jacobowitz bought 15 plane tickets — for \$8,585 — for company members from Maryland travel agent Nina Betru.

Things seemed fine until last Friday, when the parent who recommended Betru told Jacobowitz that tickets she'd bought for a trip to Jamaica never materialized.

"I was reeling when I got the call," said Jacobowitz. "My first thought was to get the money back."

Jacobowitz called Alexandria, Va.-based Adams Travel, where Betru claimed to work, but was told the tickets did not exist and that Betru did not work there.

Jacobowitz also filed a police report with the NYPD, which are investigating the case.

Adams Travel manager Hosam Mansour told The News the bogus agent used the same scheme to rip off about 50 people

for approximately \$50,000 over a six-week period beginning three months ago.

Betru also pulled the same scam at another Alexandria travel agency, Fana Travel, ripping off 20 would-be fliers for an additional \$30,000, according to KB Argeai, a manager there.

Both agencies filed reports with the Fairfax County police, who are investigating.

Jacobowitz said Dancewave now needs to raise about \$45,000 to pay for the troupe's trip.

"I have faith the people out there are going to come forward to help us," she said. "We'll recover from this."

The group is holding a Spring Celebration fund-raiser for the trip at Danspace Project in Manhattan on June 11 and 12.

To buy advance tickets call (718) 522-4696 or visit www.dancewave.org.

Fund-raising surge brings back Manhattan Beach patrol

BY MIKE McLAUGHLIN
DAILY NEWS WRITER

MANHATTAN BEACH residents can sleep easier.

The Beachside Neighborhood Patrol, a local security patrol that almost folded because of a cash problem, has been saved after a surge of support from area residents.

"Without having your own police department, this is the next best thing," said Manhattan Beach Neighborhood Association member Edmond Dweck, who credited the patrol with minimizing petty crimes and annoyances.

"It's the quality-of-life issues that you don't hear about," like loitering, vandalism and car break-ins.

The 39-year-old neighborhood watch nearly disbanded on Jan. 1 because its membership fell dramatically in 2009.

A last-ditch fund-raising effort of telephone calls to lapsed members generated enough pledges to bring back the private guards in patrol cars — resembling NYPD vehicles — for another year, providing daily afternoon and night coverage.

Beachside Neighborhood Patrol President Ted Kleynerman declined to say how many people enrolled, but he acknowledged it didn't attain its goal of boosting the rolls to 350 to 400 members.

"Although we did not achieve the membership level we were hoping for, seeing the pas-

sion of our supporters was indeed reassuring," said Kleynerman.

"During these tough economic times, our members want to have the peace of mind knowing that we have our own security detail focusing on protecting our homes."

The financial woes started when some residents didn't renew their \$400 membership because of the recession. Others opted out because of a controversy with another civic group.

Many Manhattan Beach Community Group (MBCG) members quit Beachside last year, because MBCG officials said the security service was too secretive about its financial records.

Beachside officials said members have access to the books.