

WEEKEND EVENTS

Author Patrick deWitt ready to talk writing and a new novel

Carrie Rollwagen for The Birmingham News

When research librarian Amanda Westfall brainstormed writers she'd love to bring to Alabama, author Patrick deWitt was at the top of her list. She knew getting deWitt, whose book "The Sisters Brothers" has a strong cult following and was short-listed for the prestigious Booker Prize, was a long shot — especially since deWitt lives 2,000 miles away in Portland, Ore.

"It didn't seem likely that he would come here because he's on the other side of the country," Westfall says, and he isn't currently touring. "But we thought: 'Well, just ask him.'"

Asking paid off, and deWitt is heading to Mountain Brook's Emmet O'Neal Library on Saturday for a talk about his writing process and his inspiration. Afterward, "he's going to do some reading, and then we'll have a chance for audience questions, and then he's going to sign some books," Westfall says.

"We have recommended [The Sisters Brothers] so much that he has a bit of a fan base here," says Westfall. The rights to that book, a Western, have been sold to actor John C. Reilly's production company. "It appeals to different age groups and genders," Westfall says, "people who like Westerns, people who like historical books, as well as people that like funny books or contemporary books."

deWitt speaks often about the craft of writing, especially when it comes to his work. After his first book, "Ablutions," got critical acclaim but didn't find a big audience, he made a major change to his writ-

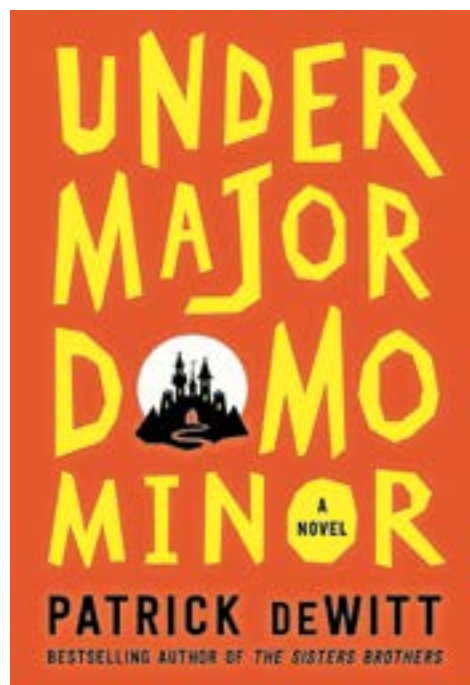
ing style, making plot a bigger priority. The books that came after, "The Sisters Brothers" and his newest novel, "Undermajordomo Minor," still showcase deWitt's trademark wit and dark humor, but they've benefited from the shift in pacing. Westfall says deWitt's writing choices and his influence will resonate, not just with his fans, but with other young authors interested in learning more about writing.

Influences are important to deWitt. In his latest book, he lists a few favorite authors that he drew on for the novel. One of the writers he references is Roald Dahl, author of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" and "The Witches."

"I love Roald Dahl," deWitt says. "He actually wrote a goodly amount of fiction that was most definitely not for children. It's filthy and rude and generally wonderful."

Like Dahl's, deWitt's books also have a dark humor that fans love, but not everyone is in on the joke. "I've come across people who don't think the work is funny at all," he says. "They don't necessarily dislike it; they just don't see the comedy in it. I think this is fascinating. And by fascinating I mean very weird."

One of the qualities that makes both "The Sisters Brothers" and "Undermajordomo Minor" fascinating is their protagonists, who aren't always heroic. Some of deWitt's most likeable characters are assassins (in "The Sisters Brothers") and thieves (in "Undermajordomo Minor"). "I think this is pretty common, right?" he says. "The old switcheroo ... I have zero interest in the thoroughly brave and admirable protagonist."



Patrick deWitt's latest novel, "Undermajordomo Minor," is a take on a European fable. It's like a fairy tale without magic.

behavior that'll get you struck by lightning."

deWitt will speak at Emmet O'Neal Library in Mountain Brook from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturday, March 18. Tickets are \$20 through the library's website, and each of the first 25 people who purchase tickets will also get a free paperback copy of deWitt's latest novel, "Undermajordomo Minor." Little Professor will be on-site with copies of deWitt's books for sale for attendees. Students with valid ID get free admission to the event.

Although this will be deWitt's first book signing in Alabama, it isn't his first trip to the state. "When I was in my early twenties I went on tour with a friend's band," he says. "My job was to sell T-shirts. We went all over the states, and I remember bowling on our day off in Mobile. We were a large group of unclean youths and we made a strongly negative impression on our fellow bowlers. That's the sum total of my Alabama experience to date. I'm looking forward to building off this modest foundation."

Carrie Rollwagen blogs about books and writing at carrierollwagen.com.

ALSO HAPPENING THIS WEEKEND

Mary Colurso mcolurso@al.com

CONCERTS

Don't worry about buying tickets in advance. Just bring \$10 to the door for admission to Winter Jam, a concert that features some of the most popular artists in the contemporary Christian genre. Fans typically flock to the Legacy Arena at the BJCC for this annual show, ready to listen, dance and worship. Friday's lineup includes Crowder, Britt Nicole, Colton Dixon, Thousand Foot Krutch, Tenth Avenue North and more. Also, three members of the "Duck Dynasty" family are on the speakers list: Sadie, Willie and Korie Robertson.

Winter Jam, 7 p.m. Friday, Legacy Arena at the BJCC, 2100 Richard Arrington Jr. Blvd. N.,

\$10, 2017.jamtour.com. Doors open for pre-Jam party at 6 p.m.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Green beer? Well, no. But plenty of Irish stout will be on tap at ShamRock, a St. Patrick's Day party at Cahaba Brewing Co. Organizers promise music by Tragic City, food trucks, contests, a photo booth and more on Friday, starting at 5:30 p.m. Erin go bragh!

ShamRock, 5:30 p.m. Friday, Cahaba Brewing Co., 4500 Fifth Ave. S., free admission, 205-578-2616 or www.cahababrewing.com.

SPORTS

Prepare to be dazzled. The Harlem Globetrotters are wizards on the basketball court, combining athletic skill with acrobatic

feats and family friendly comedy. Players on this ever-evolving team have been entertaining audiences since the 1920s, engaging in jaw-dropping hijinks that go way beyond ball spinning and slam dunks. The current roster includes Flight Time, Buckets, Too Tall, Swish and Big Easy, all of whom specialize in scoring points and bedeviling opponents. See the Globetrotters in action Sunday and next Sunday at Samford University's Pete Hanna Center.

Harlem Globetrotters, 3 p.m. Sunday and March 19, Pete Hanna Center, Samford University, 800 Lakeshore Drive, \$22-\$95, www.harlemglobetrotters.com.

THEATER

"Six brand-new plays about falling in love,

falling out of love and how certain friendships can redirect our entire lives." That's how Theatre Downtown describes its current production, "Sincerely, Sugar Bear (And Other Stories of Love and Friendship)." Nineteen actors — including Celeste Burnum, Taylor Richardson, Flannery Miles and Kenya Stewart — were recruited to inhabit the characters, and six directors signed on to helm the segments, including playwright Daniel Martin. The show runs through March 25, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 8:00 p.m.

"Sincerely, Sugar Bear (And Other Stories of Love and Friendship)" through March 25, Theatre Downtown, 2410 Fifth Ave. S., \$18, \$12 students, 205-565-8838 or www.theatredowntown.org.

Praise & Worship Guide

The Birmingham area has a faith based group to meet every need. If you're looking to join, this guide can help you find your ideal home.

Baptist	Church Of Christ	Church Of Christ	Congregational Church UCC
<p>Rev. Dr. Thomas L. Wilder Jr., Pastor BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH Collegeville - 3200 - 28th Ave. N. Birmingham, AL 35207 205-322-5360 Sunday School..... 8:30am Morning Worship... 10:00am Youth Exploive-Wed..... 7:00pm Youth Bible Study-Wed..... 7:15pm Mid-Week Bible Study-Wed..... 7:00pm Noon Day Bible Study-Thurs..... 12:00pm Sat. Broadcast Channel 4 Bright House Networks - 1:00 pm Reclamation Ministries-c/o Bethel Baptist Church Wed 7am, Sun 10am & 7pm Charter Cable 21 www.bethelCollegeville.org</p>	<p>PLEASANT GROVE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH 401 52nd Street Fairfield, AL 35064 205-786-3351 Welcome Visitors Hour of Change 9:15 A.M. Morning Worship 10:30 A.M. Adult, Youth & Children Wednesday Night Bible Study 6:30 - 7:30P.M. Music Ministry Rehearsal Wednesday 7:30 - 8:30P.M. "Christ centered, Love God, Love People, Share Jesus, and make Disciples" Mark 12: 29-31; Matthew 28:18-20</p>	<p>Heritage Place Church of Christ 5252 Highway 78 East - Irondale, AL 35210 Sunday Morning Bible School - 9:00 a.m. Sunday Worship - 10:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study - 7:00 p. m. Dr. J. Wayne Kilpatrick, Minister John Bryan O'Connor, Youth Minister dolifewithus.us 205-951-2233</p>	<p>PALISADES CHURCH OF CHRIST 625 Palisades Blvd., B'ham 35209 Sun. Bible School 9:30 AM; Sun. Worship 10:30 AM, 1PM; Wed. Classes 7:00 PM Daniel Courington, Minister 871-4385 www.palisadesfamily.org</p>
<p>Christian Science FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST - NEW LOCATION - 209 Oxmoor Circle, Suite 701 Homewood, AL 35209 Phone: 941-0100 Sunday Services and Sunday School at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday Evening Service at 7 p.m. Reading Room: Thursday, 11 am to 2 pm christiansciencebirmingham.org</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>This space can be yours for \$33 a week</i></p>	<p>Church Of God In Christ EMANUEL TEMPLE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST  Bishop O. L. Meadows, Pastor 433 1st St. N. Smithfield Birmingham, AL 35204 328-8197 Sunday School 9:30 am Morning Worship 11:15 am Evening Service 6:00 pm Wednesday Bible Band 7:00 pm Friday Evangelistic 7:00 pm</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>This space can be yours for \$20.63 a week</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lutheran LCMS Lutheran Church of Vestavia Hills Missouri Synod 201 South Montgomery Highway Sunday Worship 8:00 & 10:30 am Sunday School (Children & Adults) 9:00 am Mother's Day Out Program M-F 9:00-1:00pm Michael D Ahlemeyer, Pastor 823-1883 www.vestaviatlutheran.org</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>To list your ad call 325-2265</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Deadline to list your advertisement is Mondays by 5 PM</p>
<p>Deadline to list your advertisement is Mondays by 5 PM</p>			
<p>Faith Walkers Church  Come visit our new location. We invite you to worship with us at 2838 Ruffner Road, Bham. Sunday 10:00 a.m. Tuesday Bible Study 6:45 p.m. You do not want to miss your breakthrough! Until then, Walk it out by Faith! 205.777.3630 Pastor Kelvin Bryant</p>			
<p>Orthodox Holy Trinity-Holy Cross GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL 307 19th Street South Sunday, Orthros: 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m. Rev. Fr. Paul Costopoulos, Dean 716-3080</p>			

These faith based organizations invite you to worship with them... *'For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.'*

Matthew 18:20 KJV

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