

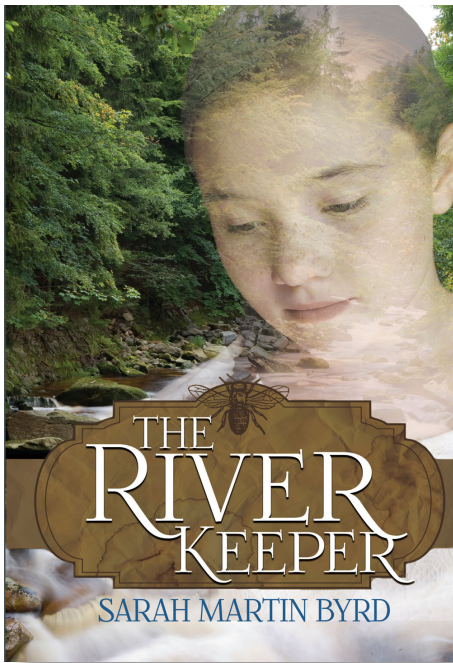


news release

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GRIPPING NOVEL FOLLOWS YOUNG ORPHAN AS SHE NAVIGATES TRAGEDY DESPITE DEVASTATING LOSS, YOUNG GIRL RESOLVES TO LET HOPE AND LOVE PREVAIL



For immediate release: Witnessing her family die in a flood could have been enough to ruin Callie Mae McCauley, but she doesn't let being orphaned at the age of eight destroy her tender spirit. *The River Keeper* (Ambassador International; October 2014; \$14.99, paperback) follows young Callie as she navigates the stream of life. Through gentle ripples and vengeful rapids, she finds healing living with her grandmother in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Set along the banks of the New River in North Carolina in the 1940s, author Sarah Martin Byrd artfully writes about the rugged hillsides and idyllic meadows with familiarity that can only come from someone who has called this place home. Believed to be one of the oldest rivers in North America, the author has woven its natural history into the story of *The River Keeper*. "I have probably done more research on this one story than I've done on all my others," explains Sarah, who has fished, swam and paddled through miles of the river. "The New River is so rich in history and folklore."

Based on actual events, *The River Keeper* tells the story of the 13-year battle to protect the New River from development. In 1965 Appalachian Power filed an application with the Federal Power Commission for permission to build a two-dam hydroelectric and pumped-storage facility. This project would have flooded over forty thousand acres of rich bottomland, displacing as many as 3,000 people, destroying hundreds of cabins, churches and cemeteries and one of the most important archeological areas in the eastern United States.

The River Keeper is Byrd's third project with Ambassador International. In 2012 Ambassador International published Byrd's novel *The Color of My Heart*, which pushes readers to contemplate whether they believe heart matters more than skin. In 2013 Byrd released *The Manger Mouse*, a touching children's book about a tiny mouse's big role in the Christmas story.

About the Author: Sarah Martin Byrd is a graduate of The Institute of Children's Literature. She is a published novelist, newspaper columnist, blogger, and former Advertising Manager for a regional newspaper. Sarah loves sharing her life story with children of all ages. She speaks at schools, book clubs, libraries and book festivals. Sarah lives at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in North Carolina with her husband of 38 years. Her only daughter and grandchild live close by. When not creating new stories she loves camping, canoeing, fishing, her daily walks, and spending time with her family.

To receive a review copy of *The River Keeper* or to connect with the author please contact publicist Alison Storm by email at media@emeraldhouse.com.

ABOUT THE PUBLISHER: Ambassador International was founded in 1980 in Belfast, Northern Ireland and expanded to Greenville, South Carolina in 1995. Ambassador International's books and materials have been distributed in dozens of countries and are sold worldwide. For more information visit www.ambassador-international.com. You can also follow @AmbassadorIntl on Twitter or check out Facebook.com/AmbassadorIntl.

Suggested Interview Questions for the author:

1. What led you to write *The River Keeper*?
2. Why does the New River hold such a special place in your heart?
3. Why did you decide to tell this story through the eyes of a young girl?
4. How much of this story is fact and how much is fiction?
5. How is Callie's faith strengthened through her trials?
6. What kind of research went into this book?

Review:

"I don't see how Sarah does it. She gets better with each book. This story is so easy to read and so hard to put down. The pages are filled with laughter, tears, and breath-taking excitement. I could not wait for the next page.

The Scripture references are well chosen. Love and hope are beautiful four letter words. Love for family and roots — knowing family is not always "blood kin" but those whom God gives us to love. Our hope is in the Lord and trusting His plan.

The strength of the human spirit is remarkable. The power of love and family can overcome any evil. This is a page-turner you are not able to put down. You may find there is some of Callie Mae McCauley in all of us.

Thank you, Sarah, for the honor of letting me see into your heart."

Shelby O'Toole, Registered Nurse, North Carolina



author bio

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SARAH MARTIN BYRD *Author of "The River Keeper"*



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Connect with the Author

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