

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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First Major NASCAR Novel Hits Stores Feb. 1 ***St. Dale product of NY Times best-selling author***

NEW YORK – The eagerly-awaited first major novel based on the NASCAR lifestyle and NASCAR fans goes on sale Tuesday, Feb. 1, throughout the country.

New York Times best-selling author Sharyn McCrumb wrote *St. Dale* (ISBN: 0-7582-0776-X; Kensington Publishing Corp.; \$25.00), the story of a modern-day group of racing fans on an “Earnhardt pilgrimage” to the Southeast speedways from Tennessee to Florida. It is published by Kensington Publishing Corporation of New York.

“I don’t doubt this is the same feeling of a driver or a crew chief going into Speed Weeks at Daytona,” said Ms. McCrumb. “All of the testing and preparation is completed. Now it’s time to get out there and see how we do.”

Veteran racing observers have anticipated the novel, many feeling it is another indication of the growth of the sport into the mainstream of American culture. NASCAR racing has grown tremendously among sports fans but has just recently shown signs of becoming a larger phenomenon.

“The sport is growing and if that is going to continue, we have to attract more than just sports fans,” said former Daytona 500 winner Derrike Cope, the Spanaway, Wash., driver who was one of the first full-time NASCAR Nextel Cup Series drivers from outside of the southeastern United States. Cope also has experience as a national television broadcaster.

“Authors like this, who have a strong following in areas well beyond professional sports, taking an interest in our fans and lifestyle can really boost us,” Cope added. “It’s good for our sport and our sponsors.”

The author will be in Daytona Beach during Speed Weeks, conducting interviews and signing autographs. She also plans to attend several NASCAR events the first part of the 2005 Nextel Cup Series season.

Ms. McCrumb, a Virginia writer best known for her Appalachian “Ballad” novels, including New York Times Best Sellers *She Walks These Hills* and *The Rosewood Casket*, has based her new novel on another Southern tradition: stock car racing.

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