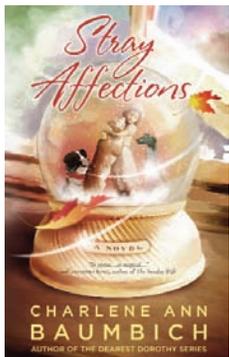


# Wild Child of God

## Q&A with Charlene Ann Baumbich

**Q:** What surprises you most when you're writing?

**A:** The art of writing fiction is filled with wonderful (wonder full), confusing, *Wa-hoo!*, Don't-tell-me!, *Arrrgh*, Yikes!, duh, dull (delete, delete, delete), helpful, awesome, unnerving and holy surprises. Thank you, Jesus. Since I'm what's known as a "panster" (I write by the seat of my pants rather than an outline), I don't know what's going to happen until I see it gradually unfold in my mind's eye. *Wow. You have got to be kidding me!*, I often think as the story sails onto the page.



Characters surprise me when they show up and knock on my brain. "Hel-lo, I'm here! Now what?" They confound, pester, inspire, anger and therefore fuel me to know them on a deeper and deeper level, which in turn helps me know myself better too. When one spends much of her day examining motives, believe me, she can't help but peel back layers of herself in the process.

I often laugh out loud and write through grace filled, revelatory, sorrowful or happy tears, the power of my characters' emotions burrows so deep into my spirit. I don't think I've ever

"lived with" a character that didn't touch me in some profound way.

I am surprised how quickly time passes when I truly surrender myself to the story.

**Q:** Where did the inspiration for your latest book, *Stray Affections*, come from?

**A:** A friend gave me a beautiful snowglobe for Christmas, a nativity scene. The music box in the base played *O Holy Night*. At the end of the Christmas season, I couldn't bear to put it away. I brought it to my office where it remained for about a dozen years until one day I accidentally knocked it off the edge. Propelled by the crash, the sparkling water streamed across the floor and the baby Jesus, who'd broken loose from the



base, floated "downriver" with the flow. My heart just ached. Instantly I began beating myself up. *You have always been so careless!* I have broken and lost so many things that I love.

But as quickly as my anger flashed, so too the thought came to me, "Of course the Christ child is out of the nativity scene! He's out in the world, risen, living within—forgiving me, yet again, even for this."

The emotions and details of the incident stuck with me. *What if, I began to wonder, something as profound, surprising and magical, if you will, took place with a series of snowglobes? What if the incidents were triggered by the desires of the heart? What if...*

**Q:** Dogs play a major role in the book—they help Cassandra heal and rediscover her gifts. What do they teach us about faith and God?

**A:** The meaning of unconditional love, and the joy God feels in His heart when He sees us come home to Him. Dogs witness and receive our joy, our tears, our impatience, our neglect, and yet, they love us. Grace.

**Q:** You describe yourself as a "Wild Child of God." What are some of the wild things you've done?

**A:** I've owned two motorcycles. Bungee jumped. Dared to enjoy Cub Scout den mothering for two years. Rode my horse Dixie in barrel races. Got a tattoo before "tatts" were fashionable. Went to England for three weeks by myself for my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Biggest wild thing: every day I dare to believe again and again that God loves me, just as I am.

**Q:** What's something that you think your readers would like to know about you that they might not already know?

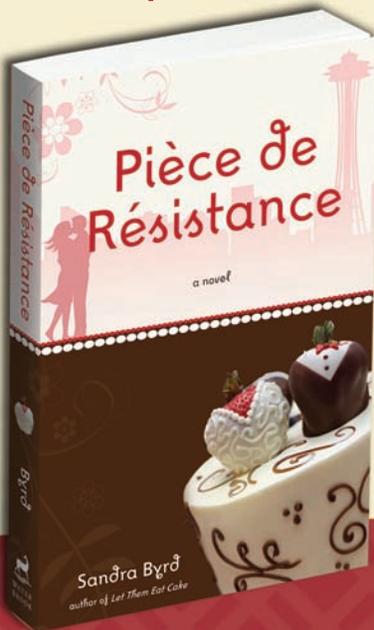
**A:** In 1955, I took first prize in a pet parade with a fish I caught bare handed in a nearby creek. I put Mr. Fish in an old goldfish bowl and pulled the bowl—carefully, lest he slosh out—in a wagon decorated with streamers.

**Charlene Ann Baumbich** is a popular author and speaker and an award-winning journalist. In addition to her Dearest Dorothy series of novels, she has written six nonfiction books of humor and inspiration.

## Too bad life doesn't come with a recipe!

Having earned her chef's hat, Lexi Stuart bids *au revoir* to her pastry mentorship outside of Paris and returns to her hometown of Seattle, Washington. There, she finds life unexpectedly complicated.

With the fate of her career and her love life hanging by a thread, the phrase "piece of cake" has never been more daunting. Lexi must learn to trust the dreams in her heart and the God who put them there.



For a recipe for Lexi's Carmel Latte Cake from the book, click here.

Little children are invited on engaging journeys that explore some of their most tender-hearted questions...

