

# Politics goes to the dogs

Vancouver author Sue Pethick continues her series of lighthearted novels that tell stories of human romance, all made possible with the nudge of a dog's cold, wet nose. Her latest book is called "Please Don't Feed the Mayor."

The story takes place in a small western Oregon town that has been in the doldrums since the downturn of the logging industry. Melanie MacDonald returned to Fossett since her divorce four years ago to live in the community she grew up in, and to open Ground Central, a coffee shop which has become the informal community gathering place.

At this point, her closest companion is her border collie, Shep.

The story begins when Melanie wakes up from a bad night's sleep, and "the second she opened her eyes a terrible certainty clutched at her heart: Fossett — the town she loved best in all the world — was dying."

On the very first page of this story, she vows to Shep that "We've got to find a way to save this place."

It seems like a rather histrionic start, and Chapters One and Two continue in this vein.

That same morning, Melanie sees a schlocky report on television about a cat in England that has been elected to a council, and she gets the bright idea that her dog should become Mayor of Fossett in order to get publicity for her town. She believes this will bring in new residents and new investments.

By the end of the second chapter, she has convinced the town to go along with her gimmick to hold an election that will put Shep into the apparently newly created office of mayor — and Elec-

## THIS WEEK'S BOOK

### Please Don't Feed the Mayor

By Sue Pethick

Kensington Books

262 pp

\$9.95

tion Day is only two weeks away.

The townspeople ask her to figure out how to run the election legally, so Melanie calls her ex-husband, a lawyer, out of the blue to seek his assistance.

Bryce MacDonald has recently switched from working in the prosecutor's office to working for a Portland law firm, and he is beginning to hit the big time. He has not spoken to Melanie in years, but when she calls, he experiences a pang of regret. He agrees to help, even though election law is not his specialty.

But that's not the only blast from the past that visits

Bryce that day. He also learns that one of the cold-blooded murderers he had successfully prosecuted two years earlier has just escaped from the penitentiary. At sentencing, that man had vowed to hunt down the prosecution team once he got out of prison.

So Bryce decides that now might be a good idea to get out of town until the escapee is recaptured. He shows up on Melanie's doorstep in Fossett and offers to help with the campaign.

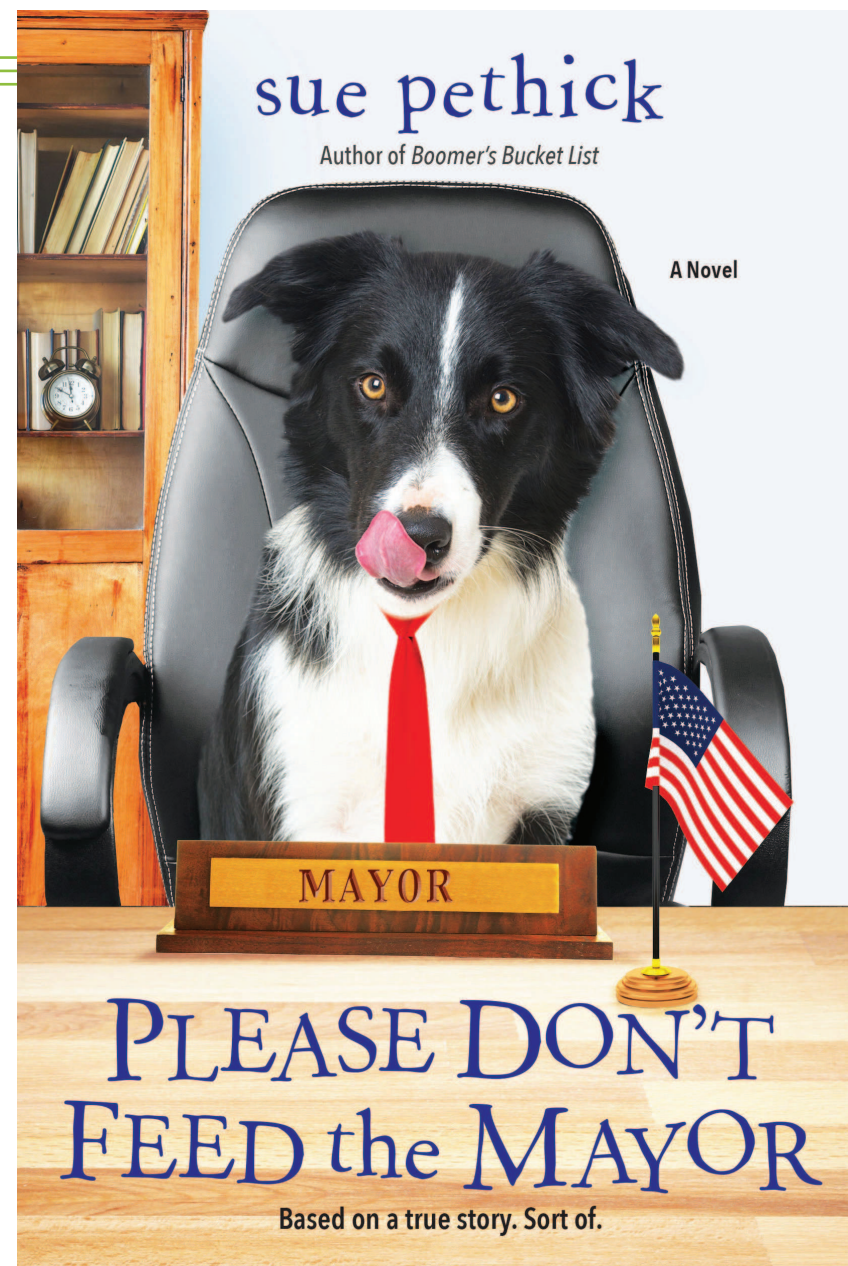
Pethick juggles these elements — a town's wacky effort at revitalization, a rekindled romance and a convict running amok — with mixed success.

The beginning of "Please Don't Feed the Mayor" is tough sledding, but once the story gets going, there is more appeal.

*The Bookmonger is Barbara Lloyd McMichael, who writes this weekly column focusing on the books, authors and publishers of the Pacific Northwest. Contact her at [bkmonger@mwlink.com](mailto:bkmonger@mwlink.com).*

## Crossword Answers

P	E	C	A	N	S	M	I	S	D	E	A	L	S	C	A	L	A	R	
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A Novel

Kensington Books

The cover of Sue Pethick's 'Please Don't Feed the Mayor'

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