

# ‘Souper’ new murder mystery

A gaggle of elderly ladies and an overworked young doctor-in-training return for “The Fog Ladies: In the Soup,” the latest installment of Seattle author Susan McCormick’s “Fog Ladies” cozy murder mystery series.

Readers who are familiar with the previous books in the series will already be acquainted with Sarah James, now a second-year resident at the local hospital, who is friends with a mix of eccentric retirees. Most of them live in her San Francisco apartment building, and all of them — Harriet Flynn, Frances Noonan, Alma Gordon, Olivia Honeycutt, and the irascible Enid Carmichael — have proven to be adept at solving local murders.

Or if not adept, at least persistent. They usually chase after several red herrings before they get their man.

In this episode, the Fog Ladies — Sarah calls them that because they are as reliably present as the fog that blankets the bay every morning — are volunteering at a local soup kitchen.

William, manager of the kitchen, is compassionate with the down-and-out clientele that come through the doors every day in need of sustenance. Once a successful restaurateur, he went through a rough patch of his own when he lost his job and started abusing drugs. But now he has found purpose and is rebuilding his life.

The Fog Ladies are helping William and his chief cook, Sadie, prepare for a state-wide “Big Pot” soup competition. The five largest pots of soup in the state will be sampled by a panel of judges, and the best of that lot will be awarded a cash prize. William and Sadie are hoping to win that money to upgrade the soup kitchen and serve more people in need.

William has even gone so far as to reach out to his former part-

ner in the restaurant business, Cornelius, to ask if he can borrow his gigantic soup cauldron. They had had a falling-out years earlier, which contributed to William’s downfall, but now that William has proven that he is successfully in recovery, Cornelius is happy to help.

The Fog Ladies are present when Cornelius and his big pot arrive, and they quickly see that William’s former partner is very pushy. Not only does the man meddle with William’s plan for serving the meal, he also insists that William’s soup recipe is missing an important ingredient — bay leaves.

But when the day of the contest dawns and the Fog Ladies arrive at the kitchen to assist, they find another surprise ingredient in the big, steaming soup pot instead. It is Cornelius’s corpse.

The police arrest William almost immediately, relying on the history of past acrimony between the two partners.

## This week’s book

‘The Fog Ladies: In the Soup’ by Susan McCormick  
Wild Rose Press – 328 pp — \$17.99

But the Fog Ladies believe William is innocent, and they busy-body their way through a soup-to-nuts menu of potential suspects before zeroing in on the actual murderer.

This has all the ingredients to satisfy: humor, a dash of romance, a colorful cast of characters and a charming Newfoundland puppy. “The Fog Ladies: In the Soup” is a whodunit to savor.

*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 [barbaralmcm@gmail.com](mailto:barbaralmcm@gmail.com)*



# A SAN FRANCISCO COZY MURDER MYSTERY

# THE FOG LADIES: IN THE SOUP

Good deeds can be deadly

# SUSAN MCCORMICK