

# Belgrade woman illustrates book cover

## Charity project labor of love for local artist

By MECHELE COOPER  
Staff Writer

BELGRADE — As a graphic artist, Connie Parker says she's been asked to do a number of special projects for charity.

Designing the cover for Helen Hudson's book, "Dinner at Six, Voices from the Soup Kitchen" — a collection of stories gleaned from her years as a soup kitchen volunteer — has been the best project yet.

Hudson, an author whose works include "The Listener" and "Criminal Trespass," is donating copies of her new

book to organizations that serve the homeless and hungry. The books would then be sold by these groups, with the proceeds going to their own outreach programs.

"This is why I get up in the morning, for this type of project," Parker, of Belgrade, said recently.

"Hunger is one of the biggest issues in our social tapestry. We live in a beautiful world, but there are problems, and they're problems that happen to good people. It's not their fault."

During her time at soup kitchens, Hudson, who is in her 80s and lives in New Haven, Conn., became interested in the circumstances that took people to

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the food line.

Hudson's son, Thomas Lane, had the idea to publish the book and donate the proceeds.

"There are plenty of resources and plenty of compassion out there," Lane said. "But all too often, those with compassion have little resources, and those with resources have little compassion."

Parker said Hudson tells in her book how many of the people who rely on soup kitchens were too proud to go to their families for help. The most powerful part of the book, Parker said, are the voices of the people who eat in the kitchens. "Dinner at Six" paints a colorful portrait of the volunteers and guests, of whom many are elderly or mothers with young children.

"They're our neighbors and our friends," Parker said. "These are real people who work and have lives."

The Bread of Life in Augusta has received 20 copies. Director John Applin said he couldn't believe Lane's offer and kept waiting for a catch, but there wasn't any.

He said people can buy the book at the Bread of Life office at 257 Water St.

"We've sold several here without even promoting it at this point," Applin said recently. "I've read almost all of it down to the last chapter. I see so many parallels with people we see in and out of our homeless shelter and those who come

to the kitchen. The faces might be different, but the stories are the same."

The Augusta soup kitchen is on Water Street below the Bread of Life office and the homeless shelter at 157 Hospital St.

Anyone interested in purchasing "Dinner at Six" should call Bread of Life at 626-3434.

Parker said books will be distributed to other soup kitchens and homeless shelters in the area.

The price of the book is \$10, but people can pay more if they want, and it's tax-deductible.

"We're also looking for corporate sponsors to reprint the books, and that's the key — to keep the book reprinted," Parker said.

The books also can be purchased through the Parker Design Studio in Belgrade Lakes at 495-3841. Parker's e-mail is [www.parkerdesignearthlink.net](http://www.parkerdesignearthlink.net).



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