

Fund-raiser puts history into postcards

Fish Library's sales will go toward cost of a new elevator

Barbara Livingston Nackman
The Journal News

GARRISON — Eyeing a colorful glimpse of the Hudson River and Garrison from a West Point vantage, Rose Champlin said she knew she wanted to purchase a package of reprinted period postcards from the Alice Curtis Desmond-Hamilton Fish Library last week.

The library is selling the reprints of local scenes to raise money for an elevator within the two-story building. But to Champlin, a 50-year Philipstown resident and longtime fan of the Desmond-Fish library, the fundraiser was a secondary reason to plunk down \$15 for 18 postcards.

"I haven't decided what to do with them," she said. "I think I'll frame a few."

Some cards show the Garrison school, Fair Street in 1912, the Cold Spring railroad station and Philipstown Town Hall. A few illustrate buildings no longer standing, such as the Imperial Hotel in Nelsonville; Craigsides, which was Julia Butterfield's house; and the Garrison Hotel.

Southeast resident Denis Castelli and the Taconic Postcard Club helped assemble the historic scenes of Garrison, Cold Spring and Nelsonville, which cover those communities from 1905 to the 1920s. A large poster of the collection is available in signed and unsigned editions for \$100 and \$50, respectively.

"The postcards depict an era of the town," said Castelli. "The reproductions can raise money for an important project and help

preserve history."

A former computer programming consultant, Castelli previously produced a card set as a fund-raiser for the Southeast Museum in Brewster. He said he is considering similar postcard projects for other Putnam towns.

About six cards are from Castelli's personal collection. Most, though, are from David Bisbee of Putnam Valley, trustee of the Friends of Desmond-Fish Library and vice president of the Taconic Postcard Club.

Many of the cards are rare, said Bisbee, estimating the originals could sell for between \$10 and \$100.

"The cards reflect Cold Spring's amazing history," he said.

Library officials are hoping sales will net the 24-year-old community institution \$11,000 toward the installation of a \$200,000 elevator.

"A lot of people use the library, but some have real trouble using the stairs," said library Director Carol Donick.

Each year, close to 7,000 people participate in programs and search for materials at the library, which is located at the intersection of routes 9D and 403.

In 2003, the library held 294 events — including its annual used-book sale — in the lower-level room, which is accessible only via a flight of stairs. An elevator would bring the library into compliance with current building standards and help the elderly and those with mobility problems, including parents toting babies and young children in strollers, Donick said.

An elevator proposal coordinates nicely with efforts of library co-founder Hamilton Fish Jr.

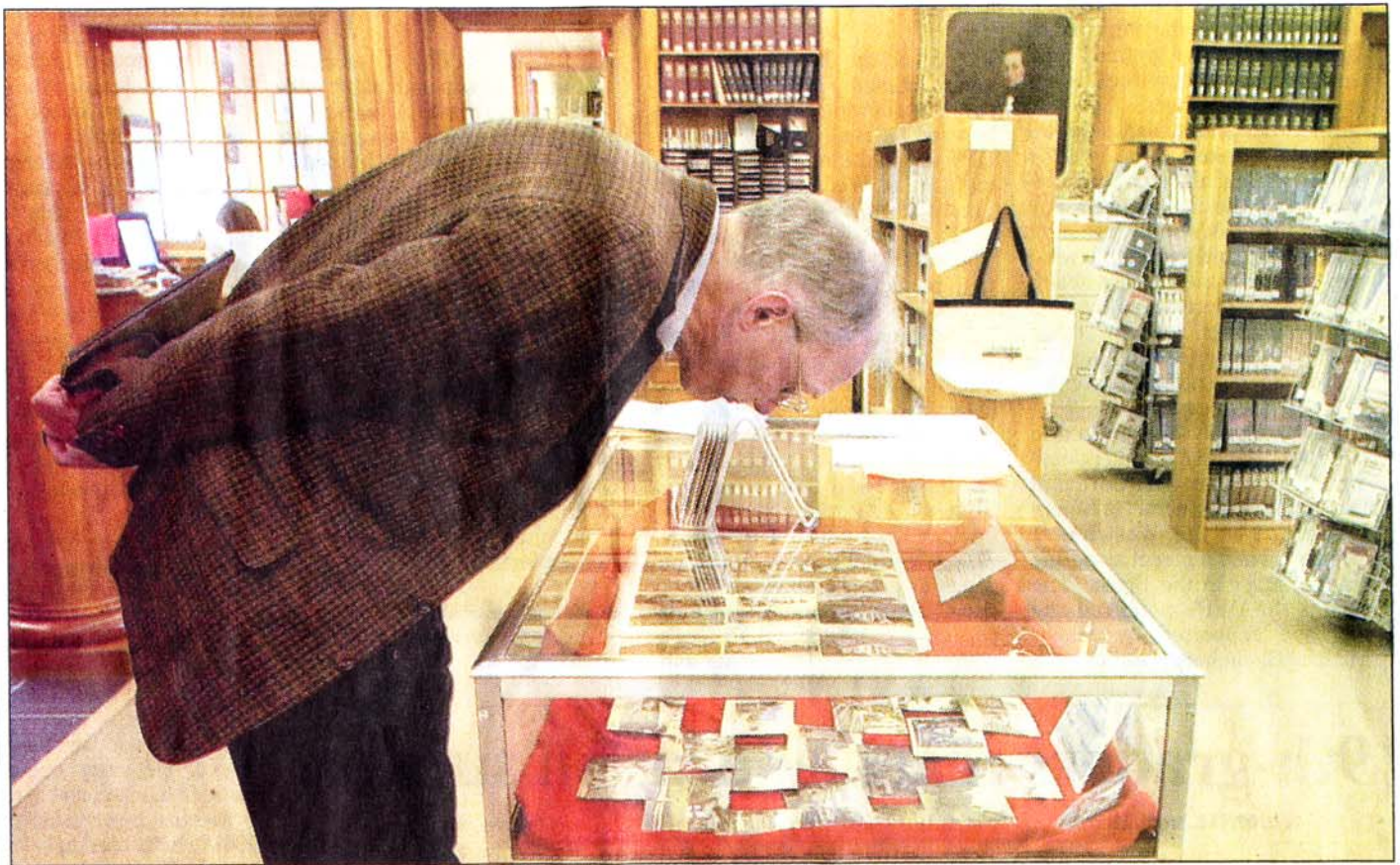
As a congressman represent-

Please see POSTCARDS, 2B



Courtesy of Desmond-Fish Library

From top, the New York Central Lines station in Garrison, Fair Street in Cold Spring and the Imperial Hotel in Nelsonville.



Stuart Bayer/The Journal News

Henry Turner of Garrison last week looks over a display of historical postcards of Philipstown at the Desmond-Fish Library in Garrison. The 18-card set is available for purchase at the library. The proceeds will be used to fund special projects.

Library raising funds through postcard sale

POSTCARDS, from 1B

ing New York's 19th district, Fish was a major figure in the passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990.

"In many respects, the library is a community center. There is a desperate and obvious need for an elevator," said Hamilton Fish, the son of the library founder and current board president, referring to the many programs held in the event room.

In 1994, his father used the event room to announce he would not seek re-election, Fish said. During the news conference, he told reporters he considered his proudest accomplishment to be his work for the disabled — sweeping legislation affecting a broad range of Americans and their ability to access public sites.

The elevator would be in a

small building extension, so it would not take up critical library space, Donick said. There are 500 packs of postcards, 30 posters signed by Castelli and 15 unsigned, imperfect posters. The library has received individual donations of \$30,000, a state grant of \$10,000 and \$25,000 from Philipstown for the project.

The building was funded by Alice Curtis Desmond and Hamilton Fish, whose families were involved in New York state politics for generations. Its annual \$450,000 budget comes from an endowment created by Desmond, contributions from an annual Library Associates dinner and efforts by the Friends group.

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