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Students Write Grand Union Urging Elmendorph Inn Sale

RED HOOK - Fourth and sixth grade pupils of Mill Rd. School here have penned letters to James Wood, Grand Union president, urging the supermarket chain to sell the 200-year-old Elmendorph Inn.

Grand Union purchased the Inn several years ago from Wood, planning to raze the building and expand its parking space, according to village historian Rosemary Coons.

Friends of Elmendorph, a non-profit offshoot of the Red Hook-Tivoli Bicentennial Committee, has made a purchase offer. Mrs. Coons said an encouraging informal response had been received. She credited the letters from the children as being helpful in presenting the case to Grand Union. "The letters added a warm, human touch to it," she said.

Below are excerpts from letters sent by sixth graders in Mrs. Terence Dewsnap's class:

"I have heard that you were going to knock down the Elmendorph Inn just for a parking lot. We have enough parking lots as it is. We need interesting stuff such as the Elmendorph Inn. Please do not destroy the Elmendorph Inn," wrote a Red Hook boy.

"I am writing to you to nicely ask you to please save the Elmendorph Inn. If you didn't know that the

Elmendorph Inn is the oldest building in Red Hook, I'm telling you," commented a Rhinebeck youth.

One Germantown girl noted the inn's importance regarding the Bicentennial. "Since the Bicentennial is approaching, I think that it would be good for the village to show that it is very old," she wrote.

A Red Hook girl, who apparently lives in an old house herself, wrote, "Well, I was wondering if it would be possible for you to bring down the price of that property to a price that Red Hook could pay. You know this is a Bicentennial year and we do want a building in Red Hook to look historical (besides my house). Well, it's all up to you."

Some letters suggested the Inn's sale could be used to further the company's business. "Maybe it would be in the papers, and more people would go to your store," said a Red Hook girl. "Also, if you help us save the inn it would be good publicity. You could put up posters and have commercials on TV saying 'Grand Union is interested in America. Look what we did in Red Hook....'" said a Red Hook boy.

One boy commented, "People believe the Elmendorph Inn has been here in town since soon after its beginning." (sgy)