

**From:** [Lorraine Weckwert](#)  
**To:** [Robert V. Doran](#)  
**Cc:** [Donald D. Crawford](#); [Benjamin Frederick](#); [Jennifer Mahoney](#); [Robert Elton Brockway](#); [Dennis Mahoney](#); [Erin Powell](#); [Adrian Montague](#); [Nicholas](#); [Amy K. Kirkland](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Index Cards  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 18, 2015 3:12:21 PM

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All,

I have held off responding to this and other e-mails from Jennifer and Robert until I could control my anger and outrage over the not-so-veiled accusations of dishonesty.

First I shall address Jennifer and Robert's implication that I was at the Movie Museum collecting items on behalf of OHC. Here is the truth, which you will not hear from either of them, even though Robert was corrected by a Movie Museum Board Member (Jan) as to my involvement there. One of the last two remaining Movie Museum board members is one of my friends. He phoned me asking me to help sort the mess that existed at the Movie Museum after the owner's death because of my experience and expertise with historical artifacts, archives and inventories, which I did. I was there to help a friend, not representing OHC. It was never the intent of the Movie Museum board to donate anything to anyone, but rather, to sell everything, using the proceeds to create a scholarship for Owosso students pursuing a career within the film industry, to be administered by the Shiawassee Foundation. For the record, I did ask for a few vintage Owosso postcards for OHC, which I did not remove at any time from the Movie Museum and the cards got lost in the shuffle. If it is anyone's business, I did purchase two books at that sale, with my money. This is all I have from the Movie Museum. Period.

I have been involved in the history and architectural preservation in this community since the early 1980's. I am known as one of the city's historical researchers, a driver of historic preservation and recorder of local history. I wrote a history of the Curwood Castle Park for the former Assistant City Manager for the recent DIG grant; I researched and wrote the history of Lincoln School and of the Middle School for the school district to facilitate the sale and restoration of these buildings through historic preservation grants from MSHDA. I drove the effort to have the downtown placed on the State Register of Historic Places and then the National Register of Historic Places, first visiting each business downtown to obtain their signatures approving such a movement, and then proceeding to research and document each building within the 17 block downtown. Some of you may have seen the resulting volume of nearly 500 pages of edited research, which took an intense year of my life. The State Historic designation and the National Register designation are the reason the downtown is now being developed and restored, making tax credits and grants available to building owners, making the financial investment feasible. I was a founding member of a group of preservationists called "Preservation Owosso" and served two years as it's president. That group, for those of you who do not know, was responsible for repaving Michigan Avenue in brick pavers, preserving the look of the original street, and raising the money for the cost difference between asphalt and paving brick. I have also chaired four Historic Home Tours for the OHC, both as a member of OHC and as an interested citizen. I could go on.

The Owosso Public School District called me personally, as a researcher and historian to ask if I was interested in their boxes of historic documents (no ephemera in the lot) and records. This invitation was not issued to OHC, but to ME. I certainly did consider preserving these historically important documents with the Owosso Historical Commission until I received Jennifer's e-mail telling how the high school kids and she would be pawing and rifling through these fragile, brittle, and one-of-a-kind documents. In a proper museum setting, copies of the originals would be made both digitally and on paper, and copies would be available to the public, preserving the original.. This is proper preservation and conservator practice.

Jennifer's and Robert's e-mail served to remind me of OHC current treatment of the rest of our historic artifacts which are thrown into plastic totes in the Gould House basement, where in the past much had already been destroyed by mold and mildew. The furniture in our collection Robert and Jennifer and Elaine moved to the smelly and vermin-infested carriage house. For them, it was more important the Gould House look "pretty" than to preserve what bits of Owosso history that had been entrusted to the OHC since its creation. Look at your By-Laws for the directive of your purpose for existence as OHC: Preservation, Promotion of History and Architecture, display of artifacts.....get a copy. Needless to say, I changed my mind. The papers from the School district will either be given to the Shiawassee Historical Society or to the State of Michigan Historical Museum in Lansing where they will indeed practice preservation. What a shame that we can't keep Owosso history in Owosso.

The artifacts in our possession were inventoried and recorded both in 1983 and in 1993--by me. The inventory sheets and card files were lost by the City when the safe in the Treasurer's office was removed to install a new elevator. When I inquired as to the whereabouts of said inventories, no one knew a thing about it, but Ron Tobey, City Treasurer, went on a hunt and found what remained---the inventory card file covered by construction and concrete dust. I had kept the card file at my house, as I was appointed to conduct another inventory by the then-seated OHC, until we hired Mitch Spears as OHC Director. I then turned the inventory cards over to him. I took these card files back a few weeks ago, adding informational notes and comments to the cards. I DO hesitate giving these over to Robert, as I certainly have trust issues with him.

It astounds me that anyone associated with historic preservation thinks its ok to use dishes donated from a prominent Owosso family to serve party food because he thinks they are "charming" and when informed of their importance, said he would use them again. Further, a platter from OHC collection was used at Christmas to serve food for a party at the Gould House, which I noticed as it was being banged around in the kitchen during clean up. Informed of its importance, he again was defiant. I can't help wonder what Robert threw away in his "professional" assessment of the items he cleared out of the store room at Curwood Castle and at the Gould House, as by his own admission, he is not an historian. For you younger and new members, our By-Laws (haven't seen them yet, have you) forbid any disposal of ANY OHC property without a vote of the Commission and then approval by City Council. I also have a

real problem with any museum director who thinks its ok to have animal napping on the museum's collection of furniture, including the just purchased \$5000 reproduction sofas at Curwood Castle and the bear rug, and I certainly question the professionalism of one bringing their dog to work. We won't even talk about the breaking of trust regarding unapproved expenditures of OHC funds at this juncture.

The card catalogue is the only remaining documentation of Owosso's historic artifacts other than what is in my head. Yesterday, I took the card catalogue to the City Clerk, the official keeper of City Records, and she will create digital copies of the card file, with copies being placed in city records in the safe, along with a digital copy for me. Then, Robert may have the old card file.

I have served on the OHC for three years. I have discovered, enjoyed and retained as friends, people of common interest and intent who accomplished much in the past three years, including a major effort to restore Curwood Castle and to bring to the forefront the activities of the OHC. The new and young members of OHC may have some of the same intent, and I have to say I was excited to share and work with them, however.....

I have described the current atmosphere of this OHC as poisonous, and as I have a strong self-preservation instinct, I no longer desire to expose myself to this poison. Please consider this my letter of disgust and official resignation from OHC.

Lorraine Weckwert