

# B Metro & State

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## Austin woman competes for spot on flight to Mars, B2



John Kelso

## Updike's things in need of home

MANCHACA — Paul Moran must be the only man on the planet selling shaved ice for a living who has an extensive collection of John Updike's stuff.

Moran has what he says are the two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist's brown leather moccasins from L.L. Bean, a piece of paper where Updike jotted down how much he spent on stamps, and Christmas cards sent to Updike from Sen. John McCain and presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush. He has Updike's address book, a cooler full of thousands of Updike's canceled checks, a wooden box presented to Updike with the presidential seal on it, a letter to Updike from singer and actress Doris Day, and a bunch more that you can view at [www.johnupdike-archive.com](http://www.johnupdike-archive.com).

"Here's his payment of \$1.34 for being in an episode of the Simpsons," Moran said. Updike's cartoon self appeared in a 2000 episode that featured Drew Barrymore as Krusty the Clown's daughter.

Moran even has Updike's watch. I couldn't make out the brand. What is it? "A cheap one, I think," Moran said. "He didn't wear Rolexes. He was a simple man."

So now you're wondering how a guy who runs his Maui Wowee shaved ice trailer on FM 1626 about a half mile west of the Manchaca fire station gets his hands on all this Updike memorabilia.

"All I can say is I've met Updike, but I've been advised to not say anything," Moran said. Moran, who is from Boston and moved here a year and a half ago, said that he was an acquaintance of Updike and that he met him more than 10 years ago as he leaving a concert at his Episcopal church in Beverly Farms, Mass.

"I'd be doing myself potential harm to say exactly, but it's all legally acquired and ethically acquired," Moran said. He adds that literary agent Andrew Wylie, aka the Jackal, has the rights to Updike's published materials and that Harvard University has Updike's archive.

Moran says the most controversial item in his collection are the notes on index cards that Updike wrote down for his yet-to-be-published novel about Saint Paul. Updike died in 2009. The book has been embargoed and won't come out until 2029, Moran said.

Moran says he's not trying to make money off his collection. He's trying to loan it to a

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## Kelso

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museum. On Monday, he sent out portfolios to the Smithsonian; museums in Dallas, Houston, Pittsburgh and Seattle; the museum of Modern Art in New York; and "a few art critics and media types."

Moran also contacted the Harry Ransom Center, the University of Texas archive, library and museum, and was told the center developed its exhibits out of its own collections.

"If I wanted to get paid, I'd put it on eBay or something," Moran said. He thinks the time is right for museums to show Updike's memorabilia. He says the public is tiring of abstract art and wants something more concrete. Like Updike's expense account form to The New Yorker for \$36 for staying at the Algonquin Hotel.

"The idea of the the relic or memorabilia seems to be taking more of a presence," Moran said.

Paul Moran's business background doesn't seem to fit an interest in the great American writer who gave us "Rabbit, Run," a novel about Harry Angstrom, the former high school basketball star who had a job

demonstrating a kitchen gadget called the MagiPeeler and ran away from his wife after she accidentally drowned their baby in the bathtub.

Moran has a bachelor's degree in English and a master's in special needs education. He ran a shaved ice place called Dunkers in an amusement park in Salem, Mass.

The store was called that because it had a clown in a dunking booth who would trash talk people as they came by. After being insulted, you'd pay to try to hit the

target with a ball to soak the clown.

"Once we had a Hells Angel walk into our store who was insulted," Moran recalled. "He picked up the ball handler and threw him across the room. He picked the guy up and threw him on his ass and he landed on a steel floor." That sounds more like a Charles Bukowski story than something from Updike, right?

"Basically, I try to find jobs where I don't have to answer to people," said Moran, who used to run a cart in a mall selling Batman souvenirs.

But these days, Moran has turned his attention to trying to share his thousands of slides of Updike's photographs, invitations to Updike from the White House and Updike's golf scorecard from the Myopia Hunt Club, with the world.

Which reminds me: did Updike like shaved ice?

"Oh I dunno. We didn't get that close," Moran said.

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