

Shall I Move to Kepler?

By Dennis Payton Knight

Dear Board President:

I have just now received your correspondence via the Intergalactic Network and feel compelled to respond immediately, noting it has already been five hundred light years since you dispatched it. Of course, your years are about a third of Earth's, so I may be low. Is it closer to fifteen hundred for you? Then I guess you will have waited three thousand years for my answer. But what's a lousy three millennia? Except my beard will be longer.

I am honored by the offer to start a writers group at your seniors' community on planet Kepler-186f. I am impressed with the scenic photos you provided, but, before I commit, I feel compelled to put forward some questions about everyday living there.

Do you have barbecue on Kepler? Carolina or Memphis style? Pizza? Is it thick or thin? Are there reliable sources of sausage, pepperoni and mushrooms? Anchovies?

What do you have in the way of crunchy, fruity, or nutty breakfast cereals? What do you pour on it there? Milk? Gravy? Is there toast? Or toasters? Pop tarts? Is your bacon thin or thick? Maple syrup? Is your butter salted? What about eggs? Do they come from chickens, or what? If I ordered a Denver omelet would I get ham and peppers in a pancake?

Is there a good place to get Chinese? Do you eat it in or take it out? Does your gravity support or hinder the use of chopsticks? I do dislike chasing General Tso morsels around my table.

Do you have French fries? I suppose not, unless you happen to have a France. Do you have fast food establishments on street corners? Do you even have corners on your streets? Do you even need streets?

Is there a Kepler Football League which I can follow that will serve as a proxy for my bottled-up competitive rage? Are the players armored like Sherman tanks with helmets and shoulder pads? Is there plenty of head butting? Or has it been spoiled by sissy rules like a concussion protocol?

What is the speed limit there? Do the police give you a little buffer? Do your stop signs mean stop, period, or just slow down and glance around a bit? What colors are in your traffic lights? Do you speed off on ruby red or royal blue? Is there something nice in fuchsia for grandma?

From a writer's perspective, do you have spell-checkers in your word processors on Kepler? Are they programmed to be tyrannical, or do they encourage creyaytive spelling? Likewise, what do your editors think about adverbs and adjectives? Are their markups made lightly in pencil, or atrociously in indelible ink?

I hope my questions don't portray lack of interest, or worries about what I might leave behind. Please rest assured I am seriously considering your offer, and look forward to hearing more about what I might expect on the lovely Kepler.

P.S. How's the ketchup over there?

