

EAGLEBUCK\$: MORE THAN JUST MONOPOLY MONEY?

Joe Grimme

Do not cross "Go," do not collect \$200—because once it's on your card, it's hard to get back. Every university has their own version of this program: Terrapin Express at the University of Maryland, Colonial Cash at George Washington University, CampusAccess at Indiana University; ours is called Eaglebuck\$.

Being able to go either on campus or off and use a "credit card" is a nice function, especially when you might be caught without other forms of payment—like cash, which no one carries anymore anyway. Eaglebuck\$ is quicker than a credit card because you don't have to sign for it, and every place on campus takes it. But what about off campus?

You might not expect a university to reach outside the main campus (especially considering how unlike a normal "college town" D.C. is), but the Eaglebuck\$ program has a pretty far reach. At Angelico's—if you are

of age—you can use them to get a beer with your dinner. At CVS you can get a prescription, and you can go to SuperCuts for a style. So what's the problem?

As a grad student, it is disconcerting to know there are limitations on a program like this. If it is marketed as a declining balance card, like a debit card, there shouldn't be a limitation, should there? While at CVS, I noticed they sell gift cards to other stores and even Visa, MasterCard and Discover gift cards. What a nice way to turn your Eaglebuck\$ into "real money," right? Wrong. The manager at CVS said they would take Eaglebuck\$ for anything else in the store but would only accept cash or credit cards for the gift cards.

This is one reason that I have not taken part of the program. If I put money on the card and then had an emergency where I needed it back, it wouldn't matter. There are no refunds for the money on the cards and no exceptions. If the cards are supposed to be treated as a debit card, then the money on them should either be good for anything or able to be withdrawn if I needed.

Over the past year, many of the copiers and even the music library have moved to accepting only Eaglebuck\$ for copying. Not only does this hinder the ability of students who need to make copies, it also hinders the ability of workers to help customers. These locations do not have ATMs, but they do have machines to add money to ID cards. With a steady decline in the usage of paper money, that doesn't help solve the issue.

The Eaglebuck\$ program is impressive considering the number and variance of stores which take the campus card for nearly any purchase. However, it really does appear to be geared toward the undergraduate population as opposed to the campus at large, and even more specifically to those who stay on campus for a majority of the time. If you are not in that category use the card sparingly, because once your money is on it, you cannot get it back. •



Money 101: YOU DON'T HAVE IT and DON'T REALLY KNOW HOW TO USE IT

Shannon Schenck

BEING RESPONSIBLE with personal finances means a lot more than clipping coupons. It requires a combination of preparedness and realism that can elude even the most well-organized person. The fact of the matter is that college does not really prepare us for the real world; after four years of being able to rely on parents, tuition and loans, the transition from student to full-on adult seems impossible. As someone who has already graduated undergraduate studies and entered the real world work force, I have experienced firsthand the highs—and very low lows—of figuring out finances in the real world and am here to offer a few tips to help you gain your footing.

- 1 Start Early**
Don't wait until after graduation to prepare for financial independence. Make sure to get your finances in order before you "need" to.
- 2 Know Your Income!**
Whether you were lucky enough to get a job after graduation or you're still sponsored by the Bank of Mom and Dad, make sure you know how much you get paid and when. TRICK: If you have a bi-weekly or non-traditional pay roll system, see if your employer has a payroll schedule.

- 3 Understand Your Financial Obligations**
What bills do you have? If you're mom has always paid your phone bill and that responsibility is now transferring to you, make sure you know so you don't find your phone unexpectedly shut off if you forget.
- 4 Plan For Your Financial Obligations**
Figure out which bills will be due during the period between paychecks and plan to pay them on time. TRICK: If you get paid bi-weekly on Friday the 2nd and have a credit card bill due Wednesday the 14th, see if you can pay that bill off as soon as you get paid. That way, you don't realize you forgot one of your bills and already spent the money.

THE LOST LINK TO HUMANITY'S PAST

Patrick MacMahon

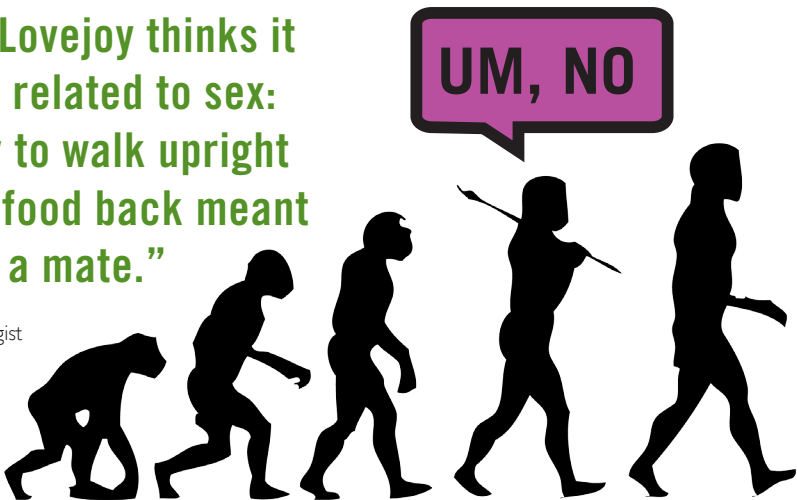
Ardipithecus ramidus, a newly-discovered fossilized species which is quite possibly the forerunner of *Homo sapiens*, has shed new light on humanity's beginnings. While the theory of evolution as proposed by Charles Darwin suggested humans evolved from chimpanzees, this may in fact be false. *Ardipithecus ramidus*, or Ardi, is a bipedal hominid, which means she walked on two legs rather than on all fours long before knuckle-walking chimps had evolved. What this will mean for science is still being determined, but it is safe to say this discovery changes the outlook on human evolution and raises new questions. Rather than evolving from chimps, it is evidently more likely humans evolved from a common ancestor with chimps but diverged on the evolutionary tree.

The most interesting realization to come out of this discovery started in the late 1980s. Tim White, a notable anthropologist at UC-Berkeley, hypothesized on his expedition to Ethiopia that walking upright may be the defining

characteristic which led to humans evolving larger, more complex brains. The basic concept is when Ardi began to walk upright, males could gather food and bring it back in their arms, thus freeing up more time for females to nurture their young. Just as agriculture and division of labor allowed us to develop more complex societies, the division of labor in prehistoric times allowed hominids to develop more complex minds.

This hypothesis is disputed by Dr. Maeve Leaky, the paleontologist who is known for his discovery of early human fossils in Tanzania. She claims the current theories have no substantial proof behind them, but at this point scientists are able to put forth their best guesses as to why humans came to walk upright.

“Dr. Owen Lovejoy thinks it is directly related to sex: The ability to walk upright and bring food back meant males got a mate.”



- 5 Keep Careful Records**
Write yourself a budget including the day you get paid, how much you reasonably anticipate making (after taxes!), what bills are due and when and how much total income you need to meet those obligations. If you use checks, make sure to balance your check book. TRICK: Keep a check register to monitor your debit card spending so you know how much you have available and don't put yourself in the red.
- 6 Make Room For the Variables**
You are young. You are human. You have a life—or at least, you want to. If your income is \$800 and you need \$700 to pay your rent and bills, carefully monitor your spending on things like food, movies and shopping. Remember that you will spend money on things other than the grocery budget and rent check you plan for. TRICK: Include Metro fare in your regular bills and not as a social expenditure, so you're never stranded with an empty wallet and SmarTrip!
- 7 Be Realistic**
Yes, you will want to have a life. But if you know after bills you have \$50 for two weeks, don't plan three movies and four dinner dates in the same week.
- 8 Be Careful With Credit.**
If you do not have a credit card, it is important you get one while you are young—not only to start building credit for the looming future of car financing and mortgages, but also to give you time to understand and practice using credit before you need it. If you use your credit card for purchases, be responsible; ask yourself not only

“Do I need this right now?” but “Can I realistically pay this off?” TRICK: Use credit cards for infrequent, major purchases such as plane tickets that you might not be able make out of pocket from your paycheck and can pay off in a reasonable amount of time.

- 9 Be Honest About Your Situation.**
Finances are hard when you first set off on your own, and with the current economic situation we have even more obstacles to overcome entering the real world. Be honest with the people you owe money to, whether it's a landlord or a credit company. Once, when switching jobs, I had an extra week between paychecks I wasn't expecting as I adjusted to my new pay period. Since my credit card bill was due that week, I called them, explained the situation and asked if I could get an extra week on the bill. They were incredibly understanding and just gave me a pass on that month—and congratulated me on my new job!
- 10 Think For The Future.**
Yes, you're broke. You're starting off and you don't have much income to begin with. It's still a great time to plan for the future. If your company offers a retirement plan or affordable life insurance, take it while you can.

Embracing financial independence can seem daunting and impossible, but all you need to do is be prepared, realistic and responsible. Obviously, you'll slip here and there, which is okay—the road to adulthood is paved with opportunities for growth and lessons learned the hard way. •