

As seen in



Money

March 31, 2003

NO. 1 IN THE USA



'A Car, Some Cash' tells college grads how it's done

By Carol Knopes
Special for USA TODAY

At this moment, some members of the college class of 2003 are deciding which jobs to take and where to live and working through the last term of school in tranquility.

Then there are the other 99%.

Most college seniors are trying desperately to not think about what comes next: the big belly-flop into REAL LIFE. And, speaking from experience, 99% of their parents are biting their tongues trying to find a non-verbal but effective way to get their near-graduates off their dime.

Enter Rebecca Knight with her almost platitude-free guide for the Class of 2003 (and their parents), *A Car, Some Cash and a Place to Crash*.

This 1998 graduate of Wesleyan University turned her and her friends' ordeals of post-college life into a roadmap for the newly graduated. She also turned to experts for advice. The result is a super book for 22-year-olds with tips on how to get those monumental firsts out of the way --

first job, first apartment, first car, even first 401(k).

It starts with the job interview, including good advice on how to learn from the interview, even if the job gets away, and smart questions to ask the interviewer.

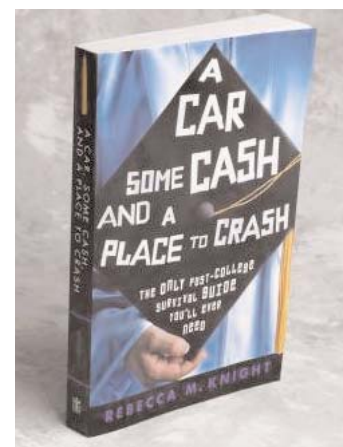
Maybe the best job advice of all: Few people are crazy about their first jobs. Have a positive attitude and know when to move on to something better.

The strongest section is how to handle money. It offers clear, simple definitions and guidelines for financial newbies. Should they get into mutual funds? (Yes, no-loads only.) Bonds? (No, they're young, so they can afford more risk.) There are how-tos, including avoiding pitfalls of credit cards and how to build automatic savings.

In the last pages of the book, author Knight couldn't resist a few commencement-speech platitudes, such as "take risks" and "quit comparing yourself to others." But at least she didn't say "to your own self be true" or "wear sunscreen."

A sentimental favorite is the chapter of advice that's almost motherly. Things like getting a big-time health checkup before going off your parent's health insurance, eating right ("There is more to life than surviving on Ramen noodles and Dr Pepper") and keeping a little money in your pocket in case a mugger gets your wallet.

Common sense all. But what 21- or 22-year-old wants to hear it from Mom and Dad? Give this to your 2003 graduate, and you won't have to say a word.



As seen in Experience TODAY



'A Car, Some Cash' tells college grads how it's done, 4B

APPLICATIONS: *synthesis, careers, interviewing, personal finance*

DISCUSSION: What are 99% of college seniors doing right now? On what topic are their parents fixated? What does author Rebecca M. Knight have to say about first jobs? What financial advice does Knight provide for recent grads? How well do you accept advice from your parents? Why is this?

ACTIVITY: Interview five adults about their first jobs. Ask your subjects to describe their responsibilities, how they were treated, when and why they left the job, how well they liked the position, what they learned from it, whether the salary was adequate, etc. After, adopt the role of career counselor and write a brief essay entitled, "What To Expect From Your First Job." In your opinion, what is the best piece of advice in your essay?

NATIONAL STANDARDS

WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS ACHIEVEMENT STANDARD: Relate the importance of workplace expectations to career development. (National Business Education Association)

CAREER ACHIEVEMENT STRATEGY STANDARD: Apply knowledge gained from individual assessment to a comprehensive set of goals and an individual career plan. (National Business Education Association)

NL-ENG.K-12.5 COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes. (NCTE)

The New Color of Money Challenge

The USA TODAY Charitable Foundation supports the Federal Reserve System and Department of Treasury's campaign to raise awareness of the newly redesigned \$20 note and U.S. currency among students, teachers and parents.



Q: Each note has a thickness of 0.0043 inches. If 37 million new notes were produced today, how tall would these bills be if stacked on top of each other?

For more information about The New Color of Money and available materials and resources:

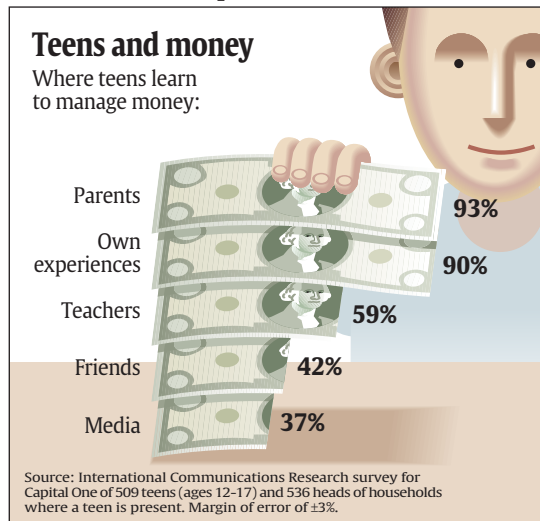
■ www.moneyfactory.com/newmoney ■ www.FederalReserveEducation.org ■ www.usatodayfoundation.org

A: The stack would be 159,000 inches tall, 13,258.3 feet tall or about 2.5 miles high.

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Money Matters

USA TODAY Snapshots®



APPLICATIONS: *education, personal finance, self reflection, responsibility*

How do parents teach their children about money matters? What are the most important financial lessons that you have learned from your parents? What personal experiences have taught you how to manage money? In financial matters, do you think people learn more from their mistakes or their accomplishments? Explain.

Every adult needs to know how to balance a

checkbook, fill out tax returns, research loans, create a budget and establish a retirement account. In your opinion, who should be responsible for teaching young people these vital skills? Should personal finance be added to the core curriculum that all students are required to take? How well does your school prepare teens for their financial futures?

CURRENCY CONNECTION: Do you think teens will save or spend the first newly redesigned \$20 bill they receive?

COMPLIMENTARY EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

On October 9, 2003, the United States government will be issuing currency with new designs and security features beginning with the \$20 note. The new \$20 design retains three of the most important, easy-to-check security features that were first introduced in the 1990s: a watermark, security thread and color-shifting ink.

As part of a national campaign to raise awareness about the newly redesigned currency, the U.S. government is making educational materials available to teachers. These materials, correlated to national educational standards, aim to teach students about our nation's currency. The program, part of a broader initiative supported by education, civic and volunteer organizations, includes a range of interactive educational activities:

► **Interactive CD-ROM** – Educational activities related to the history, security features and production process of the newly redesigned currency.

► **Classroom Activity Poster** – Information on the newly redesigned currency and activities that drive students to the web and interactive CD-ROM.

► **USA TODAY Educational Lessons** – Daily and weekly activities challenging students on current events related to financial literacy and the newly redesigned currency.

► **Currency Puzzle Challenge** – Students are to find pieces in three issues of USA TODAY, assemble them, and complete the related activities.

All of these educational materials are available free to teachers online at www.moneyfactory.com/newmoney and www.usatodayfoundation.org. For more information, email: education@usatoday.com or contact Katie Mee at 202-530-4518.