

# Geithner on the defensive

BY DAVID CHO

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — When Timothy Geithner emerged as the leading candidate for Treasury secretary in late 2008, he privately urged President-elect Barack Obama to think twice about hiring him. As a key architect of the government's bailout of Wall Street, he reminded Obama that he would carry that history into the new job.

The warning proved prescient yesterday as House lawmakers vented public anger over Wall Street's return to prosperity while unemployment stands at 10 percent.

Geithner was pummeled by Democrats and Republicans alike at a hearing before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform over his role in the \$180 billion bailout of insurance giant American International Group Inc.

"In effect, the taxpayers were propping up the hollow shells of AIG by stuffing it with money. And the rest of Wall Street came by and looted the corpse," committee chairman Edolphus Towns (D-Brooklyn) told Geithner.

Geithner, one of the original architects of the government's 2008 response to the financial crisis as president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, defended the use of taxpayer money as necessary to head off "potentially catastrophic damage to the economy."

Lawmakers are concerned with revelations about efforts to keep details of the AIG deals secret. Though Geithner said he "played no role in those decisions," lawmakers expressed skepticism.

"Many people, including people of this committee, have a hard time believing Secretary Geithner entered into an absolute cone of silence," California Rep. Darrell Issa, the committee's top Republican, said.

Geithner and Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke have found themselves on the defensive, both targets of political discontent and rising voter anger over bailouts and bonuses.

With AP



Lisa Marino of Farmingville plans to use her bonus and tax return to pay down credit card bills.

PHOTO BY MAHALA GAYLORD

## Make plan to pay off debts from holidays

BY PATRICIA KITCHEN

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Opening holiday presents is delightful. Opening the bills that are rolling in this month is anything but.

Instead of stashing those bills in a drawer, come up with a strategy for paying that new debt down quickly. "People feel better when they have a plan of attack," said Sarah Fouquart, group manager in the Jericho office of GreenPath Debt Solutions, a nonprofit credit counseling service.

Here are ways to address those bills and set the stage for a less stressful January 2011:

- Do a damage analysis report for your credit cards, listing how much you charged in holiday expenses on each card, the amounts you already owed, how much you're already paying per month per card, and the interest rates, said Catherine Williams, vice president for financial literacy in the Chicago office of Money Management International, a nonprofit credit counseling program.

- Then total up your holiday spending. Calculate how much extra you can squeeze out of your budget each month to put toward that total, and based on that, determine how many months it will take for you to wipe out the holiday portion of your debt, this as you make regular payments on the already exist-

ing balances. Ouch. This does sound painful, but without setting up and sticking to a time frame, "you just keep dragging around debt of Christmas past," said Williams.

- Still, unless you have a healthy emergency fund, you don't want to throw all your money at the debt. Lisa Marino of Farmingville wipes out her holiday bills each year with bonus money and her tax return. "Then I vow to remain free of credit card debt forever," said Marino, 49, a project manager with a health insurance company. But, inevitably, some unanticipated expenditure comes up — say, new tires — and the cycle continues. She's expecting to break that cycle of spending, though, as last summer she set up an emergency fund for such surprises, to which she's been contributing \$50 every other week.

- You'll also want to start another kitty — this to sock away a small sum each month to cover the holiday bills that will inevitably come in next January, said Fouquart.

- Those already saddled with debt who find holiday bills pushing them close to the edge can get free or low-cost help at credit counseling agencies. See the National Foundation for Credit Counseling — nfcc.org — and the Association of Independent Consumer Credit Counseling Agencies — aiccca.org.

### HOLIDAY SHOPPERS 2009

How many charged all or some gifts

**47%**

How much they charged on average

**\$816**

How much they intended to charge on average

**\$636**

When they expect to pay off holiday debt

**66%**

by end of this month

**14%**

end of February

**19%**

end of March or later

SOURCE: CONSUMER REPORTS POLL WITH 1,023 RESPONDENTS JAN. 7-10

MORE STOCKS ONLINE  
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### LOCAL STOCKS SPOTLIGHT

COMPANY	CLOSE	CHG.	CHG%	YTD CHG%	P/E
AcetoCorp	5.39	...	...	+4.70	27
AMdAlt	6.00	-0.03	-5.50	-9.50	26
ArborRT	2.05	-0.12	-5.50	+3.00	...
ArrowEl	27.64	+0.09	+3.0	-6.70	28
AstoriaF	13.50	+0.40	+3.10	+8.60	17
Audvox	6.85	+0.24	+3.60	-3.40	...
BRT	4.63	-0.02	-4.40	-9.20	...
BovieMed	6.71	-0.04	-6.0	-14.10	...
BridgeBcp	24.07	+0.42	+1.80	+1.0	17
BroadrdgF	22.08	+0.15	+7.0	-2.10	15
CA Inc	22.70	+0.03	+1.0	+1.10	17
CPI Aero	6.16	+0.01	+2.0	+2.50	12
CVD Eqp	4.40	+0.19	+4.40	+6.00	44
CablvsnNY	25.68	-0.41	-1.60	-5.0	...
CedarSh	7.36	+0.07	+1.00	+8.20	43
Chyron	2.20	+0.03	+1.40	+5.80	...
Comforce	1.23	...	...	+8.0	12
Comtech	36.49	+0.39	+1.10	+4.10	28
DealrTrk	18.38	+0.38	+2.10	-2.20	...
FalconStor	3.41	+0.18	+5.60	-16.00	...
Fst LI	24.52	+0.14	+6.0	-2.90	13
FlushFn	12.54	+0.52	+4.30	+11.40	11
Fonar	1.57	-0.13	-7.60	...	10
FreqElec	4.84	-0.32	-6.20	-5.80	...
Gentiva h	26.31	+0.32	+1.20	-2.60	13
GettyRlty	22.99	+0.50	+2.20	-2.30	13
Globeco	7.17	+0.22	+3.20	-8.30	38
Griffon	12.09	-0.02	-2.0	-1.10	32
HainCel	16.39	+0.34	+2.10	-3.60	...
HaugpDig h	.80	+0.00	+1.0	-6.90	...
HSchein	53.92	-0.61	-1.10	+2.50	17
HiTchPhm	23.07	-0.32	-1.40	-17.80	12
JennConv	1.09	+0.00	+4.0	-18.70	...
JetBlue	5.55	+0.06	+1.10	+1.80	...
KSW Inc	4.09	+0.14	+3.50	+11.70	15
Kimco	12.83	-0.01	-1.0	-5.20	...
Lakelnd	8.45	+0.01	+2.0	+3.40	70
LifetimeBr	8.25	+0.29	+3.60	+15.40	...
MSC Ind	44.61	+0.73	+1.70	-5.10	25
MedicActn	13.92	...	...	-13.20	23
Misonix	2.28	-0.01	-4.0	+20.00	13
NBTY	43.23	+0.52	+1.20	-7.0	18
Napco	2.00	...	...	+19.80	...
Nathans	15.13	+0.03	+2.0	-9.0	16
NY CmtyB	14.93	-0.06	-4.0	+2.90	15
NuHoriz lf	4.35	+0.06	+1.40	+5.60	...
OSI Phrm	34.14	-0.04	-1.0	+9.90	5
OneLibrty	9.13	-0.43	-4.50	+4.00	14
1800Flowrs	2.19	+0.04	+1.90	-17.40	...
Orbit Intl	3.29	-0.01	-3.0	-14.50	...
P&F	2.54	...	...	-2.30	...
PC Grp h	.31	-0.02	-6.10	-3.40	...
PallCorp	35.66	-0.12	-1.30	-1.50	21
ParkEl	26.38	+0.45	+1.70	-4.60	30
SmthtnBcp	5.69	+0.29	+5.40	-4.40	6
StdMic	21.85	+0.27	+1.30	+5.10	...
StMotr	8.22	+0.30	+3.80	-3.50	17
StateBcp	7.46	+0.11	+1.50	+4.90	...
SMadden	40.89	-0.03	-1.0	-8.0	17
SuffolkBc	27.14	+0.74	+2.80	-8.60	12
Systemax	17.87	+0.35	+2.00	+13.70	16
TSR Inc	2.30	-0.16	-6.50	-4.0	29
Tii NtwkT	1.29	+0.01	+8.0	+3.20	...
UtdCap	23.45	+0.05	+2.0	-1.60	27
UGrdn	11.60	+0.14	+1.20	+1.00	15
VeecoInst	34.14	-0.11	-3.0	+3.30	...
Vicon	5.45	...	...	+3.40	13

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