

## IDEARC HAS ARRIVED!!

**T**here's no more waiting for the new name to be announced. VIS is now officially **Idearc Media** (pronounced EYE-dee-ark). By the way, where do they get these names? What does this mean for our bargaining agreement with VIS?

In a letter dated August 28, 2006 Verizon informed CWA "...that our relationship will continue unchanged." Further, in this same letter Verizon's Labor Relations Director stated: "The Union will continue to represent the same employees of the same VIS employers. The collective bargaining agreements will remain in place."

This letter contained a list of items, including pensions, health benefits, savings plans, etc., and how they will be treated at the time of the "spin-off". On October 18, 2006 representatives from the 3 CWA Districts and a representative from IBEW in New York met with the VIS Labor Relations Directors to review more closely the impact of this spin off on the unionized work force.



The big idea in media is here. And soon our Web site will be, too. [www.idearcmedia.com](http://www.idearcmedia.com). The Official Publisher of Verizon Direct Communications.

### Pension Plan Issues

One obvious concern for the Unions is the structure of the Pension Plans as we move into the new company. The Company's plan is to create two separate pension plans. One plan is for all management and non-represented employees and another one for all union-represented employees. The union plan will have three components: One for those employees covered under the current VIS Cash Balance Plan, one for those employees presently covered under the former NYNX Pension Plan and the third for those presently covered under the former Bell Atlantic Pension Plan. CWA Districts 1, 2 and 13 have asked for assistance from CWA's Research Dept. to insure that the transition to this new Pension Plan is handled appropriately and fairly.

### 2007 Benefits Enrollment

This year's open enrollment will be the same as in previous years. Idearc is using Verizon's administrator, Hewitt, for its enrollment process this year. That may change for the 2008 enrollment cycle. In the meantime, please note that some of the HMO's are frozen to new enrollment for plan year 2007. This is happening throughout Verizon. Also, make sure you review all options from which you are entitled to make a selection.

### ULP Filed Over Disparate Car Allowance

CWA District 13 filed an Unfair Labor Practice charge against VIS after being notified that employees in the non-union sales offices, including those in the immediate geographic area such as Baltimore and Charleston, West Virginia, would be offered a flat rate, taxable automobile allowance in the amount of \$800 per month. This allowance is significantly more than the \$550 VIS offered to the unionized work force. The Union is attempting to have VIS offer the higher allowance to its unionized sales force. We will keep you posted.

*FOR MORE INFORMATION CONCERNING NET CREDITED SERVICE  
WITH IDEARC SEE THE TABLE ON PAGE 6*

## From The President's Desk

I'm sitting here just a couple of days before the hurry up holiday season, getting ready to make good on that uniquely American tradition. You know the one I mean ... where you join together with family and friends ... sit around a table full of food ... and eat until you just about can't get up from the dinner table. That's it, Thanksgiving!

Where in the world does the time go! I must be getting old because the years are speeding up on me.

As I've contemplated what to write this month, I've decided to move away from the traditional union issue or labor topic. Not that there aren't plenty to choose from, what with FTTP, FIOS, EISP's (you know, all the good acronyms) going on. No, I've decided to write about the holidays.

Now for the three of you who may actually read this column on any kind of a regular basis, like say once every three months or so, you might be saying to yourself, "How is the holiday season a union or labor topic?" I'm glad you asked. The simple truth of the matter is – It isn't. That is, not unless you consider old Ebenezer Scrooge to be among the first robber barons or sweatshop owners. Or, if you consider that prior to the rise of organized labor, there was no such thing as paid holidays.

No, this article is about the simple act of slowing down enough to appreciate what the holidays are supposed to represent.

Now for me, having grown up in the teachings of the Christian faith, we celebrate Christmas at our house. The Christmas holiday, as is well known, is the celebration of the birth of Jesus. For Christians, this is the miracle of God



sending his son to become man. The teachings of Jesus include one of the greatest commandments: Love one another as I have loved you.

Along with Christmas this same time of the year, we celebrate the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah. In the Talmudic tradition, this is the celebration of how one-day worth of oil burned for eight days in the re-consecrated Temple in Jerusalem. Celebrated over the course of eight days the tradition includes sharing special meals, the giving of gifts and most importantly, spending time with family.

Although it doesn't usually coincide with the traditional holiday seasons of Christmas and Hanukkah, the Islamic religion celebrates Ramadan. Ramadan is a celebration in which Muslims all over the world devote themselves to inner reflection, meditation, and fasting. Fasting creates a feeling of hunger, which in turn creates a feeling of compassion and understanding for those less fortunate than themselves. At the end of Ramadan, a holiday called Eid ul Fitr is celebrated. The celebration lasts three days; it is a very happy time, similar to Christmas, where followers share special times with family and friends and give to charity.

Each of these celebrations in some measure involve family, reflection and giving to others.

I'll be the first to admit that very often I get caught up in the frenetic pace of life and forget what the season is celebrating. For me, this year seems particularly hectic with the many changes taking place at Verizon and the contract negotiations with Avaya. The days have come and gone and before I realized it, the year had passed.

So here is my wish to all three of you ;-), along with any others who may be reading this, take the time this holiday season to slow down, appreciate your family and friendships and in whatever way you are most comfortable, enjoy this holiday season.

Here's wishing a peaceful and happy holiday to you all.

*Les*

### Communications Workers of America

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# RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

By Dennis Strout, President RMC 2108

By the time you read this article the mid-term elections will have been over for a month. As expected, the Democrats have taken control of the House of Representatives and somewhat unexpectedly have taken over the Senate also. James Webbs' upset win over George Allen in Virginia gave the Democrats the seats they needed. This is all well and good if you are a supporter of the Democratic Party, however what was won can be lost in the next election.

The Democrats need to show the country they can, in fact, get some things accomplished. There are a lot of issues that they are pushing that they will need help from the Republicans on. Minimum Wage, Health Care and Stem Cell Research are some of the main ones. It remains to be seen whether or not they will be successful. I, for one, hope they are because if not, the next election may put the Republicans back in power and they are no friends of retirees and seniors. Time will tell.



**RMC 2108**

## RMC Elections

At our November meeting Kenny Roach conducted the nominations and election of the officers of the Chapter. All of the existing executive board was re-elected with no opposition. Thank you Kenny for stepping up to help out and thanks to the members for their support. I know I speak for all of the board members when I say we will try our best to make the next two years both as informative and entertaining as we can. We will also work to grow the Chapter. If we keep growing, our voice gets stronger. Thanks again for your support and confidence in us.

## Social Security Scam Alert

The Social Security Administration issued a warning on Tuesday November 7th about a new e-mail scam that has surfaced recently. The Agency has received several reports of an e-mail message being circulated with the subject "cost of living for 2007 update" and purporting to be from the SSA. The message provides information about the 3.3 percent benefit increase for 2007 and contains the following:

**"Note: We now need you to update your personal information. If this is not completed by Nov. 11, 2006 we will be forced to suspend your account indefinitely."**

The reader is then directed to a web site designed to look like Social Security's Internet website. Once directed to the phony website the individual is asked to register for a password and to confirm his/her identity by providing personal information such as the individuals Social Security number, bank account information and credit card information.

No one should ever give that information out over the computer or the telephone. If you received this message contact the SSA Office of Inspector General at **800.501.2101**. I received this information too late to give out at our November meeting. Hopefully no one was scammed.

## December Meeting

Our December 13th meeting promises to be a good one so all chapter members make a note to attend. We will have a very short business meeting and then a catered lunch and lots of socializing.

Come to the meeting and re-acquaint yourselves with old friends and old work acquaintances ( old being a relative term). It's a fun meeting so please plan to join us.

## Delegate Election Guidelines

Nominations will be held for at-large delegates to the CWA International Annual Convention at the January 10, 2007 membership meeting. In the event that the membership meeting is cancelled due to a snow emergency declaration in the county where the meeting is scheduled, nominations will be rescheduled for the next regularly scheduled membership meeting on February 14, 2007.

Candidates may submit a picture to the Local by December 15, 2006 to run in the January 2007 issue of the 2108News. Ballots will be mailed on January 26th, and counted on February 16, 2007. A declared snow emergency may delay ballot mailing and counting.

Candidates may have use of the Local's facilities for the purpose of mailing campaign literature to the membership beginning 30 days prior to nominations being scheduled. As membership list labels will no longer be printed, any candidate who wishes to mail campaign literature should furnish their envelopes or flyers to the Local. Within four business days the Local will print the names and addresses on the material. The Local will not furnish envelopes or postage. This and all other expenses are to be borne by the candidates.

The Local postage machine may not be used to affix postage to the envelopes. Arrangements for use of the Local facilities should be made with the Chair of the Election Committee, **Frank Walker**, who can be contacted through the Local office on **301.459.2108**. Use of the Local's facilities and campaigning may not be done on union-paid time.

# From FMLA to State of Unions, Local Officers and Chiefs Train for You

*By : Trish Lyle, Chief Steward, CWA Local 2108*

The officers and chief stewards of local 2108, along with several guests from CWA Local 2106, spent three days learning from the best in Ocean City, Maryland during our Veteran's Day holiday. We all enjoyed the sand, sun and beautiful weather that accompanied our trip, but more importantly, we eagerly soaked up the information our guest speakers presented. Our hope is to be more knowledgeable and better prepared to represent our members.

**Bill Sonnik**, CWA's Healthcare Benefits Coordinator, started us off with lots of important information and changes going on in ARC and MetLife. ARC recently changed the FMLA forms which are required to be filled out, in order for an absence due to sickness to be approved. We went through the forms line by line and asked Bill many questions so we can assist anyone who has problems. Bill emphasized over and over that if his assistance is needed by a member, it is crucial to contact him as soon as possible within the first 25 calendar days of an absence. If he is contacted after that time frame, chances are very slim that he can help overturn a denial. ARC has become more stringent in what is acceptable for an administrative review, so if you are having difficulty with this process, PLEASE contact Bill on (888) 571-7218 as soon as possible. The information learned from Bill will be used regularly by all who attended his presentation.



*CWA Healthcare Benefits Coordinator, Bill Sonnik shares a laugh with officers and chiefs.*

Professor of Labor Studies, **Jeffrey Keefe** of Rutgers University headed the next two days lecturing about the history and present state of unions in the United States and then more specifically, CWA. Membership in unions is at an all-time low and with the way Corporate America fights to keep unions out, our numbers are sure to decrease in the future unless we do something drastic about it. Organizing is the only answer and members like us are the ones who have to lead the battle if we are to remain.



*Professor of Labor Studies, Rutgers University, Jeffrey Keefe, a former member of CWA Local 2108.*

Mr. Keefe showed us in detail the difference in pay and benefits, among other things, between current union service representatives and technicians versus nonunion jobs with the same titles and job duties. The difference is astounding. The next time I hear someone ask "What has the union done for me?", I'll be sure to share this information. Professor Keefe also taught us more effective ways to negotiate with the company in grievances. Hopefully those lessons learned will enable us to get through to management when a member has been wronged.

The funniest, yet most valuable lessons I learned from Professor Keefe were the role playing grievances we had. Our officers portrayed Verizon management and went head to head with our chief stewards, acting out real grievances. Some of the lines management continually use in trying to shut us down came out of the mouths of our officers. We tried our best and learned what we could have or should have done to be more effective.

The officers and chief stewards shared many laughs and had a great time in Ocean City but we all took away lessons that will hopefully enable us to better represent our members.



## CWA Local 2108 Members

### Welcome New Members

Barbara Oliver  
Wynsdi Custis

Carl Brogden  
Samuel McGruder  
Atrelle Thomas

Richard Johnson  
Oscar Saucedo  
Francis Orina  
Dietrick Dyer

### Transferred Members

Lorraine Williams  
Valentina Gensicki  
Shawn Mach

Matt Klingman  
Chris Reading  
John Boice, IV  
John Mozynski  
Samuel Tayman  
Robert Fiedler  
Bradley Krolczyk  
Timothy Smith  
James Bricker  
Frankie Greever  
P. Keith Jester  
Paul Nims

Amory Proctor  
Chris Gadway

Richard Johnson  
Daryll Lawrence  
Taivonia Jennings

Marlena Duckett  
Elsie Range

## *Personals*

*We wish to extend sincere sympathy to the family and friends of:*

Mary Ware, mother of retired member Mary Callen who died on October 2, 2006.

William Prue, Sr., father of William Prue who died on October 12, 2006.

Irene McDowell, grandmother of Antoine Pritchette who died on October 13, 2006.

Joseph M. Mills, retired member and father of retired member Joseph R. Mills who died on October 22, 2006.

Grace Frazier, wife of retired member Lee Frazier who died on October 23, 2006.

Rose Johnson, mother of retired member Mike Johnson who died on November 7, 2006

Kelly Nick, an active member who died on November 17, 2006.

### Congratulations to:

Valencia and Lonnie Williams on the birth of their son, Chancellor A. Williams on August 21, 2006.

### Thanks you's

Thanks to Rosemarie Hechinger, owner of the "[Fractured Prune](#)" at 15428 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring, MD for donating donuts for the November Blood Drive at the Chesapeake Complex.

### And...

To Joe and Tony at [Pizza Bolis](#) (Burtonsville) for donating pizzas at the November Blood Drive at the Chesapeake Complex.

Local #1108 Members and their Guest are invited to attend a  
**HOLIDAY GALA**  
Friday, December 8, 2006  
5:00pm to 11:00pm

Local #1108 Basement Meeting Room  
4301 Garden City Drive  
Landover, Maryland

Donations of \$3.00 or more will be collected  
for the Community Services Agency

Hors D'oeuvres \* DJ \* Drinks

Note: No Smoking Allowed in the Building

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CWA LOCAL #1108  
presents  
**BREAKFAST WITH SANTA**  
For Members of Local #1108 and their Children  
and GrandChildren (Ages 12 and Under)

Saturday, December 9, 2006 from 9am to 12:00pm

Local #1108 Basement Meeting Room  
4301 Garden City Drive Landover, Maryland

Pancakes, Sausage, Juice and Milk will be served and  
a photo of your child with Santa will be provided.

DON'T FORGET... 20% AFTER PARTY  
AT THE HOLIDAY GALA IS COLLECTED FROM  
AFTER THE UNION PARTY.  
TICKETS - BILLED  
(AND TICKETS AT THE DOOR)  
CALLED (202) 496-8880 FOR MORE  
INFO TO GET YOUR TICKETS!



## Coping with Holiday Stress

'Tis the season to be jolly—and stressed out! For many, increased demands and expectations during the holidays can be overwhelming. Filling many homes this time of year is the tension, conflict and disappointment of the holiday season, rather than being a time of joy and celebration.

Several factors contribute to the onset of anxiety, depression and excessive indulgence at this time of year. Most of us begin establishing expectations for the holidays during childhood. What was once a magical and exciting time of year can turn into a dreaded annual chore if we carry unrealistic childlike expectations into adulthood. We may feel responsible for creating the perfect holiday season for our loved ones only to feel guilty or inadequate when we do not succeed.

Commercialism and media hype place pressure on us to over-consume which only burdens us with consumer debt, additional weight and emotional fatigue—all which we must try to rid ourselves of after the holidays.

It is often difficult enough to meet the challenges of our daily responsibilities, let alone cope with the extra demands of time, energy and money associated with the holidays.

Can we avoid these all-too-common holiday traps? Yes! There are ways to manage these seasonal stressors without canceling the holiday season altogether! Here are a few suggestions:

**Be realistic.** Few of us have ideal families, unlimited resources or perfect lives. Stop putting pressure on yourself to magically create a perfect scenario during the holidays.

**Take care of yourself.** Don't overextend yourself to the point that a pleasure turns into a burden. Set limits in terms of your commitments so that you have time for rest, exercise, good nutrition and quality time with loved ones.

**Be independent.** Trying to compete with others because of the intense commercial hype surrounding

the holidays is one trap to avoid. Think for yourself. Make plans that feel right for you. Organize a group and go caroling at a local hospital or nursing home. Give gifts, eat, drink and socialize on your terms.

**Be creative.** Make your own traditions. Focus more on spirituality and interpersonal closeness rather than upon materialism and over-consumption.

One gift you can give yourself is the gift of physical and emotional health. This is not such an easy thing to do during this time of year. Remember: By taking care of yourself and planning the holiday you really want, you can make this holiday season one that you and your loved ones will enjoy and cherish. You may even find the true spirit of the season stays with you long after opening all the gifts.

In addition to the holidays, a variety of on-the-job situations induces stress for employees: Where does stress make its mark at work? Employees report it affects their performance relationships with co-workers, the quality of work they do and their relationships with supervision.

One thing employees are not doing that often is talking to their supervisor about their stress. Just 40 percent of employees whose stress interferes with work have talked to their employer about it.

Their reasons for not reporting it are as varied as you might imagine. That's where an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can be helpful.

Both Verizon and Avaya have Employee Assistance Programs, available to help us deal not only with stress, but with many other issues as well. EAP's are confidential, multifaceted counseling, education and referral programs designed to help with personal problems, particularly those that affect job performance.

To learn more or to initiate consultation Verizon employees may call 800-845-0632 or go online at [www.verizon.com/life](http://www.verizon.com/life). Avaya employees may call 877-804-9753 or go online at [www.MagellanHealth.com](http://www.MagellanHealth.com).

***From the Executive Board of Local 2108 here's wishing you and yours a stress-free, happy and healthy holiday!***



  
**Table for  
VIS/IDEARC  
Net Credited  
Service  
Handling  
(See Story from  
Page 1)**

SCENARIO	ASSETS TRANSFER TO VIS/IDEARC PLAN?	PRE-SPIN-OFF SERVICE CREDITED FOR VESTING?	PRE-SPIN-OFF SERVICE CREDITED FOR NCS?	PRE-SPIN-OFF SERVICE CREDITED FOR PENSION ACCRUAL?
1. VIS employee on spin-off date.	Yes, at spin-off from all Verizon plans holding accrued benefits for the employee.	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Former employee last employed by VIS prior to spin-off, no prior cash-out, is rehired by Idearc after spin-off.	Yes, at spin-off from all Verizon plans holding accrued benefits for the employee	Yes	Yes, subject to any bridging rules.	Yes, subject to any bridging rules.
3. Former employee last employed by VIS prior to spin-off, cashed-out, is rehired by Idearc after spin-off.	No	Yes	Yes, to the extent provided by the relevant plan.	Yes, to the extent provided by the relevant plan, subject to an offset for the cashed-out benefit
4. Verizon (non-VIS) employee on spin-off date, no prior VIS service, leaves Verizon with no cash-out, and is hired by Idearc after spin-off.	No	Yes	No	No
4A. Scenario 4 above with cash-out at Verizon termination.	No	Yes	No	No
5. Verizon (non-VIS) employee on spin-off date, prior VIS service, leaves Verizon with no cash-out, and is hired by Idearc after spin-off.	No	Yes	No	No
5A. Scenario 5 above with cash-out at Verizon termination.	No	Yes	No	No

Note: There will be no Idearc service credit for post-spin Verizon employment. Above scenarios assume situations where Mandatory Portability rules do not apply.

## CWA Files Executive Level Grievances

CWA District 2 has notified all CWA locals that an executive level grievance has been presented to Verizon over changes that they are making to the FMLA process as it relates to how employees are notified of their status concerning an incomplete FMLA form.

Currently, an employee has 25 days to submit documentation concerning a pending FMLA certification. Once that documentation has been received and it is found to be incomplete, the employee was given a grace period to get it corrected and resubmitted. Under the new guidelines, when an incomplete FMLA form is received before day 25 but is not processed until after day 25, the employee will be sent a letter

indicating that the FMLA form is incomplete and the leave request is denied. The employee will only have the opportunity to file for an administrative review, with a completed form, within the 14 day timeframe. So in essence, the employee only gets one chance to get the certification approved. The Union is demanding that Verizon cease and desist this practice and to provide complete "make whole" relief for any CWA members impacted as a result of this change.

CWA has also presented Verizon with an executive level grievance over the lifting of the overtime caps on September 14, 2006. As you may recall, Verizon cited a "long term service difficulty" as the reason for violating negotiated language on overtime administration, when in fact, they were just experiencing a high trouble load. CWA is requesting that Verizon cease lifting the overtime caps at will and to provide three additional days off with pay for every member in the entire Potomac Verizon bargaining unit that was impacted as a result of the company lifting the overtime caps.

## December 2006

- 2** Breakfast With Santa! 9am 'til Noon  
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 8** Presidents Meeting 9:00am  
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 8** Holiday Gala 5pm - 11pm  
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 13** Blood Drive  
Calverton Business Office, Beltsville, MD
- 13** Retired Member Club Meeting 11:00am  
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 13** General Membership Meeting 6:00pm  
at Local Office,  
Landover, MD
- 25** Merry Christmas!  
Union Office Closed  
Union Negotiated  
Holiday

## January 2007

- 1** Happy New Year!  
Union Office Closed  
Union Negotiated Holiday
- 3** Chief Steward Meeting 9:00am  
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 10** Retired Member Club Meeting 11:00am  
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 10** General Membership Meeting 6:00pm  
at American Legion, Wheaton, MD  
Delegate Nominations Tonight
- 26** Delegate Ballots Mailed today