

# Senior Lawyers Conference

by George W. Shanks, Chair



## Time Off for Good Behavior

THE PAST YEAR HAS GIVEN ME the pleasant opportunity to write on a variety of topics near and dear to my heart, to exhort my senior (and not-yet-senior) colleagues to public and professional service, and to rededicate ourselves to the ennobling ideals that place us at the epicenter of our culture.

Now, in my last column, it is time to speak of rewards well-earned. In a life consumed with resolving the problems of others, it is often difficult to let go, even for a moment, to truly relax, refresh, and reflect. To that end, I offer the following:

Over the years the Virginia State Bar has sponsored travel experiences that are incredible values and still meet the requirements of the most fastidious and demanding traveler. Since the millennium, the bar has chosen venues that include Cabo San Lucas, Mexico; Rome and Florence, Italy; Scottsdale, Arizona; Bermuda; Barcelona, Spain; and Sintra, Portugal. This year, Puerto Rico becomes the worthy successor in a list of superlatives. If you have never availed yourself of these trips, begin a new tradition. Contact Stephany Pishko at Tour Plan International, [stephanytrvl@msn.com](mailto:stephanytrvl@msn.com), or visit the VSB website at <http://www.vsb.org/site/events/item/35th-annual-midyear-legal-seminar/> for more information.

If less exotic but equally sunny climes meet your requirements, the VSB also convenes annually at Virginia Beach. This is also a great time to bring the family, including grandchildren, since the annual meeting always occurs after schools have recessed for the summer. Watch the VSB's website—<http://www.vsb.org>—early next year for details.

Other Virginia professional organizations are no less attentive to the relaxation needs of practicing attorneys. The Virginia Bar Association has for years taken up residence in the summer at The Homestead in Hot Springs and in the depths of winter before the fireside in Colonial Williamsburg. The VBA's superb educational programs are matched by the familiar, breathtaking, and luxurious surroundings in which they are presented. <http://www.vba.org/calendar.htm>

The Virginia Trial Lawyers Association annually takes its show on the road to the roots of our jurisprudential heritage. In 2004 and 2005, the VTLA sponsored weeklong seminars in Cambridge, England. In 2007, the experience moved to Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. This year the program was at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. Brochures are posted at <http://www.vtla.com/VA/>.

Senior lawyers have other delectable choices through the American Bar Association's Senior Lawyers Division. These offerings are always well-planned and well-appointed. A few of the 2008 trips include a cruise on the Baltic Sea, the Verona Opera Festival, Oktoberfest in Germany and the Czech Republic, a cruise to the Mexican Rivera, an Eastern Seaboard cruise on the Queen Mary 2, and (my personal favorite) a rail journey from Denver to San Francisco on the GrandLuxe Express (formerly the American Orient Express Railway). <http://www.abanet.org/srlawyers/>

For something less ambitious but no less thrilling, consider joining the ABA's Senior Lawyers Division in an

annual pilgrimage to the United States Supreme Court to sponsor applicants for admission before our highest court. The division provides the sponsorship and arranges tours, dinners, and transportation around Washington, D.C., culminating with your swearing-in before the justices. Although membership in the bar of the Supreme Court is hardly a necessity for the vast number of practitioners in the United States, it is a delightful and moving gift to yourself (or someone you esteem) and a bit of recognition for a professional life well-lived. Contact Angela Boykin at the ABA at [boykinaa@staff.abanet.org](mailto:boykinaa@staff.abanet.org) for more information.

It seems so benign to say that all you have to do to become a senior lawyer in Virginia is to reach the age of fifty-five. For most of us who have done that, thirty of those fifty-five years were filled with sixty-plus-hour work weeks, missed meals, sleepless nights, and the emotional roller coaster from elation to despair and back again. Whether your professional life is at either of those extremes or on the level near the station, recall the advice of those great philosophers, the Eagles: *Lighten up while you still can.*<sup>1</sup> Book one of these trips—soon. And take some time off. You've earned it!

1 *Take It Easy*, The Eagles (lyrics by Jackson Browne and Glenn Frey), (1972)