"In a very real sense, the world no longer has a choice between force and law. If civilization is to survive it must choose the rule of law."

"It is fitting that the American people should remember with pride and vigilantly guard the great heritage of liberty, justice and equality under law. It is our moral and civil obligation as free men and as Americans to preserve and strengthen that great heritage."

With those words in 1958, President Dwight D. Eisenhower proclaimed May 1 as Law Day. Shortly afterward, Congress issued a joint resolution and Law Day became law in 1961 (U.S. Code, Title 36, Section 113). Every president since has issued a Law Day proclamation asking Americans to celebrate our nation’s commitment to the rule of law on May 1.

In his proclamation, President Eisenhower went on: “I urge the people of the United States to observe the designated day with appropriate ceremonies and activities, and I especially urge the legal profession ... to promote and to participate in the observance of that date.”

Thank you, President Eisenhower, for setting aside a day for all of us who are striving to protect our freedom and liberty that we may celebrate with our local communities the importance of our judicial system. Thank you, American Bar Association, for pursuing and promoting Law Day activities to legal professionals across the United States.

Of course there are many ways to celebrate Law Day: luncheons, school visits, articles in local papers. Check out the broad range of ideas and related materials on the ABA website http://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_education/initiatives_awards/law_day_2012.html.

Recent Law Day events here in Virginia have included:

• The Madison-Greene counties Law Day focused on John Adams, a fierce defender of personal freedom, and explored the historical and contemporary role of lawyers in defending the rights of the accused. The program presented insights into our fundamental principles of the rule of law.
• The Virginia Beach Bar Association Law Day featured Clay Jenkinson, the gifted performer who takes on the persona of Thomas Jefferson, speaking about the legal foundations of our form of government.
• In Fairfax, an annual old fashioned Weiner Roast benefited the Fairfax Law Foundation.

This year, Weiner & Spivey PLC will host the 12th annual Old Fashioned Weiner Roast, 4:30–8:30 p.m., on Tuesday, May 1. I extend a personal invitation to every one of you to join us.

Highlights include the American Legion Honor Guard presenting colors, musical performances by the 20-piece George Mason University Jazz Ensemble, performers from the award-winning Boyle School of Irish Dance, and shoe shines. The party is outdoors and very casual. It’s a Weiner Roast, and that means five varieties of hot dogs and brats. No burgers ... no chicken ... just wiener. There is an old time feel to the whole event: root beer floats, popcorn, cotton candy, and olde tyme amusements.

The recipe is simple and fun!

Recipe for a Successful Community Party Celebrating Law Day
1. Parking lot
2. Tents
3. Hot dogs
4. Beer and root beer
5. Entertainment
6. A reading of the Proclamation of Law Day

For a more detailed plan of our Law Day Weiner Roast, please email our Law Day guru, Barbara Garcia at bgarcia@wsattorneys.net. A cookout works well, even if your name isn’t Weiner. The ideas are endless and the benefits are great.

Over the years, the Law Day Weiner Roast has raised more than $100,000 for the Fairfax Law Foundation, the charitable arm of the Fairfax Bar. The Law Foundation provides an array of educational and charitable services that benefit the Northern Virginia community. Programs include:

• Education for area youth about the adverse legal and medical effects of drug and alcohol abuse;
• Courthouse tours with education regarding the judicial system for 8th grade students in Fairfax County;
• The Pro Bono Program, providing legal services for Fairfax County residents who cannot afford legal representation;
• Programs for victims of domestic violence; and
• Support for the Fairfax Public Law Library.

Law Day celebrations of any type are golden opportunities to cultivate respect for the law in our communities and for the work to which we have committed ourselves — work vital to our democratic way of life. Law Day is a special day of celebration by the people of the United States in appreciation of our liberties, to reaffirm our loyalty to the U.S., and to re dedicate the ideals of equality and justice under law.

I hope that all bar leaders will attend our 12th annual Weiner Roast and take back ideas, interest, and enthusiasm to their own local bar for next year. Every local and specialty bar should make Law Day 2013 a fun and meaningful community event. See you on May 1.

The Old Fashioned Weiner Roast is an annual Law Day event in Fairfax. Last year’s participants included, from left, the Honorable George D. Varoutsos, chief judge of Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court in Arlington; the Honorable Gerald Bruce Lee of the Federal District Court, Alexandria; and the Honorable Stanley P. Klein, retired, Circuit Court, Fairfax.

For confidential toll-free consultation available to all Virginia attorneys on questions related to legal malpractice avoidance, claims repair, professional liability insurance issues, and law office management, call McLean lawyer, John J. Brandt, who acts under the auspices of the Virginia State Bar at 1-800-215-7854.

“Not in Good Standing” Search Available at VSB.org

The Virginia State Bar offers the ability to search active Virginia lawyers’ names to see if they are not eligible to practice because their licenses are suspended or revoked using the online Attorney Records Search at http://www.vsb.org/attorney/attSearch.asp.

The “Attorneys Not in Good Standing” search function was designed in conjunction with the VSB’s permanent bar cards.

Lawyers are put on not-in-good-standing (NGS) status for administrative reasons — such as not paying dues or fulfilling continuing legal education requirements — and when their licenses are suspended or revoked for violating professional rules.

The NGS search can be used by the public with other attorney records searches — “Disciplined Attorneys” and “Attorneys without Malpractice Insurance” — to check on the status and disciplinary history of a lawyer.