

A Mostly Unsolicited, and Most Definitely Unneeded, Short (Yea, Right!) Bio of Steve McCarthy, Illustrious(?) Graduate of Chatham High School, Class of 1963

1963-68 Spent doing the five-year plan at the University of Richmond, in Richmond, VA. The fifth year was in hopes of avoiding the Vietnam War. Best laid plans, etc...

1968 Got married, 1973 got divorced. Anything more is better left unsaid. Too many of our generation have been there.

1968-70 After ROTC in college, took the standard two-year sabbatical with the U.S. Army. Ft. Knox, KY, Ft. McClellan, AL the first year, Viet Nam the second year with the 1st Infantry Division, and the 2nd of the 34th Armor Battalion. In the 2nd of the 34th, half my platoon members were ex-street gang members. They had "fraggged" their previous platoon leader. They liked me and protected me. I'm not exactly sure what that says.

1970-72 Attended graduate school in psychology at the University of Richmond. Learned massive amounts of mostly smoke and mirrors.

1972-77 Worked as a Delinquency Prevention Specialist for the Virginia Department of Youth Services. Once I was single again in 1973, I prevented a lot of juvenile delinquents. Spent a couple of weeks in Russia, in the Winter! Brrrr! Bought my first house (in Richmond) and a dog. Both were good moves. Dated, a lot. Very good move. Raced my sports car, actually won occasionally, and didn't kill myself doing it, although not for lack of trying.

1977-80 Worked at other State of Virginia jobs (Corrections, Intergovernmental Affairs), bought my second house, continued dating around, and continued racing my car. Was I in a rut? Yes, but I hadn't yet figured out how to bring "World Peace." I had to do something in the meantime. So I went to Club Med.

1980-99 Worked for the Virginia Department of Planning and Budget (Governor's Budget Office) as an Analyst. 60+-hour weeks, high stress, large influence, but low (state) pay. What was wrong with this picture?

1982 Took up windsurfing and sailing, and quit racing my car. Seemed a lot safer, and a lot cooler in the hot Virginia Summers. Also, a lot more women were at the water than at the track.

1985 Met Dr. Andrea Miksa on an unwanted, and unneeded, (by either of us) blind date pushed on us by a mutual friend. I hadn't had a blind date in over 20 years. Fell in love, and in 1990, I married her. Go figure.

1990 Married Andy. She's a pulmonary-critical care doc, and works at Henrico Doctors' Hospital here in Richmond. She worked even worse hours than I did, averaging 80 hours

a week, with some weeks over 100 hours. Although we were no longer young, we tried for years to have children, but it seemed to no avail. We did, however, acquire two, very large, very hairy dogs which kept us company, and cleaning, and laughing, for the next fourteen years.

1990-2001 What do over-stressed DINKS do? Travel, save for dream house, etc. Got to see a lot of islands in the Caribbean (Cancun, St.Barts, St. Lucia, the Grenadines, St. Martin, Nevis, etc.), Paris, traveled around Italy, etc. We had a great time, but still no kids. Still hadn't solved that World Peace problem, either.

1996-98 We built our dream house. If you haven't already, don't ever do this. At times I think Viet Nam was better. We take a break in 1997 to attend Chatham's Great Reunion, and have a wonderful time. Andy wonders how a barbarian such as myself could have ever grown up among such nice people.

1998-99 We move into our new house. The agony of building it was worth it,... I think.

2000 Wow!, the State of Virginia offers full retirement benefits to employees over age 50 and with enough years of employment. This is a no-brainer. I retire to lead the life of Riley. Hey!, I can finally study archaeology! (or something). Then I discover the equivalent of a "honey-do" list of things that we have had to put off for years because of my wife's and my insane work schedules. Well, it will only take a couple of years....

2001 A banner year. I finally complete most of the "honey-do" list. We vacation in both the Outer Banks, NC, and St. Barts. I enroll in archaeology classes. Most of all, Andy's caseload drops (temporarily) to only 55-60 hours per week, for three months! After one month, she finally begins to relax. After two months, she seems rejuvenated! By the third month, she's pregnant! With twin boys! Huh? I'm 56 and she's 44. Is this insane? Is that a rhetorical question? Sometimes, however, it's best not to argue with fate.

2001-02 We prepare for the birth of our sons. "Reality check....You will do 7,000 diaper changes the first year!" (twins seminar instructor) Most of you have been there. Enough said.

2002 Our sons, Marc and Jack McCarthy are born on June 12, 2002. We get used to two hours of sleep per day for the first four months. I get letters and e-mail from John Rumsey and Steve Dungan about the coming 40th class reunion. Sounds great! "I'll just put these aside and read them when I'm not so tired."

June 12, 2003 The boys are one-year old, healthy, and ridiculously happy. "Of course they're happy!" says an ex-co-worker, "they're going to inherit when they are really young!" Big celebration. We now have a part-time "nanny" to help with the kids. Time to look at those plans for the 40th reunion. Ooops! With the twins, we can't make the reunion, and we were supposed to send in a quick bio. Oh well, at least I can do the bio, even if it's too late to include in the book. Nice job on the book, by the way.

2003 to 2007 Twin babies to twin toddlers. “Yeah, yeah, Steve, we’ve all done that child-rearing stuff. Just shut up.” Yes, but just look at them (at three years old)!:



June, 2005 Lord, I’m turning 60!! Where’d I stash that Geritol? My wife, my sister, and my niece all tell me I should do something really great for myself. But, what? What have I always wanted (other than World Peace, a cure for dandruff, or to look as cool in a cowboy hat as Lewy does (How does he do that? He’s always been able to pull off that look!))? Okay, in lieu of world peace, I go out and buy a 1989 Ferrari 328 GTS, thereby assuring myself of a constantly thinning bank account, and a morbid fear of parking attendants. Ah, who cares? It’s a freaking Ferrari. My dream since I was twelve.

2006 to 2008 Nothing happens. What?, you expect electrifying news every year? Okay, Okay. The twins grow taller, I grow wider, and my wife Andy still never seems to age. All is normal. Time to update the “bio” with such important stuff.

Spring, 2008 We find we can actually finesse the logistics for Andy and I to come to the Great Reunion and our class’s 45th reunion. Wish Lewy could make it. I wanna try on that hat (then again, with that sweatband,...ah, maybe not).

Spring, 2009 We get lucky and finally get in the Boat Club just a quarter mile down the road from our house. I'm not sure either Andy or I care about the boat, but the club has 15 acres of beautiful waterfront property on the James River. It's casual, family-oriented, and your blood-pressure drops ten points just driving into the place. We plan to spend a lot of time here. Life is good.

Early Summer, 2009 A slight pain in my hip slowly gets worse, then much worse, over May, June, and July. I go to a bunch of pain doctors. Everybody agrees that it probably is just a pinched nerve, but physical therapy, spinal injections, and lots of x-rays can't identify where it is. Can't have this, it's putting a decided cramp on my Summer. I spring for an MRI. Ah, the wonders of modern medicine. The doc calls me and tells me I have a mass the size of my fist growing on my spine. It has broken off one of the "wings" of my lower vertebrae, and is pushing the "wing" between my vertebrae, and is about to cut my spinal cord in half. Damn, no wonder it hurts. Time to call a neuro surgeon.

Early August, 2009 OK, they rush me into surgery. Seems it's metastasized prostate cancer (Hey, I had a clean check-up just two years earlier!), and my PSA (for all you guys familiar with this) is 683. Yes, that is not a misprint. Anything over 10 is kind of a disaster. Ah, this surgery is not fun. Under about seven hours, and they take out two of my lower vertebrae (and a lot of cancer) and replace it with an Eiffel Tower made up of titanium rods, wire, and ten two and a half inch screws. I don't think I'm going to play much championship lacrosse anymore. Good thing I never did. Fortunately, I did wake up. When I did, I wished I hadn't. Jeez, it hurts! It became evident that no one thought I would make it through the first week.

August, 2009 I spend two weeks in the hospital. ICU, then Rehab. When I leave, I'm at least walking (sorta), but my esteemed oncologist tells me if they can't get my PSA number down, I've got less than two months to live. If I can, the average is two years. Hey, the good news! I'm to start on radiation therapy in three days, but first I get a blood clot in my lung while at home. Fortunately, my wife, the pulmonary doctor, is still home that AM when I turn blue and pass out. In four hours, she saves my life twice, and I'm back in the hospital for another three days.

August-September, 2009 Ah, the joys of intensive radiation therapy! I'm lucky if I can crawl out of bed. There's a car show in mid-September I'd waited a year to go to. A friend was going to come all the way from NJ to drive my car to the show. Another friend was going to get an ambulance just to get me there safely. The other drivers were going to take care of me. I just couldn't get up the energy to get out of bed, much less go. The kids don't know what I have, but they are cool. They help out however they can. They are golden.

Winter, 2009-10 Radiation and lots of drugs get my PSA down to 5, even down to .6 by February. I don't bend very well, and I am sore (big understatement here), but it looks like I will live for a while. The drugs sap my energy, though. I need a lot more sleep (yes, that's a benefit, of sorts). Everyday day, I wake up and say my new mantra: I'm

alive, the day is mine, not the cancer's. I hug my puppy, I kiss my kids, I love my wife, I do the things I have to do to make it through the day and plan for the future, and then I have some fun. Life is good. Where are the darn keys to the Ferrari? Enough talk of this cancer crap. No doubt you agree.

Christmas, 2009 Hey, we actually have a Merry Christmas. The twins were impressed again with Santa Claus. They were even more impressed when we finally got them a dog. Yes, the dog may outlive me, but kids need a dog. Other than ruining our best carpet the first week, she is a wonder. A rescued dog, she doesn't bark (except at people coming to the door), she only sheds twice a year, and is incredibly patient with the exuberant twins. We think she is, more or less, an Icelandic Sheep Dog. This is Abby:



Winter-Spring 2010 Things are going as well as can be expected. Andy still looks twenty years younger than anyone has a right to. The boys are doing well in school, and Abby watches over us all (checking each of us in our bedrooms each night). In May, Andy and I get to go to a three-day celebration of all things Ferrari at the Williamsburg Winery, "Ferraris on the Vine." Wine, women, and song. Life can be good, even now.

Summer 2010 to Summer 2012 Blah, Blah, Blah. Hey, we are still a functioning family. All the standard stuff. A vacation in the Outer Banks (NC) each year, a couple of Ferrari get-togethers each year to see old friends. We even finished off the basement.

For anyone heading to the South, have we got a guest room for you! My many meds seem to continue to keep the dreaded PSA number down. Then in 2012, the old PSA starts making a run for it. They pull out the new stuff. I start the ‘Provenge’ system. They stick a tube in my jugular vein, shove it down and out my chest my chest, and put a couple valves in it. For three months, every other week I go in, they take my blood out, send it to New Jersey (where else!) where they put some kind of anti-cancer cell on my white cells, then they send it back to Richmond, where it’s put back in me. It’s supposed to buy me six months. Sure, why not?

Fall, 2012 Doesn’t seem to be working too well. My PSA is up to nearly 40 (for those of you uninitiated, this is not a swell number.) My docs decide to try their last magic bullet. Something called Zytiga. No, Hennessy, it’s not a generic for Viagra. Damn things are horse-pill size and I have to take four a day. Blah! And,...they cost \$7,500 a month (again, this is not a misprint). Boo. Fortunately, my insurance takes care of all but \$1,500 a month! Such a deal!

Wow! In two months, my PSA drops to 2.1! Zytiga is worth it. This is incredible. We celebrate in our normal logical, sensible way. We go out and rescue two more dogs, GiGi and Anna. Now we have two hyperactive ten-year olds and three goofy dogs running around like mad-men through the house. But, they make us laugh.

Winter-Spring, 2013 We’ve never taken a Spring Break trip with the kids, so this year we decide to do it. We go to the Turks and Caicos at Ocean Club West and have a grand time. Snorkeling, horseback riding in the ocean (I did not do this, my artificial back would not have liked it), chasing lizards on Iguana Island, finding shells, and taking a semi-submarine boat ride through the reefs. Life is good.

Spring, 2013 I’ve received all the e-mails and all the literature (thanks, Jack and Josh) about the 50th Reunion. We, of course, would like to be there, but my not exactly solid condition has kept us from committing until the last moment. When we get back from vacation, my Oncologist lets me know that my PSA is rising again. More lab work this month (April) shows even more of an increase. Twenty years from now they expect to have prostate cancer cured. Right now, however, the Zytiga is the last magic bullet. Anything can happen, and we will always have hope, but my wife and I have decided that it is best that I spend every day that I’ve got with my family. So, though I regret it, we won’t be coming to the reunion.

To all of my classmates, I hope you have a great time at the 50th Reunion. I was lucky to be in a class of good, decent, and smart people, and I will always be proud to say I was one of you. Please say hello to everyone for me, and if you think about it, I would love a copy of the reunion album. I’d be glad to send the “purchase price.” Thanks to all of you for your friendship, and to Chatham for being Chatham. We were all very lucky. Unquestionably, life is still good.

- Steve McCarthy