

## 'Cause These Are The Good Old Days



While driving my SUV with the radio blaring, Carly Simon's<sup>1</sup> syrupy voice pouring out the words to the song, "Anticipation", her 1971 classic, while I sing along.

*Anticipation, anticipation is making me late, is keeping me waiting.*

*We can never know about the days to come.*

*But we think about them any way.*

Together, Carly and I vocalize:

*'cause these are the good old days.*

I glance over at Tracie, who to my surprise is lip-synching, and remark,

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<sup>1</sup> Carly Elisabeth Simon is an Academy Award, Golden Globe and two-time Grammy Award winning American musician who emerged as one of the leading lights of the early 1970s singer-songwriter movement. She was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1994. Her most popular song is "You're So Vain."

“Wow, what a great song. Too bad most of your generation has never heard it. They never even saw the Heinz 57 commercial<sup>2</sup> which used the tune. Kids could learn an important life lesson if they listened.”

Tracie laughs while thinking about one of their recent Health Department projects, “Mort, if you had written that song the title would have been: “Procrastination.”

Mort chuckles as he retorts, “Some people sure know how to procrastinate and I am one of the best!”

Mort continued, “You know, throughout my health department career, I’ve heard:

Get immunized;  
Wash you hands;  
Eat right, exercise;  
Get your annual physical;  
Test your cholesterol;  
Don’t Smoke;  
Be prepared;  
Wear protection;  
Don’t procrastinate...

“So you would think that these public health messages would sink into my thick skull. But, as most of our nurses are aware, health messages alone get little response until the matter at hand becomes urgent.

Tracie, remember my fear of the surgeon’s silvery scalpel!” Mort exclaimed as he licked his teeth with his tongue.

Tracie shook her head in the negative, and asked, “What happened?”

Mort shuttered as he remembered his most lengthy and unhealthy procrastination.... a story spanning two decades.

Mort began, “One morning back in ‘87, I observed two protrusions on my body. Wondering what the protrusions were, and with the fear of the unknown outweighing my desire to wait, I promptly made an appointment with my family doctor.

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<sup>2</sup> Available at [utube.com](http://utube.com)

He advised that I had two hernias<sup>3</sup>.

“Doc, what should I do?” The kind-hearted physician replied, “Son, at this stage I would say wait until you are in pain and then have surgery to repair them.”

Over the next twenty years, when I was on shopping adventures with my wife in the Sawgrass, Broward or Pembroke Pines shopping mall, I would get a burning sensation in this region of my body. And it was not from my credit cards!

My remedy was simple; I would sit in a chair for approximately 15 minutes. Then the discomfort would subside and I could continue proclaiming that my wife’s newest acquisitions were exactly what we needed at the house.

I had successfully avoided my hernia surgery for twenty years.

Then one fateful Hurricanes-versus-Tarheels Saturday afternoon, we walked two miles to get to and from the Orange Bowl. That night, I was lying in bed with sharp excruciating pains piercing through my left side.

I prayed to the God of procrastinators, “*Please stop this pain! Please no surgery!*”

Awakening often throughout the night. My prayers went unheeded.

That morning, in agony, I whimpered my story to the wife.

Now the process was out-of-control---doctors, nurses, an ambulance, and finally the hospital.

As I slipped out of consciousness, I kept thinking about the dreaded surgeon’s sharp silvery scalpel slicing into my soft skin; my twenty years of procrastination had finally ended.

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<sup>3</sup> A hernia is a protrusion of a tissue, structure, or part of an organ through the muscular tissue or the membrane by which it is normally contained. The hernia has three parts: the orifice through which it herniates, the hernial sac, and its contents.

A hernia may be likened to a failure in the sidewall of a pneumatic tire. The tire’s inner tube behaves like the organ and the side wall like the body cavity wall providing the restraint. A weakness in the sidewall allows a bulge to develop, which can become a split allowing the inner tube to protrude, and leading to the eventual failure of the tire.

It is generally advisable to repair hernias in a timely fashion, in order to prevent complications such as organ dysfunction, gangrene, and multiple organ dysfunction syndrome. Uncomplicated hernias are principally repaired by pushing back, or “reducing,” the herniated tissue, and then mending the weakness in muscle tissue. Modern muscle reinforcement techniques involve synthetic materials (a mesh prosthesis) that avoid over-stretching of already weakened tissue (as in older, but still useful methods). The mesh is placed over the defect, and sometimes staples are used to keep the mesh in place. Increasingly, some repairs are performed through laparoscopes.

Seven hellish days of hard recuperation - IVs, liquid diet, pain killers, shots, bandages and the passing of many hours in silent boredom.

Tracie hears me sing, "Recuperation, recuperation is making me hate, is keeping me waiting." She gives me her weak joke smile.

As we continue down I-95, Tracie realizes how happy my restored health had made me and I realize the joy of a new healthy beginning.

"Carly was right," Tracie acknowledges.

"We can never know about the days to come."

After a pregnant pause we both magically and simultaneously blurt out:

"Cause these are the good old days."