

# Face Forward

## Executives Turn to Plastic Surgery for New Look

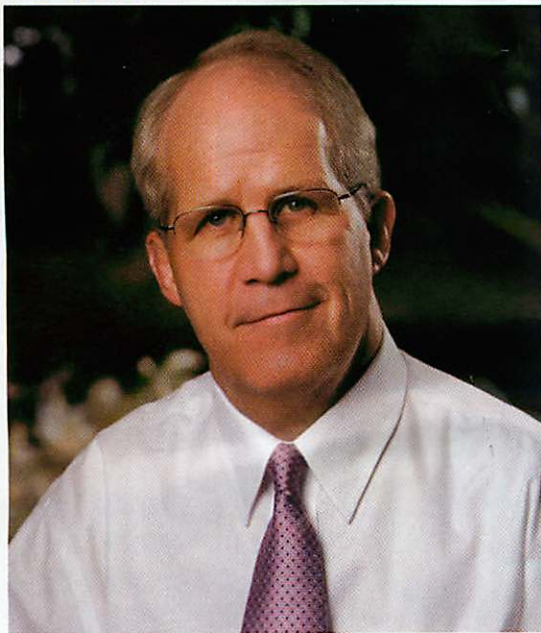
When Amy Jones, (name has been changed) owner of a local manufacturing company, turned 50, she became determined to fight age gracefully. She decided to seek cosmetic surgery.

"Like many women in the workforce, I wanted to keep that competitive edge," she says. This year, at age 60, Jones underwent a minimal access cranial facelift. "I reached a point in my high-stress business where everybody said, 'you look so tired.'"

During Jones' procedure, plastic surgeon Dr. Gregory Kjar of Bountiful used liposuction on her neck and lifted the skin at her cheekbones, which smoothed wrinkles from her jowl area. With minimal swelling, Jones returned to work two weeks later. She says her results are "phenomenal. Today, everyone says I look wonderful – relaxed and refreshed."

Plastic surgery has grown in popularity in Utah during the past three years because increasing numbers of people are realizing they have the capability of looking better and because "the media has made looking good a business," says Kjar, president of the Utah State Plastic Surgery Society.

Dr. Gregory Kjar



The society, with more than 75 physician members, has grown by about 10 percent during the past three years, Kjar says, adding that Utah has a high percentage of plastic surgeons, "because it is a popular place to live. People like the four seasons and the skiing."

Both state and national plastic surgery societies are patient advocates that try to protect patients from practitioners with little or no experience, Kjar says. Because insurers now pay providers lower insurance reimbursements than in past years, growing numbers of physicians who didn't originally specialize in plastic surgery now perform cosmetic surgery procedures because patients provide the reimbursement out of their own pockets. Along with advocating for patients, both the local and national societies also foster education and ongoing education and development of plastic surgeons, he says.

Plastic surgery "is a unique position in which the surgeon is trained in the full gamut of cosmetic medicine practices – from skin care to a tummy tuck," Kjar explains. "For a doctor in another specialty to take on cosmetic surgery – such as a gynecologist who performs a tummy tuck after attending a three-day seminar – is like a plumber taking on auto mechanics." He advises potential patients to check whether a surgeon is certified by a board of medical specialty for procedures the patient requests. He also suggests asking a physician to provide information about his or her experience level relating to a particular procedure including the number of patients who have undergone the procedure and the number and type of resulting complications.

Dr. David S. Thomas, a plastic surgeon in Salt Lake City, estimates that the industry

has grown 33 percent in terms of both the number of procedures performed and the dollar amount generated.

At a cosmetic medical industry seminar Kjar attended this year, a presenter announced that 88 percent of the potential market for surgery patients is untapped. "There are many baby boomers who will want to have wrinkles tightened with a laser or facial hair lasered off," he says.

A common concern of executives such as Jones is that "they want to stay sharp and have their looks remain competitive with younger people who are coming in to challenge their authority," he adds, pointing out that another recent trend includes less invasive procedures, such as using injectible materials like Botox to fill in wrinkles.

Executive-level patients request procedures ranging from basic skin care protection to cosmetic surgical procedures. While female patients still outnumber men, cosmetic surgery is increasingly popular for male executives. On June 26, a typical workday, Thomas performed two eyelifts for prominent Salt Lake City men.

"When a man's eyelids start to sag and he can't see his youthful appearance in the mirror, he will often choose a blepharoplasty or eyelid lift that takes eight to 10 years off his appearance," says Kjar.

Thomas adds that FDA approval of non-surgical aesthetic procedures increases both public awareness and industry growth. "Once a patient has undergone a non-surgical procedure, it becomes easier to discuss surgical procedures. A patient might say, 'While I'm in here, tell me about the new silicone breast implants.'"

"We are in the business of making people look like themselves," Thomas concludes. "The procedures don't change who they are, but simply allow them to look more vibrant and rested. Our goal is aesthetics." **UB**