

Facelifts are not just vanity—they help lift women's spirits

Getting a face-lift has for years been considered a vanity item for the very rich or the very famous.

Something they would do, but never talk about. Something no one but your doctor knew for sure.

In recent years, the face-lift has come into its own.

The fact that former First Lady Betty Ford went for a face-lift this fall was only symptomatic of a new feeling pervading feminine thinking.

More and more women are thinking about having this cosmetic surgery, not because they are super vain or need to look young and glamorous before the public, but just because they want to look better for family and friends.

Mainly, says Dr. Jan Beekhuis, a Bloomfield Hills cosmetic surgeon, they want to look better when they look in the mirror.

"For many women," said this cosmetic surgeon who has been practicing in the Detroit area 25 years and now does about 500 facial reconstruction jobs a year, "there comes a time when they just start feeling that they look older than others around them."

"If a face-lift can make such a woman feel better about herself, that's what is important," he said. "It gets her over the hurdle."

In his work, said Dr. Beekhuis, it is good to make a client look good to others.

"But what is more important is what she sees when she looks in the mirror," he added. "What she sees may not be what others see, but what she sees determines how she feels about herself."

RECENTLY, Dr. Beekhuis took two Plymouth women through the process of facial surgery, including consultation in his Detroit office, surgery on an out-patient basis at the Henry Ford Hospital Clinic in West Bloomfield and recuperation at home.

Connie Moshimer, a teacher at Piquette School, had a nose and chin job. For Ida Nairn, a proofreader for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, it was an upper and lower blepharoplasty, which refers to work on the tissue of the eyelids and under the eyes.

Both had a great desire for the work. "I've had this bump on my nose as long as I can remember and I used to be teased about it," said Mrs. Moshimer. "Then I was in an accident, and the cartilage was cut inside my nose, making the nostrils uneven."

"Dr. Beekhuis suggested the chin work. I really didn't have one before," Mrs. Nairn had been bothered for years by heavy bags under her eyes.

PLASTIC SURGERY is more common these days, Dr. Beekhuis pointed out, because techniques have improved so much.

"Today a woman can have plastic surgery with predictably good results and a minimum of discomfort," he said.

Both Plymouth women are acquainted with the surgeon's nurse, Mary Lockman, and both fully expected the work to come out well. Well-briefed in the pre-surgery sessions, neither expected to experience a lot of pain.

"You don't feel pain; you feel pressure and that's a little scary," said Mrs. Moshimer. "But they have you to the point where you don't really care."

Mrs. Nairn said she had no apprehension—"I had wanted this for so long,"—and in the course of the surgery, no pain whatsoever.

Both were sent home when the work was completed.

"I do practically all my surgery on an outpatient basis," said the doctor. "That means the patient goes home the same day. The procedure cuts scars, but there is a more important psychological value. A woman is more accepting if she's not cooped up in a hospital."

It is his practice to give a couple of pain pills for the first 24 hours or so. Many women can go back to work a few days after facial surgery, he said.

"If they don't mind a couple of bruises and bandages, they are perfectly capable of working," he added. "At the most, they are back to normal in a week or two, so it doesn't disrupt their lives too much."

MRS. MOSHIMER had her surgery during summer vacation, and when she went back to school she said only her principal commented on a somewhat altered appearance, but he wasn't sure what the difference was.

"Most people don't really look that closely," she said. "But I see a big difference."

The blepharoplasty Mrs. Nairn underwent took a little longer to heal, and she admitted "I wasn't very presentable for a while."

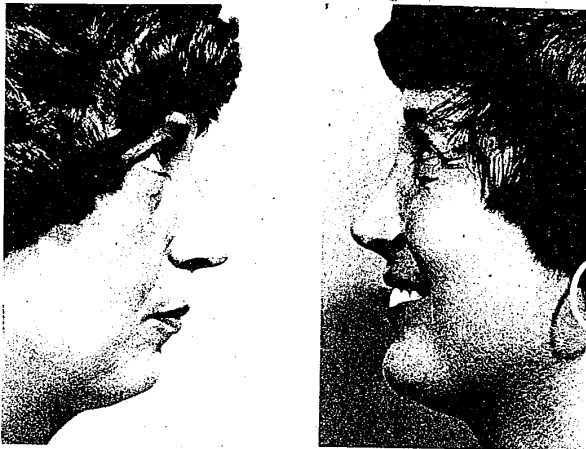
Will the work last? "New jobs are pretty permanent," said Dr. Beekhuis. "We rarely redo eyelids—90 per cent of the people who have that work don't need it."

"With a face-lift, it's different. That will usually hold for five to 10 years, and then the women will look as she did before she had it, so she's still ahead."

"Maybe one in 10 will come back for a second face-lift. For the rest, it's not because they are dissatisfied but because they have reached the stage where it is more acceptable to look older."

DR. BEEKHUIS said he's asked often whether getting a face-lift or

la la mode



Connie Moshimer (right) of Plymouth smiles at her former self (left). She had cosmetic surgery done on her nose and chin.

other plastic surgery isn't an act of vanity.

"Probably it is," he said, "but a lot of what we do is to make us look better."

"We shop for becoming clothes and go to a beauty salon. How is this different if it is important to the person involved?"

His prices vary, of course, with the individual case, but he said a face-lift ranges from \$1,500-\$2,500, a nose job is \$1,000-\$2,000 and work on eyelids \$1,000-\$1,500.

Sometimes surgery is covered by hospitalization, he said, for example when heavy eyelids interfere with vision.

"When the surgery is purely cosmetic," the doctor added, "some insurance companies do not pay hospitalization; some do."

"Most do not pay the professional fee."

"I know I am doing more for people now than I was then," he said. "I can make a tremendous psychological change in their lives, improve the quality of life."

The face-lift, he concluded, is not for everyone. "But if there is something of real concern, something that can be improved relatively simply, then it's something that should be considered," he said.

"What she sees may not be what others see, but what she sees determines how she feels about herself."

—Dr. Jan Beekhuis, cosmetic surgeon



Ida Nairn underwent cosmetic surgery on the tissue of her eyelids and under the eyes. At left is how she appeared before surgery. (Staff photos by Art Emanuel)

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By JUDY SOLOMON

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Plaza Suite, Franklin Shopping Plaza, 12 Mile and Northwestern, Southfield, 357-1121.

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Birmingham Drugs, 1220 S. Woodward, Birmingham, 644-3214.

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