

PEOPLE MIGHT SAY it's the same weight-loss story, just a different name. But it's not the same story. Not to 52-year-old Steven Head.

"When I was 20 years old, I fell 25 feet out of a tree and landed on a stump," says Steven. "That's when I became inactive. I got married when I was 21, and started putting on weight. For 20 years, I put on weight.

the bypass surgery got rid of my diabetes. Now, I get out and do something everyday. We have a nursery. I can load plants, trim bushes; I actually get up on the tractor."

During a check-up, Dr. Lavin asked Steven, "Do people recognize you?"

"You know, doc," Steven replied, "Me and my wife

were at a funeral the other day and somebody asked her if she thought it was safe to be bringing her boyfriend out in public. We both just smiled. It sure does feel good to be happy and healthy."

Saving a Leg, Saving a Life

The Surgical Specialists of Louisiana

Around 1980, I did my own diet and lost 80 pounds. I went from 240 to 160 pounds in six months. Right after I decided to quit dieting, however, the weight started coming back on."

But that's not what Steven's story is about. "It's not about the weight loss," he emphasizes. "This is about saving my leg."

Steven was diagnosed with type-2 diabetes in 1999. At 379 pounds, he was taking 200 units of insulin a day. But the worst part was the wound on his foot, which was caused by his diabetes. "It was as round as the bottom of a pop bottle and probably at least a half-inch deep. I was going to the wound care center every week. Nothing was working, and they were going to amputate my leg at the knee. It would have ruined my life. I knew I had to do something."

After seeing several doctors across the state, Steven made an appointment with Dr. Tom Lavin, founder of Surgical Specialists of Louisiana. Dr. Lavin echoed what all the others had told him. "We've got to get rid of the diabetes if you want to keep your leg. And to get rid of your diabetes, we've got to get rid of the excess weight." Dr. Lavin suggested laparoscopic gastric bypass.

On December 18, 2006, Steven checked into Southern Surgical Hospital in Slidell for the surgery. He is a different person today. He's lost an amazing 187 pounds. More importantly, he still has his left leg, and his foot is almost completely healed. "It's because



Surgical Specialists of Louisiana is located at 1750 Hwy. 190 East Service Road in Covington. Telephone, 985-234-3000. whyweight.com.