

Susan's Healthy Gourmet as seen in People Magazine...

Up Front

Hello, NEWMAN!

Seinfeld alum Wayne Knight has dropped 117 lbs. (and counting) with a little help from his friends

For a man who once ate all day long, resisting the siren song of food is a victory sweeter than a tub of Chunky Monkey. Once tipping the scales at 327 lbs. but now 117 lbs. lighter, Wayne Knight says he's no longer a slave to temptation. "The other day," he reports, "someone gave me Godiva chocolates. And the box is still sitting on the table—I haven't eaten any."

Known to *Seinfeld* fans as Jerry's nemesis Newman, Knight, 48, has traded grazing for shopping: "I now have the privilege of going into pricey boutiques and spending too much," he says. "Who knew regular people were spending so much money on clothes?"

Chubby since his Georgia childhood, Knight says, "I was overweight so long, it became part of who I was." Playing plus-size funny guys in regional theater and later on *Seinfeld* and *3rd Rock from the Sun*, he had tried amphetamines, fen-phen, Atkins and the Zone. But when he did shed pounds, he felt "exposed." Says Knight: "My weight was like a room of flesh I hid myself in."

Hiding, of course, had its risks. In 1993 a *Seinfeld* scene in which his character ran through a field left the actor gasping for breath. The doctor who examined Knight soon after "read me the riot act," he says. "He basically told me, 'You're going to die.'" The message hit home; Knight's own father, who had had heart disease, suffered a fatal stroke at the dinner table in 1992.

Last September the actor was final-

ly ready to shed his cocoon. With the help of a psychotherapist, he realized that "I was an addict and my drug was food. The meal would start when I woke up and end when I went to sleep." Reasoning that "it takes a village" to fight an addiction, Knight tapped a cardiologist, a trainer and a food-delivery service that kept him on 1,500 calories a day. For good measure he joined a food-addiction support group. ("Basically," he says, "it's just a bunch of guys sitting around and saying, 'Why don't you do something about it?'"")

Professionally, the trimmer Knight is thriving; in December he'll be seen in the Steve Martin comedy *Cheaper by the Dozen*. His romantic life, though, is in transition. Married for seven years to



"I could binge on just about anything," says Knight (with Jerry Seinfeld in 1993).

Photograph by BRAD HINES



"I love it when people say, 'You look like that guy Newman, but you can't be him because you're much thinner,'" says Knight (on a hiking trail above L.A.).

makeup artist Paula Sutor, 51, he's now in mid-divorce. But he looks forward to dating again, and his new confidence (and sleeker wardrobe) can only help. "As a fat person," says Knight, "I was isolated. There's a lot of self-loathing attached to being that size."

Will he lose work because he's dropped so much weight? Maybe. But Knight's willing to take that risk. He reports that when casting directors call, "I ask them, 'Do you know what I look like now?' The commodity I was selling before, I'm no longer selling," he says. "Now, I'm selling the guy inside."

ALLISON ADATO

Allison Singh Gee in Los Angeles

How He Did It

A support team makes all the difference when it comes to shedding pounds, says Knight. His allies:

SUSAN'S HEALTHY GOURMET—an Irvine, Calif., food-delivery service that brings his daily meals totaling 1,500 calories. A typical breakfast is fruit and cottage cheese; lunch can be a chicken Cobb salad and dinner is often turkey lasagna. And no nosing in between: "If I want a snack," Knight says, "I shave a little food from one of my meals and save it for later."

MARC VAHANIAN, a Studio City, Calif., trainer. Three times a week, Knight and Vahanian do hour-long workouts of weight training or Pilates stretches. Knight also takes weekly three-mile hikes near his Toluca Lake, Calif., home.

MEMBERS of a first-names only group for food addicts. "I found that my story was one among many," says Knight. "We've become a family."

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PHOTO: TERRY O'NEILL/ONYX