

# NEW YORK POST

**Liz Smith**



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## A Stritch in time

**I** HAVE an enormous amount of talent and most men can't handle it!" says the toast of Broadway, **Elaine Stritch**, who is Memorial Day's cover girl for **Joan Jedell's** colorful magazine *The Hamptons Sheet*.

Having been friends with Miss Stritch since 1953, I have lived through vast assortments of men who all adored the acting, dancing, singing lady. But only her beloved and much-too-short-lived husband, the funny sweet man **John Bay**, could go the distance and get past Elaine's problems with the Catholic Church. Through the years, before **John Bay** came along, I watched Elaine try to marry the gifted actor **Jack Cassidy**, then she dated **Danny Scholl** of "Top Banana" while on the road in "Call Me Madam," at the same time ostensibly engaged to her leading man **Kent Smith**. Later there was the handsome movie star **Gig Young**, the marvelous Method actor **Ben Gazzara**, and of course, the screen star **Rock Hudson**, who she had no idea was not in the market. Elaine was also engaged or involved over the years with such as man-about-town TV producer **Billy Harbach**, restaurateur **Joe Allen**, the dancer-actor **Grover Dale** and TV producer **Gary Pudney**. There were even more, but I can't keep them all in my head. I often commiserated with these nice guys who mostly were sorrowful that they'd been married and divorced and were ineligible in Elaine's Sacred Heart Convent scheme of things.

This past week I awarded two accolades to Elaine, one from the New York Drama Critics at the Jack Rose restaurant and another from the Outer Critics Circle at Sardi's. Recently, I also emceed her "Woman of the Year" award from the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. I am about out of soap on Miss Stritch. **Joan Jedell** says the cover story in her paper is "in anticipation of the Tony Awards."

I was amused to read in this interview what Elaine has to say about winning the Tony which she has been "up for" many times and for which she says she has been rehearsing a great acceptance speech for over 40 years. Elaine notes, wisely, "I'd rather win than lose. I've earned it. If they don't give me a Tony for this, I'll be more famous than I would if I got it."

I have been waiting to see if Miss Stritch would invite me to be her "date" at the Tony Awards. (A nominee can only take one person.) But no, I'm sure she has some guy all picked out. And who knows? Maybe this one will be a rare fellow who is still eligible to marry this legendary icon. It's what she really wants — a final husband. This would be a glorious cap to a fantastic career.



AP

**ELAINE STRITCH**

Back in her wild and crazy youth.

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