

“This wonderful article, lovingly written by Carole in memory of Daphne Branzell, touches so many of us deeply. Daphne was the National Rescue Coordinator when I started in Scottie Rescue many years ago, and I can remember how excited I was to be asked to join her resource list. She was a fine mentor, always handling situations with dignity and skill that she gained over her many years of experience. She had a great foresight to invent such a great working model for a rescue organization. Even when she retired (I remember begging her not to), I asked her to promise me I could still come to her when I needed her advice, and she kept that promise. As the years went by, I tried not to disturb her retirement except when absolutely necessary. For those who are relatively new to Scottie Rescue, she’s a name you probably haven’t heard before. To those of you who have been around the block, she’s someone you likely remember with reverence. We have much to thank her for. She was truly one of those people who pass our way but once, and is very much missed.—Erica Cerny (TSRF Note: Erica has been coordinator for Scottish Terrier Club of Greater New York Rescue for many years, and is chairman of Scottish Terrier Club of America’s Rescue Trust Fund.)

The Queen of Scottie Tea Parties is Gone **Daphne Brown Branzell, 1936-2015**

By Carole Fry Owen

Daphne, the queen of Scottie tea parties is gone. Daphne Branzell perhaps also was the Queen Mother of Scottie Rescue in America.

Daphne knew how to throw a real English tea party. After all, she was English before she was American. She became a U. S. citizen May 1, 1962. For five years Daphne staged inimitable fundraisers, the Black & White Tea, for the Texas Scottie and Westie rescue group she started. Oh, to hear Daphne's British accent just one more time...



Scottie Rescue owes much to Daphne Branzell. She was a starter! Daphne and husband Marshall chaired Rescue for the Scottish Terrier Club of America for six years (1996-2002) at the very beginnings of organized national Scottie Rescue. She had earlier founded San Antonio Area Scottie & Westie Rescue. Texas Scottie Rescue Fund Inc. owes its existence to Daphne, too. Her dream was a 501(c)(3) entity to raise money for special needs Scottie Rescues in Texas, and she helped it happen in 2002. She also was appointed in 2003 to STCA’s committee which organized STCA’s later nonprofit, the Rescue Trust Fund.

Daphne was born in Radcliffe-on-Trent, England. Her childhood was wartime Britain. Had she been older, I always thought she could have helped Churchill Rescue Great Britain, just as she did Scottish Terriers later.

Daphne’s father had purchased The Chestnuts, an ancient manorial estate in 1937 after what Daphne calls “a particularly good run at the horse track.” While her father was at war, Daphne’s mother bartered for hard to get food like butter, and obtained a liquor license to open “the Chestnuts Country Club” in the family’s large formal parlor, so she could obtain scarce liquor for friends and neighbors. After the war Daphne’s father expanded The Chestnuts into a hotel.

My favorite story about Daphne happened at the family hotel. I tell it to show how Daphne always could make the impossible happen! One day when she came home from school at 13, Daphne's father met her with the news that her mother was sick, and "You will have to do the cooking tonight." That meant food by 7 p.m. for a dinner party of 40. It was 4:20.

"The menu was plain English fare, roast beef and gravy with two kinds of potatoes and cabbage for the main course; soup as starter and...stewed apples and custard" for "afters," wrote Daphne in her 2008 memoir *Another Time, Another Place*. All this happened with one kitchen helper who arrived at 6:00. Fortunately, Daphne's mother had already started the large roast. By 9 p.m., Daphne and "Uncle Tommy" had served 40 guests and washed all the dishes and pots and pans. "Looking back now," wrote Daphne, "I realize that was the end of my childhood."

Before Scotties, Daphne was a military wife. She married Marshall Branzell in 1958 when he was stationed with the U.S. Air Force in England. Their first Scottie/Westie pair hooked them forever on both breeds. The many more that followed were loved by their sons David and Russell, and later daughter-in-law Kathy and grandchildren Chandler and Emily.

Marshall and Daphne retired in the '70s from the Air Force to Windcrest, TX, in greater San Antonio, eventually breeding two litters and exhibiting a few Westies and Scotties. They produced two champions, one Scottie and one Westie. They also were popular ring stewards at Texas dog shows. Daphne was a gardener (the kind with potting bench and classic English "borders"), a great cook, an admitted Anglophile and a constant reader and learner. I loved the BBC video series *A History of Britain* that she loaned me, and envied the short courses she was always taking at the Academy of Learning in Retirement (ALIR). There was the writing class that inspired her memoirs, and she took hundreds of courses about regional and world history, bird watching, and history of theatre, films and music. When she died she was editor of the group's newsletter, *The Aliran*. Daphne was much more than dogs!

Daphne's Start in Rescue

Somewhere in there, Daphne trained as a professional groomer, and opened a shop in her garage. Like most of us do, the Branzells got involved in Rescue because of one dog in need. It was a Scottie puppy that they sold that led them into Rescue. Star disappeared from his owner's yard. He was never found, but because of him and Daphne, hundreds of other terriers have found new homes. The Branzells' long years of experience with terriers made them naturals to evaluate terrier Rescues and understand what needed to be done for each dog.

Daphne founded San Antonio Area Scottie & Westie Rescue (SAASWR) in the early '90s and developed a strong Texas rescue network. She used her talents as a fine seamstress to create countless terrier items to benefit SAASWR. Every spring she staged its Bluebonnets and Terriers Picnic with BBQ, potluck and fun and games for terriers and their people. For five years her Black and White Tea was a much-anticipated date on the San Antonio terrier scene. Daphne also was an avid collector of vintage Scottie and Westie items and terrier fabrics, which eventually seeped down to help Scottie and Westie Rescue.

Three other Scottie Rescue programs in Texas were inspired by Daphne. Like I said, she was a starter. She always was the go-to lady for advice and was a master at recruiting Rescue volunteers. The four Texas Scottie Rescue groups are still strong today!

Coming of Age for Scottie Rescue in America

Daphne's reputation as a doer grew, and in 1996 STCA asked Daphne and Marshall to be national Rescue co-chairmen. The previous year was the first for STCA to even have a national Rescue chairperson. It was to be a coming of age for Scottie Rescue, a historic time in our breed, of the same significance as when Gail Gaines a few years earlier had started STCA's health committee, which evolved into STCA's Health Trust Fund.

I decided to look at *Bagpipers* for the six years the Branzells chaired STCA Rescue to get a feel for that key period. The 1996 issue that carried the Branzells' appointment noted that only one Scottie Rescue had been reported in the previous five months. Three years later Daphne's 1999 Rescue Survey reported 510 Scotties had been rescued through the STCA's rescue network, and by 2001 the number was 649.

Six months into Daphne's term, she published the first list of Scottie Rescue contacts, one for each regional club, plus many independent rescue operators. Daphne's mission was to fill in "America's blank places" so every state would have a Scottie Rescue coordinator. She came darned close! Shortly before the Branzells retired from STCA work in 2002, Linda Hill reported in *Great Scots Magazine's* rescue issue, "Under the dedicated and capable leadership of the Branzells...Scottie Rescue has grown to...75 Rescue coordinators.'

The new Age of Internet helped Daphne spread the Scottie Rescue mission. Early in Daphne's term, a Yahoo e-list was established for communication among Scottie Rescue coordinators and volunteers. It became easier to foster a spirit of camaraderie and mutual cooperation, and to secure help for Scotties in need.

Innovations during Daphne's STCA service include development of a Rescue section on the STCA's website, offering an STCA Certificate of Adoption, development of a Rescue Code of Ethics, initiation of an on-line Rescue application, and reaching non-STCA members by encouraging publication of *Great Scots Magazine's* MacRescue column.

What I found in six years of old *Bagpipers* was the first regular presence (every issue!) of Rescue stories, coverage of regional rescue programs, annual national Rescue surveys, and always the "rescue philosophy" that we are all responsible to help even the Scotties we do not breed ourselves. Daphne kept Scottie Rescue always "on the front burner" for STCA members.

"We Are All Responsible"

"We are all responsible for every member of our breed, no matter how he or she arrived on this earth," wrote Daphne in her first article in *The Bagpiper*, 1997: #1. "You and I did not breed that unfortunate Scottie in the local shelter, but the irresponsible person who did is not going to save him from the gas chamber. It is up to each one of us—the responsible Scottie people." Daphne's message is just as true 18 years later. Rescue is a job for all of us!

A knack for writing always helps promote a cause, and Daphne had that. She wrote two books to benefit Texas Scottie Rescue Fund: *Manual for Grooming the Scottish Terrier* (2003) and *Teatime in Texas* (2005) and later wrote her own memoirs. Then there were years of writing newsletters for SAASWR, and writing and editing six years of Rescue articles for *The Bagpiper*.

Daphne had a knack for “birthing” ideas, fostering and growing them, then closing the curtain on herself so the curtain could go up for a new and growing cast of rescue players. She closed her own curtains at times she chose, first as STCA rescue chair, and later as director of SAASWR, and as founding trustee of Texas Scottie Rescue Fund Inc. Daphne wanted to leave a group “roots and wings” to be strong without her. That she did.

When Marshall called me Jan. 22, in London about Daphne’s very sudden and unexpected death, Ray and I made sure Daphne had one last blowout tea party. We left one empty chair for Daphne at our table at Brown’s, London’s oldest hotel (since 1837) and famed for its afternoon teas. We toasted her with tea and enjoyed her favorite savory and sweet tea “dainties.” It was so much like Daphne’s famous Black & White Teas. How many three-tiered tea trays and china teapots did Daphne have anyway, to go with her dozens of delicate floral cups, saucers and tea plates?

I imagine Daphne is out there right now in God’s Garage, giving a fresh trim and cleanup to little terriers as they cross the Rainbow Bridge. Why not sit down with a cup of tea (make an extra for Daphne) and write a reminiscence about Daphne for the family’s memory book. Mail to Marshall Branzell at 5810 Windvale Drive, Windcrest, TX 78239; or e-mail to mbranzell@satx.rr.com.

Copyright, Carole Fry Owen 2015. First published in The Bagpiper of the Scottish Terrier Club of America, Vol. 2015: #3.

