

Original bell from Old Church finds its way home

FARMERS BRANCH ~ On an unusually warm Tuesday in January, a crew of specialized craftsmen carefully helped place a 100-plus-year-old bell back into the belfry where its service began in the 1890s.

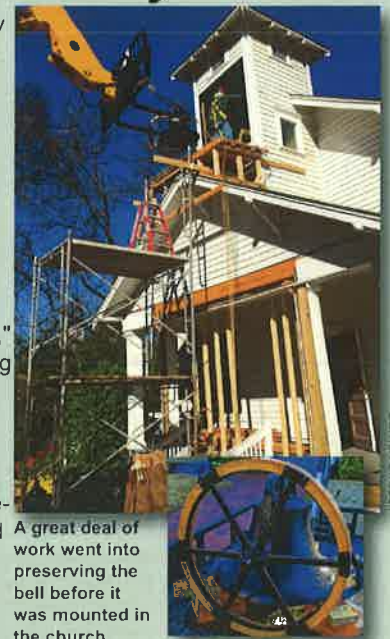
The Old Church at the Farmers Branch Historical Park has been the site for lectures, demonstrations, and many, many weddings since being moved there from Renner, Texas in 1985. But, it came without a bell.

A group of concerned, civic-minded citizens in the Focus Farmers Branch class of 1991 donated a small railroad bell to the park for use in the Old Church. Yet, the structure's original bell was still out there.

Historical Park Superintendent Derrick Birdsall said the original bell had been given to the Renner Baptist Church where it had been displayed outside their building for many years, enduring the Texas weather and earning years of rust.

"The good folks at the Renner Baptist Church reached out to us with their desire to donate the bell," Mr. Birdsall said, "thereby, reuniting the bell with the church."

The Friends of the Farmers Branch Historical Park took on the task of funding the restoration of the bell by Siebler Inc. who also removed the railroad bell and placed the original, 600-pound bell back inside the bell tower at the park. Find out more at 972.406.0184.



A great deal of work went into preserving the bell before it was mounted in the church.

Derrick Birdsall

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Branch REVIEW



www.farmersbranchtx.gov

Tax help Tuesdays

Trained volunteers from AARP will be on hand to help with tax preparation questions throughout the season on Tuesdays between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. at the Senior Center and from 1 until 7 p.m. at the Manske Library. Senior Center tax help is by appointment only. Call 972.919.8740 to make an appointment.

Date Night set

The popular springtime event 'Date Night in the Park,' featuring live music, food trucks and an outdoor movie, will be held Saturday, April 25 at the Farmers Branch Historical Park. The movie will be selected by citizens voting at the Rec Center or on Facebook. Call 972.919.2620 for info.

Community Garden

There are a limited number of plots open for adoption at the Farmers Branch Community Garden. Anyone interested should call Pam Smith at 972.919.2625. The Farmers Branch Community Garden is part of an initiative to bring families together and help feed the community with tons of food donated to Metrocrest Services since the Garden's inception.



Record lows at FBPD Crime drops to levels not seen in 15 years

FARMERS BRANCH ~ Citing community partnerships and advances in technology, Farmers Branch Police Chief Sid Fuller announced this week that overall crime in Farmers Branch dropped to its lowest level in the past 15 years with 997 incidents reported.

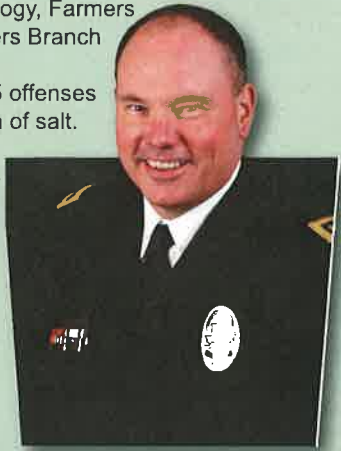
This continues a five-year trend of declining crime rates, after recording 1,615 offenses in 2009. Chief Fuller explained that crime reporting should be taken with a grain of salt.

"Of course, we're happy with this report but crime is a very complex phenomenon that is influenced by many factors," he said. "Things like the economy, unemployment, age of criminal population and such. Therefore, we can't take full credit for the decrease in crime, just like we can't take blame for increases."

However, the Chief said that there are factors the Police have control over and the local department tries to take full advantage of them.

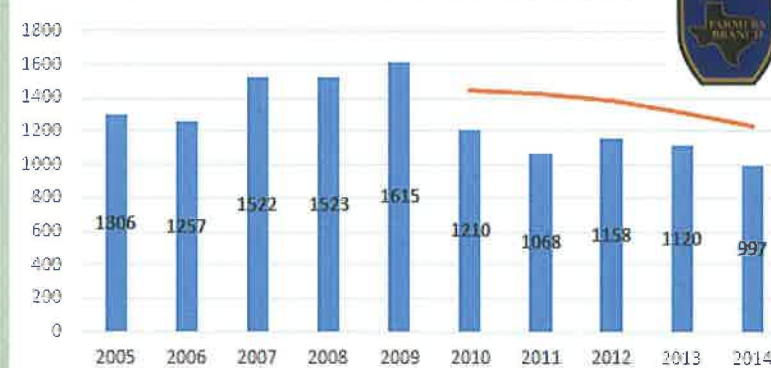
"I do believe that police, working in partnership with the community, can have an impact on crime," he said. "We have the best citizen partners on the planet who support this department, look out for each other and have an open line of communication to share information."

Chief Fuller cited awareness as the first step towards crime prevention but added that technology has been a big help. Auto license plate recognition systems help officers spot wanted people and stolen cars electronically. Citizen Observer is software that allows the department to alert large segments of the population of crime trends as well as provide crime maps that keep residents informed. The software also lets the public send crime tips anonymously



Chief Sid Fuller

Farmers Branch Crime Since 2005



which, he said, has paid off in the arrests of numerous offenders.

"I also believe in the broken window theory," Chief Fuller explained, "The efforts of our City to keep our neighborhoods up and remove blight does have an impact on crime. Once an area becomes run down, it welcomes criminal activity. Farmers Branch works hard to make sure that doesn't happen."

"Most importantly, hardworking, dedicated and well-trained police employees should be credited," the Chief added.

Aquatics Update

Finishing work in progress as Margaret Young

Natatorium nears completion



Miklos Valdez

The layout of the lazy river can be seen from the slide tower at the 'Frog Pond' while the multi-colored play structure sits silently in the background. The Margaret Young Natatorium is expected to open in late March or early April. Frog Pond will open Memorial Day Weekend.

FARMERS BRANCH ~ Construction at the Farmers Branch Aquatics Center is nearing a milestone as the work on the Margaret Young Natatorium is entering the finishing stages.

Officials said tile and decking are among the last tasks remaining on the indoor pools at the Natatorium. The completion of plumbing and installation of fixtures and furnishings will continue until the facility is ready for opening in late March or early April.

Aquatics Manager Miklos Valdez said Memorial Day Weekend remains the targeted opening for the outdoor 'Frog Pond,' which will include a lagoon pool, lazy river, two water slides and a kids play area. He said concrete work should be finished in February with landscaping and fencing to follow.

He said the Aquatics Center is hiring for lifeguard positions along with year-round and seasonal cashiers, concessions staff and swim lesson and aerobics instructors.

For more information, call 972.919.8766.

Landscape Manager ready to do battle with Rose Rosette Disease

FARMERS BRANCH ~ Growing a City of roses requires commitment, skill and sometimes information, in order to promote healthy plants that showcase our streets and neighborhoods.

Farmers Branch Parks Landscape Manager Pam Smith said local rose gardeners should be pruning their roses by the end of February to be ready for the upcoming blooming season.

"If you found some odd looking growth that was abnormal for your variety of rose, it's time to take action to protect the rest of your roses, your neighbor's roses and your City's roses," she said. "Remove and dispose of that rose plant."

Ms. Smith said Rose Rosette Disease (RRD) has made its presence known in Farmers Branch and threatens all our rose plants. The abnormal growth can include witches broom, malformed flowers and leaves, excessive thorniness, red discoloration, lateral shoot elongation and flattened or enlarged stems.

"If you think your rose might be diseased and would like confirmation, please send a picture and contact information to pam.smith@farmersbranchtx.gov," she explained. "I'll be happy to assist you in diagnosing RRD."

"At the current time, there is no known cure or a way to prevent the disease. The good news is that it does not affect the soil and roses can be replanted." Visit www.fbroses.com for more info.



Tom Bryson

Pam Smith

"The Women of Farmers Branch" visit Library

MANSKE LIBRARY ~ In honor of Women's History Month in March, the Farmers Branch Historical Park presents "The Women of Farmers Branch," a temporary exhibit at the Manske Library.

The display will highlight the contributions made by the women who have shaped our community from pioneer days to today. Photographs, objects, and stories, will teach visitors about the history of our city through the eyes of the matriarchs, wives, sisters, and daughters who cultivated it.

Meet Nancy Jane Hughes Cochran who travelled over 650 miles to come to the Republic of Texas, established one of the first farms in Peters Colony, lost her husband and daughter to typhoid, and continued to lead her family, eventually surveying and writing the deed to found Cochran Chapel. Learn about Bessie Asbury Dennis, an artist and mother who, despite personal tragedy, exemplified poise and class to her relations and neighbors. Explore the career of Ida Good, the first telephone operator in Farmers Branch who helped to connect our community to the rest of the world with her switchboard.

The exhibit will be on display from Thursday, March 5 through Thursday, March 26 in the Farmers Branch Manske Library Art Gallery and will be available during all normal library operating hours. The public is invited to the opening of "The Women of Farmers Branch" on Thursday, March 5 from 5 to 7 PM at the Gallery.

Fort Worth Symphony to play Stars & Strings

Continuing the tradition of soaring music under the Texas sky, Liberty Fest presents Stars & Strings will feature the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra in concert on Saturday, May 23. Watch for additional info at fbspecialevents.com.

'Drowsy Chaperone' closes March 1

The Firehouse Theatre continues its 2015 season opener with the offbeat musical 'The Drowsy Chaperone,' a parody of the American musical comedy of the 1920s.

It will be presented at The Firehouse Theatre on select days through March 1. Call 972.620.3747 for info.

Camping Under the Stars set March 14-15

The family-oriented, outdoor event "Camping Under the Stars" is planned March 14-15 in the meadow at the Farmers Branch Historical Park. The \$50 registration fee per campsite includes a community campfire, s'mores and breakfast. Reservations began February 2. For availability, call the Historical Park at 972.406.0184.

Spring Star Parties resume March 24

The Spring series of Star Parties, featuring astronomical observations through high powered telescopes, resumes March 24 at the Farmers Branch Historical Park, with another event planned April 21. For more info call 972.406.0184 or visit texasastro.org.

Senior Dances

The Senior Dance Club holds dances most Monday nights at the Farmers Branch Senior Center at 7 p.m. Admission is \$5.

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| Mar 2 | Southern Pride |
| Mar 9 | Blue Champagne |
| Mar 16 | Will Taylor |
| Mar 23 | Dave Alexander |
| Mar 30 | JC Tippett |