

Bronx hall from hell



INJUSTICE: The \$400 million Bronx Hall of Justice (above), where the new canopy had to be taken down (right).

Probe into inspection 'blunders'

EXCLUSIVE

By CHUCK BENNETT

The state is asking law-enforcement agencies to probe a firm whose slipshod inspectors approved the entranceway to the budget-busting \$400 million Bronx Hall of Justice — including a 75-foot canopy that had to be removed for safety reasons, The Post has learned.

The state Dormitory Authority, which oversaw the problem-plagued Bronx development, says Farmingdale-based Materials Testing Laboratory sent unqualified welding inspectors to review portions of the Criminal Court complex on East 161 Street.

"We contracted for certified welding inspectors. We did not get certified welding inspectors and, as a result, there could have been potential life and safety issues. We referred the matter to the Bronx district attorney and U.S. attorney," said Dormitory Authority spokesman Paul Burgdorf.



N.Y. Post: Robert Kalifus

After a new inspection team reviewed recent construction, it found that three crucial weld locations on the outdoor glass and steel canopy above the main entranceway did not meet standards.

As a result, the state was forced to remove the canopy.

Materials Testing Laboratory said in a statement, "We are unaware of any safety issues related to the

services we performed at the Bronx courthouse. MTL will cooperate with any inquiries into any issues."

The 2½-block Bronx Hall of Justice is supposed to open this month — three years behind schedule and \$100 million over budget. The project suffered a slew of problems: the soil was contaminated with oil, the first contractor was fired for suspected mob ties, and the 200-car underground

garage had a sagging ceiling.

Judges have been complaining about the size of the jury rooms, as well. They say the cramped rooms can hold 14 people — 12 jurors and two alternates — but a bigger space is needed, since there are often more than two alternates.

Additional reporting by Denise Buffa

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Heir \$tiffs ex while living high life

By DAREH GREGORIAN

Being bad has been very, very good for Alexander's department-store heir Bruce Farkas.

He cheated on his now-ex-wife, Arlene, for at least 30 years of their 35-year marriage — including a secret bigamous marriage that produced two kids. And he's been cheating her financially for the decade since their split, crying poverty and stiffing her on the almost \$2 million judges have said he owes her.

In the meantime, he's been spending

millions on himself, living the high life while enlisting family, girlfriends and even the woman he married while hitched to Arlene to make sure his ex doesn't get a penny.

"He just does what he wants," a source familiar with the case said, noting Farkas remarried and spends his days in Miami flying planes, boating and ignoring court orders.

Various judges have blasted him as "shameless" and a "bad guy."

Farkas didn't return a call for comment, and Arlene declined comment.

The pair were teenage sweethearts, and they married Dec. 29, 1959. Farkas' father was the founder of Alexander's, and Farkas went to work in the family business. They had two kids and were soon rolling in money, court papers show.

In 1974, Farkas married Dolores D'Oca in Las Vegas. They had their first child together in 1975, and their second in 1982. Arlene didn't find out about her husband's other wife until 1987, court papers say.

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CROP SHOP CRAZE

Farm shares sizzle

By CHUCK BENNETT

The hottest summer shares aren't just in the Hamptons.

New Yorkers are snapping up shares in organic-farming harvests faster than Sag Harbor rentals as the community-supported agriculture trend blooms.

There are 50 community-supported agriculture clubs, or CSAs, in the city that ensure members a weekly supply of the freshest produce in town. Twenty of them have already sold out their seasonal harvest shares, according to the nonprofit group Just Food.

"This year, we sold out by the beginning of April," said Steven Waxman, coordinator of the Carnegie Hill/Yorkville CSA in Manhattan, which has 190 shares of the Stoneledge Farm in upstate South Cairo. "You definitely have a food element, but there is also a general wariness of commercial produce."

For a fee ranging from \$225 to \$600, New Yorkers can purchase a share in a harvest from a regional organic farmer through their local CSA.

Each week, shareholders collect a big bag of fresh, organic produce containing seven to 10 different vegetables — all delivered personally by the farmer to a makeshift distribution center.

"It starts with just supporting a local farmer and eating fresh, organic vege-

tables. That's the main reason people do it," said Chris Caveglia, coordinator of the Cobble Hill CSA in Brooklyn. "It's cheaper than going to the grocery store, deli or even farmers market."

With 200 shares, Cobble Hill CSA is the city's largest. There were still about 20 shares available, Caveglia said, but those were expected to go by the time the first shipment from the Green Thumb Organic Farm in Water Mill, L.I., arrives later this month.

Part of the attraction of CSAs is getting veggies not found in even the fanciest grocery stores.

"Most people primarily know butternut and acorn squash. We get delicata squash, the sweetest, most amazing squash. Just cut it and bake it. It's fantastic," raved Bernie DeLeo, coordinator of the sold-out Chubby Bunny CSA on the Upper West Side.

Most CSAs will receive their first batch later this month with weekly shipments until late November. In addition to vegetables, CSAs offer fruit, eggs from free-range chickens, meat from organically raised animals, honey, maple syrup and dairy products, such as raw milk or artisan cheeses.

"It's very social," Waxman said. "We have potluck dinners. We have trips to the farm. People get to know their neighbors."

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Big bill for firing N.J. univ. dean

STRATFORD, N.J. — It cost the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey more than \$450,000 in lawyer fees to fire R. Michael Gallagher, a former School of Osteopathic Medicine dean indicted in March on 13 counts of bribery and fraud.

Gallagher, who was on the payroll until November, allegedly created a \$38,000-a-year no-show job for state Sen. Wayne Bryant, who pleaded not guilty to fraud, bribery and pension-padding charges in April. Bryant allegedly steered millions of grant dollars to UMDNJ and the Rutgers-Camden Law School.

AP