

THE BATTALION

Thursday, October 17, 2002

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Judge dismisses drug charge, moves Ryder's trial back

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — A judge dismissed a drug charge Wednesday against actress Winona Ryder and rescheduled her trial for Oct. 24 on three remaining felony counts from her shoplifting arrest.

Superior Court Judge Elden Fox ruled in favor of a prosecution motion to dismiss the charge that Ryder was illegally carrying painkillers when she was arrested last Dec. 12 outside a Saks Fifth Avenue store in Beverly Hills.

"It's unfortunate it's taken them 10 months to do this," said Mark Geragos, Ryder's attorney. "I applaud them."

Geragos said prosecutors had evidence almost immediately after Ryder's arrest that she had a prescription for the two pills, a generic form of the painkiller Percocet.

"The worst thing you can say is that she was trying to save a couple of bucks," Geragos quipped outside court in reference to the generic pills.

Deputy District Attorney Ann Rundle said after the hearing that the charge was dropped after defense lawyers provided a sworn declaration from Ryder's doctor that he'd given her the Oxycodone pills without a prescription.

"The responsibility for providing the drug would be the doctor's," said Sandi Gibbons, a spokeswoman for the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office. "Therefore, the criminal responsibility is not (Ryder's)."

Ryder, accused of shoplifting \$6,000 worth of merchandise, will stand trial on the remaining charges of felony grand theft, burglary and vandalism. She faces up to three years in prison if convicted.

The 30-year-old star of such films as "Girl, Interrupted" and "Heathers" smiled at court employees and seemed upbeat as she chatted with the bailiff before the hearing, but she didn't speak during the proceedings and offered no comment while leaving the courtroom.

Distributor recalls 'Kung Fool' costume after Asians protest

A costume distributor said Wednesday it has stopped shipping its "Kung Fool" outfit to retailers after Asian-American groups complained it was racist.

Groups including the Organization of Chinese Americans, the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium and the National Asian American Student Conference said the Halloween costume perpetuates stereotypes. They also called for Disguise Inc. to remove it from retail stores.

The company, headquartered in Poway, Calif., said the adult costume — which includes a mask with buckteeth and slanted-eyes — has already been shipped to retailers across the country, including Party City and Wal-Mart. No more will be distributed.

The outfits now belongs to the stores, Disguise said, though the company will accept returns from retailers.

Olympics

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registration table where they will be assigned a duty, Menthey said.

"The contestants, or anyone who gets to experience this natatorium, gets the best experience because it's a world-class facility with great people," said Mark Hanken, director of competition and games.

Students and community members are encouraged to come out Thursday to support the athletes and cheer them on while they are playing golf, Hanken said. "There are some great athletes within our program."

This year marks the first time the Olympics have included a triathlon, a combination of biking, running and swimming, Hanken said. Last year was a trial run, where all athletes who participated received a ribbon.

The eight athletes competing in the triathlon have been training with experienced coaches, Hanken said.

Boeck, who volunteered with Andy when she was in high school, will be stationed at Athlete Village on Saturday.

"It's a fun way to give back to the community," she said.

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