

# THE UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO Argonaut The Students' Voice

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## Missing

Nov. 23 & 26, 1993



### • Weather •

Today is mostly cloudy with a chance of rain. Highs will be in the low 40s. Wednesday and Thursday will see a chance of snow and highs 35 - 40.

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### Darin Crisp Staff Writer

The long trial of the girl who gave birth alone in her dorm room a year ago is over, and she's been sentenced to five years with the possibility of parole in one year.

On Tuesday morning, Megan Heber placed her hands over her face, sighed heavily, then sat forward with an air of resignation and relief to hear the rest of Judge John H. Bengtson's comments. Her parents sat silently behind her, sadly looking on. Minutes after the hearing they rushed out to find out how they could visit her in jail.

Heber gave birth alone in her dorm room Oct. 4, 1992, and subsequently caused the death of the infant by "not acting to cause it to live," say police reports.

In one more twist in this odd case, Bengtson admonished the defending attorneys to monitor

the Idaho Board of Corrections. If they found the spirit of his sentence violated, they were to appeal to him and he would likely overturn his own decision.

This instruction was in response to Heber's demonstrated mental instability both before and after the death of her baby. According to Bengtson, Heber has attempted suicide at least six times since May.

"My main goal in imposing this sentence," Bengtson said, "is to provide for the strict rehabilitation of this defendant. If the state doesn't obey this sentence, I may very well reverse the decision."

Bengtson's sentence stipulated Heber be incarcerated in a suitable treatment facility for at least one year, then be allowed to go through the parole system to finish the remaining four years of her sentence.

Dr. Mike Emery, a consulting

ness by the defense, testified that in his opinion, Heber was indeed disturbed, and she often refused to confront her problems. It was his recommendation, he said, that she be made to answer to the court through either probation or incarceration in order to relieve the intense guilt which causes her self-destructive acts.

He also recommended a period of some sort of service to the "Body Public" to help her pay her debt to society. He mentioned Heber had said she wanted to work with unwed mothers and children in some capacity. Emery said he felt she wasn't ready to work with children yet, but helping unwed pregnant women would probably be quite therapeutic.

Bengtson used some of Emery's advice when handing down his sentence, saying "Incarceration is necessary, so

she will not commit it herself."

Bengtson's attitude toward the treatment of the defendant is a switch from earlier this year when he claimed to be the victim's spokesman, since no one else seemed concerned with his rights.

Just before she was sentenced for negligent manslaughter, Heber read a short statement to the court in which she claimed to be extremely remorseful, explained she understood her crime and said she trusted she would be treated fairly.

Heber claimed her pregnancy resulted from an acquaintance rape suffered at a New Year's Eve party in Eureka, Calif. After she transferred up to UI, she wore loose fitting clothes, and none of her acquaintances asked her about it.

• SEE HEBER PAGE 2

# TRI-STATE

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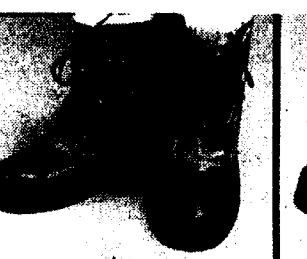
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