



Butte County

LAND OF NATURAL WEALTH AND BEAUTY

MICHAEL L. RAMSEY

District Attorney

FRANCISCO R. ZARATE
Chief Deputy District Attorney

ANTHONY G. KOESTER
Chief Investigator

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

March 31, 2007

Woman pleads guilty to drunk driving, injuring 5 in pedicab crash

A Chico State senior plead guilty this past Thursday to driving with more than three times the legal limit of alcohol in her system and running down a pedicab last September carrying five persons, injuring them all seriously.

Janet Edna Stephens, age 22 at the time of the September 16, 2006 incident, appeared before Butte County Superior Court Judge Sandra McLean and entered her plea as charged to a single count of felony driving under the influence and five additional allegations of causing serious bodily injury. Stephens had been scheduled for an April 16 jury trial on the charges, but asked on Thursday for a continuance of the trial date. Judge McLean denied the continuance in the morning and Stephens entered her guilty plea that afternoon.

Chico Police reports established Stephens had been driving at a .25 percent blood alcohol northbound on Nord Avenue at 1:28 a.m. when she overtook a pedicab with a driver and four passengers (two males and two females) who were returning from celebrating the 21st birthday of one of their group. Stephens hit the pedicab from the rear just north of the Big Chico Creek bridge throwing the group into her car's windshield and onto the pavement. The pedicab driver suffered a compound fracture to his leg; the female birthday celebrant suffered a broken skull, broken jaw, the loss of four teeth and several severe lacerations to her head; the other female passenger also suffered a severe laceration to her head; the male passengers suffered broken legs including two compound fractures to the leg of one.

Judge McLean referred Stephens to the probation department for a sentencing report to be used at a sentencing hearing on May 29, 2007. She faces up to 18 years in state prison on the charges. Stephens remains free until that date on a \$75,000 bail bond posted shortly after the collision with additional conditions that she consume no alcohol.