

SPORTS  
**TENNIS**

La Porte's Josh Cornwell, Bobby Barden advance in regional

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BITE  
**IDEAS ABOUND**

From one rotisserie, 25 delicious ideas for dinner

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THE LA PORTE COUNTY  
**HERALD-ARGUS**

**89-year-old drug courier pleads guilty**

DETROIT — An 89-year-old Michigan City man pleaded guilty Tuesday in Detroit to serving as a drug mule in a scheme to distribute more than 1,400 pounds of cocaine.

Leo Sharp is one of the oldest criminal defendants to step inside Detroit's federal court.

He was contrite and very talkative during his appear-



Sharp

87 in 2011 when a Michigan state trooper pulled him over

ance, saying he had never before committed a crime and worked for a drug organization because he needed money.

Sharp was a Michigan state trooper pulled him over

on Interstate 94, west of Detroit.

Anxious and upset about what the trooper would find, he declared, "Just kill me and let me leave this planet."

In court, Sharp wore a dark suit that had a lapel pin signifying his service in World War II. He playfully winked at drug agents who investigated the case. His hearing aids weren't strong enough

so U.S. District Judge Nancy Edmunds invited Sharp to stand just a few feet away from her.

"You knew it was cocaine, right?" Edmunds asked.

"I did," Sharp replied.

"Oh, yes."

The delivery of more than 200 pounds wasn't Sharp's first interstate haul. He admitted he was responsible for more than 1,400 pounds of

drugs. The government said it has evidence that Sharp was transporting marijuana and cocaine from the West Coast back in 2000.

Nonetheless, prosecutors are showing mercy by recommending a five-year prison sentence because of Sharp's age and his war service.

It's a significant break: The sentencing guidelines, which

aren't mandatory, call for a minimum of 14 years.

Defense attorney Darryl Goldberg said he will ask for less than five years when Sharp returns to court on Feb. 11.

Sharp owes \$500,000 as part of the plea deal and has agreed to give up his lily nursery in Apopka, Fla.

— The Associated Press

**A LOOK INSIDE**



ABOVE: La Porte firefighters demonstrate how to break into a car to save lives with the "Jaws of Life" rescue tool during the department's annual open house at La Porte Fire Station 1 on Saturday.



LEFT: Dot Kesling of the Lindsey O'Brien Kesling Wishing Tree Foundation speaks with children about her organization, which was established in 2010 to raise awareness of carbon monoxide poisoning after the death of her daughter Lindsey. It is seeking signatures for a petition to require carbon monoxide detectors in Indiana homes. The organization gave out 50 free carbon monoxide detectors during an open house at La Porte Fire Station 1. For more information, go to lokwishingtreefoundation.org.

Photos by Matt Fritz

**More funds approved for city hall upgrade**

By MATT FRITZ

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LA PORTE — An additional \$213,423 in expenditures has been approved for the La Porte City Hall renovation project.

But officials said much of the money is going toward additional improvements to make city operations more efficient, and not to unexpected details in the project.

During a meeting of the La Porte Board of Public Works, members voted unanimously for a change order of more than \$200,000 to cover expenses of, among other things, swapping locations of the mayor's office and the utility office, and bringing down the treasurer's office and combining it with utilities.

La Porte Mayor Blair Milo said the treasurer's office oversees utilities so this move will make it easier for the offices to work together.

The renovation project, which initially cost about \$1.12 million, also includes a revamp of the inside and outside of city hall, and improvements to make the 101-year-old building more handicapped accessible and technologically capable.

The improvements initially approved for the project

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**Shannon makes initial court appearance**

By JESSICA O'BRIEN  
For The Herald-Argus

MICHIGAN CITY — Tommy Shannon Jr., 22, made his initial appearance by video in La Porte Superior Court 1 before Senior Judge Paul Baldoni on Tuesday, charged in the death of 2-year-old Nizeir Brown.

According to reports, Brown died on Aug. 13 in the 200 block of East Seventh

Street. La Porte County Chief Deputy Coroner Mark Huffman reported that the child died of blunt force trauma to the abdomen.

Shannon, the boyfriend of the child's mother, is facing charges of murder, battery resulting in death (class A felony) and battery resulting in serious bodily injury (class B felony).

If convicted, Shannon could receive 45 to 65 years on the

murder charge, 20 to 50 years for class A felony battery and six to 20 years for class B felony battery.

Preliminary pleas of not guilty were entered on all charges. He is being held at the La Porte County Jail without bond. Baldoni granted a two-week continuance for Shannon to obtain legal representation. His hearing was postponed to Oct. 24, at which time he will appear by video for a status

hearing. An omnibus hearing was scheduled for Dec. 12 at 8:30 a.m.

Brown's mother, Regina Brown, is also facing charges of murder, battery (class A felony) and neglect of a dependent (class B felony). She will appear in La Porte Superior Court 1 on Thursday for her initial hearing.

The boy's maternal grandmother, Derris Baylor, is also facing charges in his death.

She will make her initial appearance before Judge William Boklund in La Porte Superior Court 4 on Oct. 30. She faces charges of failure to report (class B misdemeanor) and obstruction of justice (class D felony).

Anyone with information regarding this case is encouraged to contact Detective Sgt. Kevin Havlin of the Michigan City Police Department at (219) 874-3221, ext. 342.

**THURSDAY WEATHER**  
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**74 53**  
**SUNNY**



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