



**Water under the bridge**



A kayaker paddles on the Boardman River in Traverse City on Wednesday.

Record-Eagle/Mike Krebs

T A X  
**TIF debate back as DDA plans future**

*City, DDA leaders hear results of early input for Moving Downtown Forward*

BY JORDAN TRAVIS  
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TRAVERSE CITY — Questions over whether Traverse City should continue a tax increment finance plan to pay for downtown projects loomed large during an open house.

Fewer than a dozen people met in the City Opera House Wednesday night, but the questions they asked were anything but small. They had some ideas to share as the DDA works on a strategic plan for the next few decades, both on what overall goals should be included and how to fund them.

Brad Segal is president of Progressive Urban Management Associates, the firm DDA CEO Jean Derenzy said the authority picked for the planning effort. It's called Moving Downtown Forward.

Segal explained how the funding mechanism works: as the taxable values of properties within the TIF district grow, that increased value goes to a separate fund for projects within the district.

For TIF 97, that's over the 1997 baseline from when the city created the district that maps show covers roughly two-thirds of the DDA's district.

It's one of the few tools that Michigan allows local governments for funding big-ticket infrastructure projects that benefit more than just a city's residents, Segal said.

"One argument for this, particularly in the state of Michigan, is that, yeah you've got a region sharing in the cost of this, but particularly in Traverse City the downtown is a regional

**SEE DDA PAGE 2A**

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY

**Inspection backlog clogging drain system**

*Drain commissioner requesting funds*

BY PATTI BRANDT BURGESS  
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TRAVERSE CITY — The Grand Traverse County drain commissioner has requested funding to take care of a 15-year backlog of drain maintenance and to

hire a consultant to create a schedule for future upkeep.

Commissioner Andy Smits, who has held the post since January 2021, proposed what he says is a significant increase in the budget for the department, which consists of him. Smits said he is still working on the proposal and does not yet have a dollar amount.

Smits is retired after more than 35 years as a

professional engineer and said he has the skills to do the job, though many elected to the post in past years did not.

"The problem, in part, is a lack of service to the drainage district the county has created," Smits said. "That has resulted in non-functioning or poorly-functioning drainage systems ... We're standing in a deep hole and that's why we're asking."

Smits is also asking for a

salary increase. The job is considered part-time and he is paid about \$18,000 per year, joking that those who work at McDonald's make more than he does.

Because of its marginal salary, the elected office does not attract the talent the job needs, Smits said. The person managing the county drain system should have construction management and administrative

**SEE DRAIN PAGE 2A**

IN MEMORY

**Althea Petritz 'left a lasting impression'**

*She played key role in formation of The Cherry Hut, Crystal Mountain Resort*

BY MARK URBAN  
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TRAVERSE CITY — The Michigan Legacy Art Park honored Althea Kraker Petritz with the Legacy Award in 2010. But her legacy and continuing impact on the region began

more than 50 years before that award, including playing an integral role in long-time Benzie County businesses Crystal Mountain Resort in Thompsonville and The Cherry Hut in Beulah.

Petritz died on June 15 in Traverse City. Born on Aug. 24, 1923, she was 98 years old.

"She's was absolutely remarkable," said daughter Mimi Appel. "Like no other. She was a beautiful soul and it was felt by everyone she touched."

"She left a lasting impression on people."

Althea's parents, James

Lewis and Dorothy Rogers Kraker, started what became the Cherry Hut 100 years ago, a business she owned and operated from 1950 to 1958 with her late husband, George Karl Petritz, who died in 2010.

In 1955, Petritz became director of the newly formed Buck Hills Ski Club, "whose mission was to build a community ski hill near Thompsonville and increase access to outdoor winter recreation for local families," according to her obituary. Brought to life

**SEE PETRITZ PAGE 5A**



Special to the Record-Eagle

Althea Kraker Petritz played a key role in the formation of longtime Benzie County businesses The Cherry Hut and Crystal Mountain Resort. Petritz died June 15 at the age of 98.



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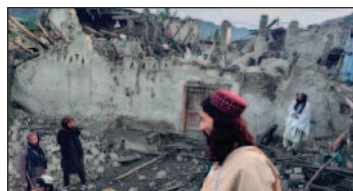
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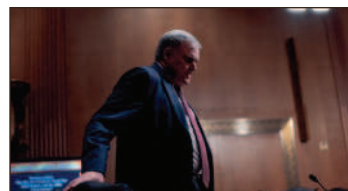
**Midday Dailies:** 1-7-7, 8-2-6-4  
**Dailies:** 3-1-4, 7-1-1-8  
**Fantasy 5:** 02-13-20-29-33  
**Classic 47:** 05-10-17-21-25-27  
**Keno:** 04-05-06-09-12-23-27-33-40-41-47-51-52-55-56-60-63-64-66-70-73-79  
**Mega Millions jackpot:** \$312 million  
**Powerball:** 6-10-31-48-56  
**Power Ball:** 12  
**Power Play:** x3

**WHAT'S INSIDE**



**World:** Earthquake kills at least 1,000 people.

**Page 6A**



**Business:** Tax returns pile up, phone delays worsen.

**Page 1D**

**WEATHER**



**High:** 81 **Low:** 64

**Page 6B**

**INDEX**

Advice .....6C  
Business .....1D  
Classifieds .....2, 3, 5, 6D  
Comics .....4D  
GO .....1-5B  
Nation/World .....6A  
Obituaries .....5C  
Opinion .....4-5A  
Region/State .....3A  
Sports .....1-4C

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# PETRITZ

*Althea Petritz 'left a lasting impression'*

FROM PAGE 1A

in 1955-1956, the Petritz family and two partners bought Buck Hills in 1966 and renamed it Crystal Mountain.

Crystal Mountain remains in her family's ownership today. One of Petritz's six children, Chris MacInnes, is president of Crystal Mountain Resort. Chris' husband, Jim MacInnes, was CEO for 36 years.

"Though small in stature, Althea had a bigger-than-life vision and a positive energy that was infectious," Chris MacInnes said of her mother in an email. "A self-defined, civic leader she focused her energy on doing good — for others, the environment and our community ... with fun always being part of the equation!"

Benzie Area Historical Society and Museum Executive Director Barb Mort said Althea was the one came up with the roadside farm stand that would grow into The Cherry Hut. Mort said it's hard to talk about Benzie County without her name popping up.

"Almost every part of our history ties back to Althea," Mort said. "She was part of one of the oldest farm families in the county. (With The Cherry Hut and Crystal Mountain), Althea was at the very beginning of both of those businesses and that's very impressive."

Beyond her accomplishments in business, two of her daughters said their mother's ability to bring out the best in people of all ages was probably her



Althea Kraker Petritz kayaks in this 1992 photo.

biggest attribute.

Appel said a family friend recently described Petritz as "a giant of kindness when I needed it most. A saint in a tight, little package of joy."

"She just had a great way of seeing exactly what a person needed affirmed in themselves," Appel said of her mother.

"... her hallmark was an insatiable interest in and concern for others," MacInnes said in an email. "She wanted to know your story. She listened intently (it took her forever to get through the grocery store and contributed to her being perennially late) and she generously shared her gifts, whether material, or, often, the gift of time."

Mort said Althea Petritz wasn't one to toot her own horn and didn't need to, because she had a lot of other people to do it

for her. Mort said her "indomitable spirit" made her a role model for a lot of people, but she always did it with a smile and positive energy. Mort said Petritz displayed a "servant leadership" quality, never asking another to do a job she wouldn't perform.

Althea Petritz is survived by her six children, Chris MacInnes (Jim), George Lewis Petritz, David James Petritz (Iris Herrero), Dosie Kermod (Steve), Mimi Appel (Gary) and Laura Lee Petritz. She also had nine grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.

Althea Petritz graduated from Benzonia High School in 1940 and Michigan State College in 1945 with a degree in physical education, according to her obituary. She attended Northwestern University, where

she earned her physical therapy certification.

At Northwestern was where she met George Petritz. The couple was married in October 1946 and spent their honeymoon camping on the Manistee River.

"She was a Renaissance woman," Appel said.

In 1946, the couple moved to Beulah and started a business based on her family's famous Cherry Hut pie recipe. Pet-Ritz Frozen Pies became an employer in the region and was purchased by the Pet Milk Company in 1955, according to her obituary.

That was when Althea and George Petritz helped establish what would become Crystal Mountain Resort. Appel said it was a group effort to establish the business.

"There were a lot of people together that

worked real hard," Appel said. "Her passion and determination was infectious."

And it didn't wane as she got older. Appel said her mother took up windsurfing when she was in her 60s and 70s and taught yoga when she was nearly 80 years old.

"She carried that sense of adventure until the very end," said Appel, noting that her mother accompanied a cousin on a trip to Kenya at the age of 94 and went on a short excursion on the Platte River this October.

Her love of the outdoors was also something that endured during her lifetime and will live on. Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy Executive Director Glen Chown said she was one of the early Benzie County leaders when the organization began in 1991 and



Special to the Record-Eagle

Althea Kraker Petritz dances with her husband, George Karl Petritz, in this 1971 photo. Althea Petritz died June 15 at the age of 98.

made one of the first land donations as an addition to the Trapp Farm Nature Preserve.

"What an incredible woman," Chown said. "She was a force to be reckoned with — a force for good. She was strong, but she was also kind with a generous heart. She had a very clear-headed vision. She loved the outdoors and she loved Benzie County."

"She was small in stature, but mighty in good deeds."

Appel and MacInnes said their mother always showed compassion for others, including caring for her caregivers near the end of her life.

"Kindness, compassion and love just kind of emanated from her," Appel said.

"Though we will miss her beautiful smile and sparkling eyes that said welcome, we will be inspired to continue breaking trails and making connections ... as was Althea's way," Chris MacInnes added in an email.

A funeral mass will be held at St. Ann's Catholic Church in Frankfort today, according to her obituary. A Celebration of Life is planned for later this summer.

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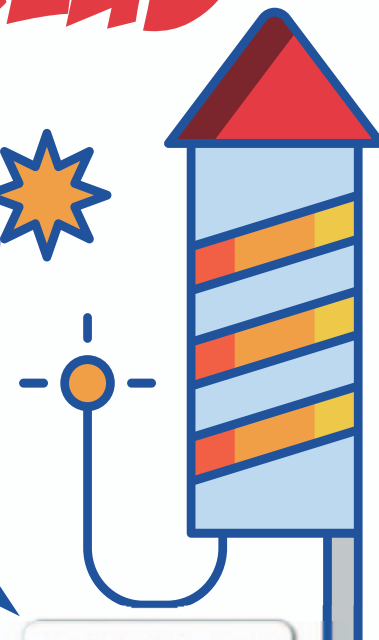


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