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Community activist Kobryn dies at 75

Fri, Feb 20, 2004

KRISTA J. KARCH
Observer-Dispatch

Nancy Kobryn could hold her own against area heavyweights.

A longtime community activist and all-around volunteer, Kobryn worked to better the Mohawk Valley, and didn't mind going head to head with anyone to get the job done.

Kobryn died Wednesday at 75.

"I think it's a diplomatic faux pas," she said publicly when Utica Mayor Tim Julian canceled a 2001 meeting with Chinese businessmen on a trip organized through Kobryn's ChinAmerica sister city program.

Julian pulled the plug on the meeting when an American spy plane was held in China after it collided with a Chinese fighter jet.

When Ralph J. Eannace, Jr., then the Oneida County executive, suggested his meeting with the businessmen should occur under the radar of local media, Kobryn threatened to pull out.

The meeting went on as she had planned, with a media presence.

Kobryn could be seen all over Utica. Her name frequently appeared in the Letters to the Editor of the Observer-Dispatch on topics from the Arab-Israeli conflict to Hillary Clinton to Griffiss Air Force Base.

She volunteered for the Boilermaker Road Race and created a Web site to publicize the city of Utica.

Most of all, Kobryn worked for those around her.

"She just loved people," said Shirley Scialdo, a friend, on Thursday. "She was a kind soul."

There are no calling hours.

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