

EDITORIALS

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Soyuzivka's Sonia

By Staff

Tuesday, July 25, marked the 40th day since the passing into eternity of Sonia Semanyszyn, a loyal employee of Soyuzivka since late 1988, who was a familiar and friendly face to countless visitors at this Ukrainian heritage center in Kerhonkson, N.Y. It's not often that this editorial space is used for a reflection on someone's passing. But, like Soyuzivka, Sonia herself was an institution.

Sonia (her given name was Sofia) served in various capacities during nearly 30 years at Soyuzivka, from office manager to, most recently, billing and accounting manager, working under managers John A. Flis and Nestor Paslawsky, and with colleagues such as John Kocur, Sheila Zahajkewycz, Stefko Drabyk, Andrey Sonevytsky, Marianka Hawryluk... They and many others constituted Sonia's Soyuzivka family.

Many who came to Soyuzivka for the 11th annual Ukrainian Cultural Festival just two weekends ago remembered Sonia, noting that it just wasn't the same without her... Several even caught themselves reflexively saying things like "I'll have to ask Sonia" or "Sonia will take care of it."

For us at the Ukrainian National Association's two newspapers, The Ukrainian Weekly and Svoboda, Sonia was someone we could always count on, whether that was for information about the annual Miss Soyuzivka weekend or the latest news from Soyuzivka. When Sonia said she would find what we needed, she always delivered. We were grateful to count her among our colleagues and friends.

Those who were lucky enough to get to know Sonia remember a kind person who was always willing and able to help out anyone who needed assistance – guests and employees of Soyuzivka, especially those who had arrived from Ukraine, and members of the local community. She was actively involved in her parish and in the local branch of the Ukrainian National Women's League of America.

That's why some 300 people – family, friends, colleagues and Soyuzivka regulars – came to the local funeral home in Kerhonkson on Sunday evening, June 25, for the panakhyda (memorial service). A couple hundred were there the next day for the funeral liturgy at Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church, just down the hill from Soyuzivka, and interment at the nearby cemetery, the final resting place for many local Ukrainians. The "tryzna" (memorial repast) held afterwards in Soyuzivka's dining room was nothing less than an outpouring of love for Sonia, who left this earth much too early at the age of 60.

A fund in Sonia's memory has been established by the Ukrainian National Foundation, the owner of Soyuzivka Heritage Center, and a memorial garden featuring a pergola, benches and her beloved sunflowers is to be established at Soyuzivka.

It is evident that Soyuzivka's Sonia is missed by many. Her colleagues cite a void at Soyuzivka, and her photo graces the back office in the Main House that was her domain. Rest in peace, dearest Sonia.

4 free views left

