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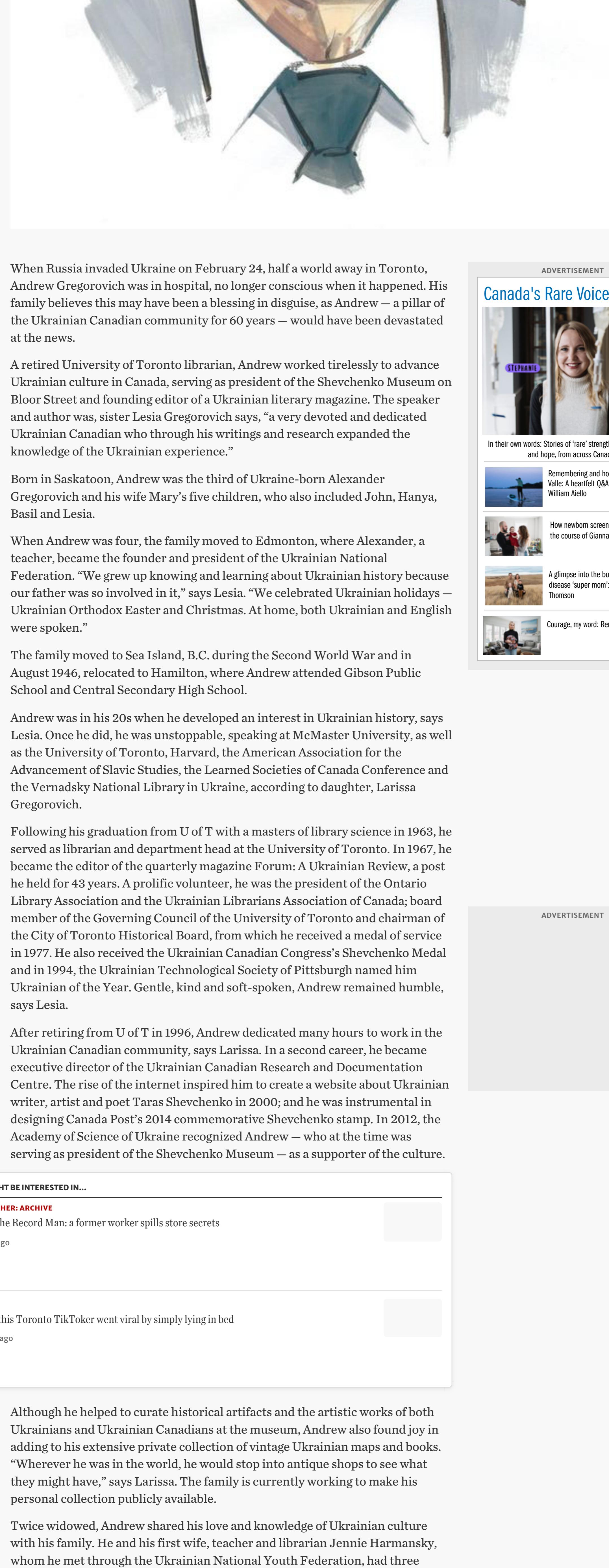
Remembering Andrew Gregorovich, a librarian and author who promoted Ukrainian culture in Canada

The late Andrew Gregorovich worked to promote Ukrainian culture in Canada

By Tracey Tong Special to the Star
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When Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, half a world away in Toronto, Andrew Gregorovich was in hospital, no longer conscious when it happened. His family believes this may have been a blessing in disguise, as Andrew — a pillar of the Ukrainian Canadian community for 60 years — would have been devastated at the news.

A retired University of Toronto librarian, Andrew worked tirelessly to advance Ukrainian culture in Canada, serving as president of the Shevchenko Museum on Bloor Street and founding editor of a Ukrainian literary magazine. The speaker and author was, sister Lesia Gregorovich says, "a very devoted and dedicated Ukrainian Canadian who through his writings and research expanded the knowledge of the Ukrainian experience."

Born in Saskatoon, Andrew was the third of Ukraine-born Alexander Gregorovich and his wife Mary's five children, who also included John, Hanya, Basil and Lesia.

When Andrew was four, the family moved to Edmonton, where Alexander, a teacher, became the founder and president of the Ukrainian National Federation. "We grew up knowing and learning about Ukrainian history because our father was so involved in it," says Lesia. "We celebrated Ukrainian holidays — Ukrainian Orthodox Easter and Christmas. At home, both Ukrainian and English were spoken."

The family moved to Sea Island, B.C. during the Second World War and in August 1946, relocated to Hamilton, where Andrew attended Gibson Public School and Central Secondary High School.

Andrew was in his 20s when he developed an interest in Ukrainian history, says Lesia. Once he did, he was unstoppable, speaking at McMaster University, as well as the University of Toronto, Harvard, the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, the Learned Societies of Canada Conference and the Vernadsky National Library in Ukraine, according to daughter, Larissa Gregorovich.

Following his graduation from U of T with a masters of library science in 1963, he served as librarian and department head at the University of Toronto. In 1967, he became the editor of the quarterly magazine Forum: A Ukrainian Review, a post he held for 43 years. A prolific volunteer, he was the president of the Ontario Library Association and the Ukrainian Librarians Association of Canada; board member of the Governing Council of the University of Toronto and chairman of the City of Toronto Historical Board, from which he received a medal of service in 1977. He also received the Ukrainian Canadian Congress's Shevchenko Medal and in 1994, the Ukrainian Technological Society of Pittsburgh named him Ukrainian of the Year. Gentle, kind and soft-spoken, Andrew remained humble, says Lesia.

After retiring from U of T in 1996, Andrew dedicated many hours to work in the Ukrainian Canadian community, says Larissa. In a second career, he became executive director of the Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre. The rise of the internet inspired him to create a website about Ukrainian writer, artist and poet Taras Shevchenko in 2000; and he was instrumental in designing Canada Post's 2014 commemorative Shevchenko stamp. In 2012, the Academy of Science of Ukraine recognized Andrew — who at the time was serving as president of the Shevchenko Museum — as a supporter of the culture.

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