



## **ENGAGEMENTS IN CORNWALL: 1971- 1998**

### ***A SELECTION OF STEPHEN GILL'S CULTURAL AND LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM 1971 TO 1998 AROUND THE SEAWAY AREA OF CORNWALL, ONTARIO, CANADA. CORNWALL IS HIS HOME TOWN.***

***Please note that Stephen Gill has been in Canada for a little more than fifty years. Though internationally known, he has been active also in his hometown. This list includes mostly the activities that were covered by the media. There is a lot more. He left the position of director with the Children's Aids Society of SDG in 2012.***

***Stephen Gill's activities at provincial, national and international levels are not included here***

\*1971-1973: Chairman, the World Federalists of Canada Club at the University of Ottawa. Also, chairman of Education Committee of the Ottawa Branch of the World Federalists of Canada. Arranged several gatherings of students and professors on world peace;

\*1972: Discusses Bangladesh issue based on his book, *The Discovery of Bangladesh*, with the members of Optimist Club at Towne Line Motel (*Standard-Freeholder*, June 15, 1972, p.9);

\*1972: Presents his poetry at cable 11 (*Standard-Freeholder*, Dec. 8,);

\*1973: Invites local writers to start a group to help one another (*Standard-Freeholder*, April 2, 1973, p.7);

\*1973: Elected as chairman of The Cornwall Writers Guild (*SF*, April 12, 1973);

\*1973: Organizes "India Evening" at Beach Hall of St. Paul's United Church on Sydney Street on the 6th of May 1973 to promote understanding among ethnic groups. (*Standard-Freeholder*, May 7, 1973

\*1973: Plans to edit and publish an anthology of local poets. "The man responsible for

creating the group (Cornwall Writers Guild) is Stephen Gill... After several false starts at trying to form a writers circle, he finally got the guild launched in March...."  
(*Standard-Freeholder*, June 29, 1973, p.9);

\*1971-73, 1977-79: Edited the Canadian section of the World Federalists newspaper, published from Ottawa;

\*1973-74: Interviews authors for CBM-FM, McGill University, for the program OUR WRITERS;

**\*1974: Seeks a council seat:**

**QUOTES: "He finds literature and other arts neglected, and feels the local administration across Canada ought to take an increased interest in the creative people in the municipalities of the country..."(SF. Oct. 28, 1974);**

\*1974: Arranges and participates in a poetry reading at Cornwall Collegiate auditorium (SF, Jan 25, p.7);

\*1974: Launches three books at Beach Hall. Writers were entertained with tea and poetry reading (SF., April 24, 1974);

\*1974: Gill succeeds in arranging to have the books by the local authors displayed at the local library (SF. May 6, p.7);

\*1974: Guest speaker at Kirk Hill Church (SF, July 6);

\*1974: Gill invites local writers to meet at his residence to solidify the writer's guild (SF, Sept. 25, 1974, p.13)

\*1974: "An anthology of Seaway Valley Poets is planned by the Cornwall Writers Guild... Editor is Stephen Gill." (*The Ottawa Citizen*, Dec. 21, 1974);

\*1976: *Seaway Valley Poets*, anthology of twenty-six poets, was published by the only local book publisher Vesta Publications Ltd. Eds. Stephen Gill & Fr. Roland Hamel. "The anthology "refutes the charge that the Seaway Valley is a depressed area--it is not so at least in the field of creative literature." (from the preface of the book by the eds.);

\*1976-1978: Interviews writers on cable 11 under *Artist Corner*. Interviews several writers per week. It was aired every Monday and Thursday;

\*1976: "Stephen Gill doesn't think books by local authors are getting the support they deserve...(SF. Feb. 3, 1976, p.7);

\*1976: Organizes a wine & cheese party and reading by The Seaway Valley Poets on February 14 in the basement of St. Felix Church, 100 Montreal Road (*Cornwall Weekly News*, Feb. 11, p.7);

\*1976: Organizes a poetry reading at St. Lawrence College on the 7th of April (*Echoes*, the newsletter of the college, March 19, 1976, p.3);

\*1976: Arranges a display of books by local authors and artists at Milles Roche Hall, part of Canada Week activities in the city (*SF*. June 29, 1976, p.22);

\*1976: Advises local writers about writing and how to get published (see the article "Time is the True Test for Writer's Ability" in *Standard-Freeholder* by Margaret Penney, Oct. 19, 1976);

\*1976: Offers to write a history of Cornwall (*Cornwall Weekly News*, Oct. 20, p.2; *Standard-Freeholder*, Nov. 9, 1976);

**\*1976: Seeks election as an alderman. Wants development of art and culture. (*SF*. Nov. 13, p.7)**

\*1977: Succeeds forming the Cornwall branch of the Canadian Author's Association on Thursday, May 12. Gill was elected as president at the first meeting held at St. Lawrence College. Fred Kerner, director of Harlequin Publishing, and Ontario Regional Director of C.A.A explained the aims of the Association which started in 1926. Gill chaired the meeting. (*Cornwall Weekly New*, May 25, 1977, p.26; *The Glengarry News*, May 26, 1977, p. 15)

**"Your organization is most fortunate to have a competent person, as yourself, responsible for its affairs" (A letter from Ed. Lumley, M.P. May 27, 1977)**

\*1977: The Cornwall branch of CAA holds a meeting in the library of Osnabruck High School, where "Stephen Gill, President, outlined several future projects.....(*Cornwall Weekly News*, August 17. 1977, p.11);

\*1977- 1979: Advises local writers about writing through a regular column "Calling All Authors" (*Standard-Freeholder*, Oct. 15, 1977, p. 6A);

\*1978: Organizes another poetry reading at St. Lawrence College on the 19th of January, 1978. Guest was Len Gasparini, an established poet from Windsor. (*SF* January 20, 1978);

1978: Organizes a wine and cheese party under Vesta Publications on the 27th of April at the auditorium of St. Joseph's Villa in Cornwall to promote fellowship among the writers of the area. Several writers from Ottawa and Montreal attended the party. Books were displayed. (*Cornwall Weekly News*, May 10, 1978, p.7);

\*1978: Writes against censorship and urges stronger government action to protect the interests of authors. (*Cornwall Weekly News*, July 26, p.3; *Glengarry News*, August 9);

**\*1974--1990: President, Vesta Publications Ltd., promoted more than sixty Canadian writers from more than one hundred and twenty authors;**

**QUOTES: "Finding a serious writer is like finding a rose in the desert, publisher and author Stephen Gill told the Montreal Branch of Canadian Authors Association meeting at Sir George William University recently. " His own firm "was formed to find just such roses... Mr. Gill is interested in building bridges of understanding**

**between the various Canadian ethnic communities." (*The Link*, October 15, 1976)...**

"Gill prefers to publish books that contribute something to society. He believes that publishers and even authors have an obligation to society. "( *The Gazette of Montreal*, January 20, 1979).

*The Recorder And Times* writes: " Vesta Publications, a small publishing house in Cornwall, caters especially to unknown and previously unpublished writers in eastern Ontario ... Mr. Gill said Vesta sees its role as giving an author's work its first public exposure. After this first publication, an author's work is more likely to be accepted by a larger established publishing house." (August 25, 1976, p.16);

**\*1976: Fights another municipal election. He wanted development of art and culture. (*SF*. Nov. 13, p.7):**

**QUOTES:** "Gill wanted a new way of looking at art in Cornwall...Most municipalities don't do anything for culture, and I wanted the local people to be more active.

**'So he ran as an independent alderman on a cultural platform in a historical city which is an important seaway location. ... He doesn't see himself going into political arena again for he has books to write and publish. But now he's getting his cultural message across in a regular half hour television show on Cornwall Cable TV where he interviews writers and artists." (*The Montreal Star*, Feb.21, 1978);**

\*1977: Receives a grant from the federal government to hire young people to do research for a book of history of Cornwall and its surrounding areas. The researchers under the guidance of Gill find that not all the area's history is buried in musty records. (*The Chesterville Record*, July 13, 1977)

"Stephen Gill will co-ordinate and organize the project without receiving any remuneration for his services. The project was officially launched May 30. Mr. Gill told his enthusiastic researchers that 'it is like baptizing a child to launch a project of this sort.'" (*The Standard-Freeholder*, June 1, 1977, p.5;)

"On July 11, the researchers and supervisor were interviewed by Mr. Gill, in two half-hour taped television shows, to be shown on Cable 11 August 10 and 17" (*The Winchester Press*, July 28, 1977, p. 13)

**\*1977: Elected as president of the Canadian Author's Association, Cornwall Branch, on Thursday, May 12 at the first meeting at St. Lawrence College. Fred Kerner, director of Harlequin Publishing, and Ontario Regional Director of C.A.A explained the aims of the Association which started in 1926. Gill chaired the meeting. (*Cornwall Weekly New*, May 25, 1977, p.26; *The Glengarry News*, May 26, 1977, p. 15);**

**QUOTE:** "Your organization is most fortunate to have a competent person, as yourself, responsible for its affairs" ( A letter from Ed. Lumley, M.P. May 27, 1977);

\*1979-81: National vice-president, The World Federalists of Canada;

- \*1982-1990: Takes over the charge of *Writers Lifeline*, a fortnightly international publication for writer, poets and librarians. (*Cornwall Weekly News*, Feb. 17, 1982). It is published periodically now;
- \*1985: Guest speaker about writing and publishing at St. George's Separate School, Long Sault. Ray Barnes, principal, writes in a letter of thanks: "Your talk was very interesting, and by the response of the students, I know they learned a great deal...(letter, May 1, 1985);
- \*1986--1987: Elected as vice-president of Indo-Asian Association of Cornwall. Arranged several functions;
- \*1987--1988: vice-president, Multicultural Council of Stormont & Dundas Counties. Helped to arrange multicultural festival;
- \*1989: Receives a Volunteer Service Award from the Ministries of Citizenship and of Culture and Communication.
- \*1990 : Guest speaker at the Massena Public Library to address writers. "A complete manuscript, he explained, "is like a well-designed house...."(*SF*. Oct. 4, 1990, p.9);
- \*1990: Shares his experiences as a poet in an interview (*SF* Dec. 6, 1990, p.11);
- \*1991: Presents his poetry at 39ers club, Alexandria. (*The Glengarry News*, August. 28, 1991, p.2);
- \*1992: Receives a certificate of recognition for active and cooperative participation in the 10th annual multi-cultural festival;
- \*1990-1992: The City of Cornwall appoints him as a representative of the city at The Cornwall Arts Board;
- \*1993: Appointed as chief delegate to represent The World University, Arizona, in Canada. The news appeared in several publications of the world, bringing Cornwall to the limelight. He presented papers on world peace and understanding at several international gatherings of the World University. On his recommendations, more than twenty persons from Canada have been honoured with D. Lit. Two of the recipients were from Cornwall. These recipients worked hard to make Canada a better place to live in their own fields;
- \*1994: Organizes, in cooperation with Neelam Ghar, a symposium of Urdu, Panjabi and English poets at St. Lawrence College on the 15th of May. Guest: Sohan Singh Josh, a poet from Kenya, was honoured by the Canadian Alumni of the World University with the best poet of 1993 in Panjabi Literature abroad;
- \*1994: A cultural interpreter for Cornwall & District Immigration Services Agency, Pitt Street, Cornwall. Translated brochures into Urdu and helped as an interpreter for R.C.M.P and the local school boards and the department of social services. He passed examinations approved by the Government of Ontario and helps particularly Ontario Works with interpretations.

\*1994-1996: Elected as a director of Indo-Canada Association of Cornwall;

\* 1994: Becomes a member, The Pen International;

\*1994: Elected as Vice-President, The Christian Cultural Association of South Asians. Arranged several functions and gave talks to promote harmony and peace among ethnic groups;

\*1994: Received a Certificate of Appreciation from Mayor Ron Martelle:

**CITATION: This certificate represents a special contribution for your personal efforts in having served your community in an exemplary way**

\*1995-1996: A member of the Seniors Concerns Committee, appointed by the City Council;

\*1996: The Writers Union of Canada. Member of Foreign Affairs Committee;

\*1998: A member of Amnesty International;

## **BOOK PUBLISHER**

Stephen Gill founded Vesta Publications Ltd., a book publishing company, in Cornwall in 1974 and managed it till 1994. As a book publisher

--He brought foreign currency by selling books abroad;

--Hired local skills;

--Published several local authors and local histories, including,

1. *John Strachan Comes to Cornwall* by Dorothy J. Phelps (ISBN: 0-919806-16-3);

2. *Seaway Valley Cartoon* by Bob Eadie (ISBN: 0-919806-17-1);

3. *The McCormicks of Glengarry* by Thelma McDonald & Mary Devine (ISBN:0-919301-73-8);

4. *Rapids Away* by Leslie E. Wismer (ISBN: 0-919806-43-0);

5. *Go Ask the Mole* by Dorothy Grant (ISBN: 0-919806-05-8);

6. *The Lost Son* by Gordon Ferris (ISBN: 0-919806-97-x);

7. *Seaway Valley Poets*, Eds. Stephen Gill & Fr. Roland C. Hamel (ISBN: 0-919-806-06-;

Stephen Gill also edited a monthly international magazine for writers and poets, titled *Writer's Lifeline*, which is now online. As a poet, fiction writer, and book publisher Stephen Gill has helped to put Cornwall on the world map. Cornwall is the city where he wrote most of his books for the world readership, though he has been writing from his early life in India.

Stephen Gill would like to conclude that it is hard to point out any obstacle that he did not have. The only tool that stood by him was his will— the only sun that lighted the corners of his darkness was his optimism— the only road before him to travel was his aspiration— the only thought he had was his pen that he used extensively and intensively in this city that provided him the pleasure to have his feet in this legendary land of the Mohawks and his head in the air of the cosmopolitanism of today. The city of Cornwall is the area where Stephen Gill had the honor to have miracles and epiphanies which showed him the place where he has been breathing for more than half a century. It is because of this optimism— it is because of this aspiration— it is because of this will— it is because of his pen that Stephen Gill is still in Cornwall and shall continue to be here. The city of Cornwall held and still holds the key to his remaining obstacles. He is thankful to the City from the fathomless bottom of his heart for providing opportunities to serve and to stay here with human dignity.

Stephen Gill would like to add to his conclusion that this is the city where he was married and had three children: Rekha, Ajay and Sarita. This is the city where all his children attended St. Joseph School and later went to universities. This is the city where his children had their children and some of them are attending universities. Stephen Gill is positive that some of his children's children will bring honor to this city to breathe further the air of cosmopolitanisms.

**NOTE: Stephen Gill's literary activities on national and particularly on international level are much more to list...**

Please visit his Sites:

--stephengill.info

--twitter: [Stephen Gill@poetste](#) [@poetstephengill](#)

--facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/stephen.gill.5686>

--Linkedin: <https://ca.linkedin.com/in/gillstephen>

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