PRESS KIT · SEASON 1



CANOE **STORIES**

with **Mike Billy Sr.**

A seven-episode video podcast of conversations about Coast Salish canoe racing, carving and the families who keep the tradition moving.

Presented by **Canoe Cultures Society**
Funded by **TELUS STORYHIVE**

canoecultures.com



ABOUT THE SERIES

Stories carried in the canoe

In *Canoe Stories with Mike Billy Sr.*, Sḵwx̱wú7mesh canoe carver and racer Mike Billy Sr. sits down with Elders, paddlers and canoe families to talk about the races, the canoes and the people who kept Coast Salish war canoe racing alive.

Many of the memories reach back to the 1960s and 1970s, when crews travelled the circuit in hand-carved dugouts and the sport carried culture through the residential school era. Mike meets his guests in the places that hold those memories: a canoe shed lined with racing canoes, a museum gallery beside a historic dugout, and a living room at home.

The result is funny, candid and full of history that lives mostly in memory, recorded in the words of the people who lived it.

FAST FACTS

Format
Video podcast, 7 episodes

Host
Mike Billy Sr. (Lemxacha Siyam)

Producers
Mike Billy Sr., Jeremy Dyson

Cinematography
Jeremy Dyson

Presented by
Canoe Cultures Society

Funded by
TELUS STORYHIVE Voices

Episode length
19 to 38 minutes

Where to watch
TELUS TV, and the TELUS STORYHIVE YouTube channel from November 24, 2026

> *Canoeing helps a lot for our young people because it helps give them a feeling of who they are.*
>
> Glen Newman, Episode 4

EPISODE GUIDE · SEASON 1

Seven conversations



EPISODE 1

Rikkole Cree Canoe Club

Mike spends time with the Rikkole Cree Canoe Club and the paddlers carrying war canoe racing into a new generation.



EPISODE 2

Catching Up with Bob Baker

Bob Baker looks back on the circuit in the days of hand-carved dugout racing canoes, illustrated with archival photographs and great memories.



EPISODE 3

A Conversation with Keith Point

Esteemed canoe carver Keith Point talks racing and paddling, and teaching and handing on carving knowledge. One of Mike's few peers with a lifetime of carving behind him, he is eager to see his learnings passed on.



EPISODE 4

Great Stories with Glen Newman

Glen Newman knew from a young age that he wanted to be a paddler. Beside a historic canoe at the Museum of Vancouver, he shares amazing stories from his paddling era.



EPISODE 5

Stolta.ken on Singles & More

Mike's son, Stolta.ken (Mike Billy Jr.), talks single canoe racing, canoe building and racing in Hawaii, and taking over as manager of the North Van Canoe Club as one generation hands on to the next.



EPISODE 6

Reflecting with Robert George

At home in his living room, Robert George reflects on a lifetime connected to canoe racing.



EPISODE 7

Looking Back with Uncle Gene

Uncle Gene returns to the North Van Canoe Club, where he paddled for many years, and shares stories from the era when Mike Sr.'s father was involved in the club.

VOICES FROM THE SERIES

"It's in our DNA. We got salt water in our veins."

Bob Baker, Episode 2

"You just get up and go again the next day. Never, never put your paddle down."

Keith Point, Episode 3



ABOUT THE HOST

Mike Billy Sr.

Lemxacha Siyam

Sḵwx̱wú7mesh canoe carver
Host and producer, Canoe Stories

Mike Billy Sr. is a seventh-generation Sḵwx̱wú7mesh canoe carver. His hereditary name, Lemxacha Siyam, means canoe-builder. He is creating a significant fleet of new dugout and cedar strip canoes for local First Nations, including the North Van Canoe Club on Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Nation, while teaching apprentices, guests and visitors about the traditions, tools and techniques of the craft.

Each project is a multi-generational and multicultural chance to learn traditional Sḵwx̱wú7mesh ways around the canoe and its place in the Squamish way of life. It is reconciliation in practice: non-First Nations people come to understand Indigenous traditions, while traditional skills pass to Sḵwx̱wú7mesh members new to carving. Mike leads every build. He makes all major decisions on design, schedule, apprentices and how to work with the Elders, and ensures the work is done in a culturally significant and respectful manner.

Mike has been part of the North Van Canoe Club for decades, managing the club until recently, when his son, Stolta.ken (Mike Billy Jr.), took the lead. He chairs the board of Canoe Cultures Society.

“You have to be in agreement with the log before you start chopping on it.”

MIKE BILLY SR.

Canoe puller, coach, carver, teacher

Mike fell in love with war canoe racing the first time he sat in a canoe, at 15. He has spent most of his life since in and around racing canoes. Today he works with school districts, canoe clubs and other organizations to share traditional and modern canoe building, and welcomes visitors onto the water with Canoe Cultures.



Mike (far left) with the North Van Canoe Club crew.



Talking canoes with young visitors at a public carving demonstration.



Leading a Canoe Cultures Indigenous canoe tour on False Creek.

PRESENTED BY

Canoe Cultures Society

Canoe Cultures is an Indigenous-led non-profit dedicated to the advancement of Indigenous arts and the preservation of the heritage art of the canoe. Through carving, paddling, storytelling, cultural education, exhibitions and on-the-water experiences, it passes knowledge between generations, supports artists and cultural practitioners, and builds understanding and reconciliation. Its board is 75% Indigenous.

Canoe carving and building

New dugout and cedar strip canoes for First Nations clubs, plus restoration of historic canoes, built in public with apprentices.

Four Fires Festival, 2022 to 2024

A two-day festival that returned Indigenous canoe races to False Creek for the first time in over 100 years.

Tatus Festival and the PNE

Two days of live Indigenous music and cultural performances, plus live canoe carving, an Indigenous Artisan Marketplace since 2022 and cooking demonstrations at the PNE Fair.

Indigenous canoe tours

Guided paddles on False Creek that share Coast Salish history from the water.

School and youth programs

School programs, plus youth media, storytelling and speaker training since 2021.

Exhibitions and leadership

Canoe exhibitions with partner museums, and a Cultural Leadership Circle guiding the work.

Media and documentaries

Films and series that record canoe culture in the voices of its carriers. See page 9.

Find Canoe Cultures

canoecultures.com
Facebook, Instagram and YouTube:
@canoecultures

Canoe Cultures programs take place on the traditional homelands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish) and sə́lilw̓ətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples.

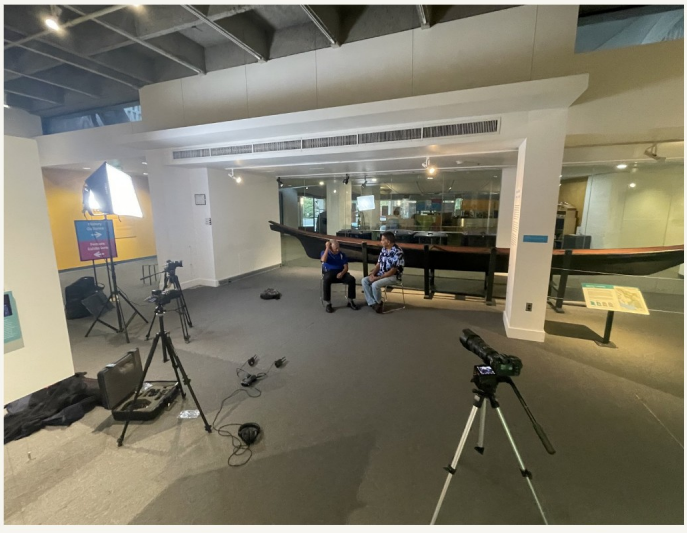
IN PARTNERSHIP

A permanent Coast Salish exhibition at the Vancouver Maritime Museum

The Vancouver Maritime Museum is working in partnership with Canoe Cultures Society, Mike Billy Sr. and others to design a permanent Coast Salish exhibition. Elements of *Canoe Stories* will be part of it, bringing the voices of Elders and paddlers into the gallery.

The series was recorded as long-form conversation, so it also works as an archive. Short extracts from the episodes can live on in the museum long after broadcast, for visitors, students and the families whose stories they are.

BEHIND THE SCENES





Filming Episode 4 with Glen Newman beside a historic canoe at the Museum of Vancouver.

> *"I hope that maybe one hundred years from now, it'll still be around and be in a museum."*
>
> Bob Baker on the canoe St. Theresa II, Episode 2

MORE FROM CANOE CULTURES

Films and series

Raised by the Canoe

Documentary · Directed by Cathrine Paul

The Terry Lee Canoe Club told through family stories, from its origins to a new generation of paddlers, with Sts'ailes songs by Keegan and Kelsey Charlie Sr. Festival run includes imagineNATIVE and Ācimowin.

Learning, Knowing & Sharing: The Journey of Kikya

Documentary

Mike Billy Sr. carves a dugout with his son and nephews. Screened in nine countries; Best Documentary, Black Rock City Film Festival.

Canoe Connections

Documentary · Directed by Reeva Billy (Sialtinot)

Reeva interviews her father, Mike Billy Sr., and brother, Mike Billy Jr., about canoe racing from the residential school era to today. More than a dozen festivals; audience award, Fist Up Film Festival.

Embers of Resilience

Documentary · Coming soon

Musqueam carver Dickie Louis, his son and grandson rebuild a dugout to revive Musqueam canoe heritage after a longhouse fire destroyed the Nation's canoes.

CANOE CULTURES IN THE PRESS

CBC News · Global News · The Vancouver Sun · Georgia Straight · North Shore News · CBC The Early Edition · Stir · Fairchild Television

Full coverage list at canoecultures.com/media

MEDIA CONTACT

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AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Episode screeners, high-resolution stills and episode title cards, and interviews with Mike Billy Sr.

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