



Created in 1994, The Canadian Badlands Passion Play has gained national and international prominence as one of North America's top 'must see' cultural and tourism events. Located in Drumheller, Alberta approximately 90 miles northeast of Calgary, the annual 'Theatre in the Badlands' attraction provides its audiences with

a dramatic retelling of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The 200+ performer play is presented in a 30 acre natural badlands canyon bowl whose stark and dramatic geographical surroundings and acoustics mirror those of ancient Israel. The Canadian Badlands Passion Play runs annually for seven days in July.

# The Canadian Badlands Passion Play



## 2012 ANNUAL REPORT

CANADIAN BADLANDS PASSION PLAY

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## President's Report

2013 marks 20 seasons for the Passion Play of authentic encounters with the life of Jesus Christ. Milestones like that often cause us to look back and consider how far we've come. For me, 2013 is my 17th summer in the glow of the Passion Play, and like many of us I fondly think about all the different ways I've been involved over the years: as a performer, as an usher, a concession volunteer, as a donor, as an employee, as a board member. It's such a dynamic community that's been built around this endeavor, and requires so many different skills and ideas to keep it going. That's something I've always been proud of for the Passion Play.

I also think of the places where we struggle. Last summer's rain out was disappointing, not only because of how it affects the plans we would like to keep pursuing, but more importantly because of the patrons who didn't get to share in story we portray. When that disappointment overwhelms me, I'm encouraged by a quote amongst a group of inspirations I've collected and keep posted on my office wall:

*"Artists have always been drawn to the wild, wide elements they cannot control or understand - the sea, mountains, fire. To be an artist means to approach the light, and that means to let go of our control, to allow our whole selves to be placed with absolute faith in that which is greater than we are. The novel we sit down to write and the one we end up writing may be very different, just as the Jesus we grasp and the Jesus who grasps us may also differ.*



*We live under the illusion that if we can acquire complete control, we can understand God, or we can write the great American novel. But the only way we can brush the hem of the Lord or hope to be a part of the creative process, is to have the courage, the faith, to abandon control." ~ Madeleine L'engle*

As it has always been, the Passion Play is not our effort, but that of a higher power who we continually look to as members of the society, as members of this community and as members of the board who serve through the Passion Play. As we continue to seek ways to increase awareness of the Greatest Story Ever Told we abandon ourselves to the will of God and engage in the cooperation of his people to continue to see this organization, and its impact on our world, reach and grow beyond the humble valley it delights in calling home.

~Brad G. Graham~  
President

**2012 Board:** John Bruins, Bill Girard, Brad Graham, Lloyd Huber, Rob Middleton, Kelly Pasma, Steven Peterson, Rose Porter

## 2012 Volunteer Report

In addition to our great staff the Passion Play also has a fantastic team of volunteers. Each year this group puts in over 50,000 hours of volunteer service to help bring the play to life.



200 of our volunteers are actors in the play and starting on the May long weekend they will be gathering in Drumheller each weekend until the July performances. Some of them drive up to 7 hours for the rehearsals and then return home on Sunday night for a full week of work at their regular job. These folks are dedicated to the telling the Greatest Story Ever Told and that enthusiasm comes through to our audience.

Serving the needs of our audience is our Front of House volunteers. Greeters, parking attendants, cart drivers, concession workers and many others will make sure that each guest is welcomed warmly to the Passion Play. Without their help the play would not succeed.

## 2012 Financial Report

2012 was a challenging year financially, resulting in a loss of \$42k. Revenues were down slightly from budget (\$810k) mostly due to the rained out show, and lower than expected fundraising numbers that can be partially attributed to the shorter fiscal (9 months) that eliminated potential revenue from our prime fall and Christmas fundraising period. At the same time expenses came in slightly higher than expected (\$852k), primarily because of a large increase in repairs and maintenance costs after taking possession of our new land and building assets.



Our five year plan ended in 2012 and so it's time to review what we have learned, think about our goals for the future and create a solid plan for sustainability as we head into our third decade! Complete financial statements and a verbal review will be presented at the AGM along with an opportunity to ask any questions.

George Smith - Business Manager



# 2012 Production Report

2012 was a year of challenges for our production team. The extensive renovation of the set created a difficult work environment due to a rainy spring and the mud created by the unsettled ground. A number of the scenes from the new script of 2011 had to be reworked to fit the new spaces. Design lagged behind schedule creating situations that required long meetings and extra work for all. Actors and staff were often working in half finished spaces in the cold rain.



Each of the 33 members of our Production Team went far above the call of duty and pitched in to make the season not only a success from a theatrical point of view but also a great experience for our 200 volunteer actors. Our team creates a visual feast for our patrons but they also truly care about each of our cast members. It is this professional environment which enables our volunteers to bring their best to the stage and which makes the Canadian Badlands Passion Play a top notch production. As a result we achieved a referral rate of 98% in our 2012 survey. This means that almost every person who saw the play is saying that they plan to tell their friends and family to attend the Canadian Badlands Passion Play.

### Directors

Royal Sproule	Co-Director
Barrett Hileman	Co-Director
Jeany Snider	Crowd Director
Adrian Young	Assistant Director /Fight Director
Bill Hamm	Musical Director
Deanne Bertsch	Dance Choreographer
Johanna I. DeVries	Director (Intern)

### Stage Management

Ailsa Birnie	Stage Manager
Denise Lines	Assistant Stage Manager
Justin Born	Assistant Stage Manger
Jesse Anderson	Jr. Assistant Stage Manger
Myrna Newman	Child Chaperone

### Sound

Luke Ertman	Composer/Sound Designer
Sean Jacob	Sound Engineer
Chris Stockton	Deck Sound
Brandi Bailey	Sound Assistant (Intern)
Robert Rollingson	Drummer

### Technical

Caitlin Ferguson	Production Manager
Alyssa Neudorf	Production Assitant/Volunteer Coordinator
Steve Ellerbeck	Head Carpenter
Gene Zacharias	Set Carpenter
Lewis Frere	Technician
Josh Christensen	Props Master
Audra Stevenson	Props Assistant
Marlies & Jody Ohlhauser	Animal Wrangler

### Wardrobe

Deborah Lawton	Costume Design
Victoria Krawchuk	Associate Designer Head of Wardrobe
Julie Serger	Wardrobe Administrator
Linnea Lawton	Keeper of the Armory
Jean Grebely	Stitcher/Dresser
Cheryl Gallagher	Stitcher/Dresser
Diane Illerbrun	Stitcher
Elaine Hileman	Dresser

# Special Events

### Golf Tournament



The 14th annual Passion Play Golf Tournament took place on Thursday, June 22, 2012, at the Dinosaur Trail Golf and Country Club. 100 golfers enjoyed a tournament that raised over \$15,000 for the Passion Play. The 2013 Passion Play Golf Tournament is scheduled for Friday, June 21.

Special thanks to the 2012 Committee; Tom Stoltz, Bryce Nimmo, Andrea Boehm, Janet Hove, Lloyd Huber and Vance Neudorf.

### Memories of Christmas

The 8th annual Choir Concert took place on January 12th at the Drumheller Church of the Nazarene. A full audience enjoyed music from Rosa Cantorum, the FBC Youth Choir, Bethany Lutheran Choir and the Rosebud Masterworks Choir.



### Founder's Banquet



A special event was held in November to honor those who have been long term supporters of the Passion Play. Morris Ertman and Cassia Schramm entertained the group and our founder, LaVerne Erickson, spoke to the 75 people in attendance about significant changes and how we have now moved into a position where ongoing monthly support of the organization is critical to the future of the play.

### Movie Night

In September we hosted the local Family Services movie night in the main amphitheatre and began the event with a concert and BBQ in the Forum. As I observed the event from on top of the set building it struck me what an amazing space we have created. Once the entrances are cut into the Jerusalem Wall to give our performers access to a backstage area we will have an exceptional smaller theatre.



## Script Committee



In 2011 the script committee adopted a new script based on the Gospel of John. John's gospel focuses on the divinity of Christ, the "Word made flesh." It is more thematic, more theological, less historically oriented than the other gospels. It challenged a prevailing notion in parts of the world at that time that it was impossible for a divine being to become human ( i.e. Incarnation) and die. The new script stuck closely to the theme and exclusively used material presented in this gospel and created additional scenes to unwrap the message and engage the audience. In 2012 changes were made to better achieve the vision of the script writer and directors. Our thanks to all who have dedicated so much time and effort to this enterprise. (Kelly Pasma, Rose Porter, Rev. Lloyd Huber)

## Property Report



After 5 long years of working towards a solution regarding the ownership of the lodge building and the west parking lot the Passion Play Society was finally awarded the property in a court appointed sale. This gave the society full ownership of 55 acres of land as well as the lodge, quonset and pumphouse building. The \$100,000 purchase stretched us financially but the assets will protect the future of the Passion Play. It would have been impossible for us to carry on without access to the parking lots and the buildings.

## Awards and Reviews

"Always a bridesmaid, never the Bride?" It seems that each year we make it as a finalist in the Alberta Pride category of the Alberta Tourism (Alto) Awards but so far we have not been able to win the top award. 2012 gave us our fourth finalist plaque but despite not winning we were pleased to be chosen and glad that the Passion Play was profiled before a capacity crowd of 700 travel industry leaders.

The 800 evaluations we have received back from our guests have been overwhelmingly positive. 98% of those attending in 2012 are going to recommend the play to their friends. On the TripAdvisor.com website we moved up from the #9 position to the #1 attraction in the Drumheller area. It's encouraging to see what people are saying about our Passion Play A man named Ken wrote:

"A unique and truly magnificent production. I am not a religious person but I was in awe of how the production worked across the huge vista backdrop. You should be deservedly proud of this truly monumental piece of work."

## Marketing Report



A complete website redesign allowed visitors to explore the play, purchase tickets and find answers to their questions. With the assistance of Travel Alberta two co-operative marketing initiatives were implemented in our marketing plan. The Alberta Rural Theatre Association was a new program which promoted 5 rural theatre and arts centred organizations, and Drumheller marketing consortia both aimed to support the goals of Travel Alberta's tourism strategy.

Online engagement through social media networks has played a significant role in communicating our message in the past 2 years. The Canadian Badlands Passion Play facebook page has grown from 200 fans in 2010 to 920 fans in 2012 on Facebook, a growing presence on Youtube with over 2,000 hits on each video, 2 blogs, a twitter and Google+ accounts. The power of social storytelling allows us to interact with patrons and learn more about what our audience wants, needs and desires in order to further expand The Canadian Badlands Passion Play experience for more people.

## Executive Director's Report



2012 was a year of great change and with it came many challenges. We were given a grant to create the forum amphitheatre space but it required finding matching funds. Many people responded by sponsoring a large concrete block which was a great blessing, With the help of our supporters we were able to triple the size of the stage area by raising the back of the stage 8 feet and raking it towards the audience. We were able to secure the ski hill but that meant financing the purchase. We came into full possession of the lodge building but the repairs, mechanical issues and utilities also became our sole responsibility and there was much that needed our attention. We took possession of the quonset and pumphouse buildings and turned them into a set shop and props storage but the sheer volume of junk left behind in them took months to sort through and extra cost to haul away.

All of these successes and challenges required finances to see them through to completion and at the end of the fiscal year we found ourselves in financial difficulty. Through an appraisal of our newly acquired land and buildings we were able to secure an additional loan which consolidated our mortgages and line of credit into one payment. We moved forward into the 2013 performance season with a reduced budget and a completely new administrative staff. We are looking forward to a year with no new projects and a time to finalize the final stages of our five year strategic plan. In the fall of 2013 the board and management will be setting aside time to create a sustainable direction for our society. We appreciate your prayers and support as we plan for the future.

Vance Neudorf



# Fundraising Report

As in most theatre societies, ticket sales at the Passion Play represent about half of our budgeted revenue. The rest must be raised through government grants and private donations. Our Fundraising plan consists of the following components

## 1. Endowment Fund

An Endowment fund was created so that people wishing to contribute through their estate can assist the ministry of the Passion Play long term. We also have the capability of accepting gifts of stocks and shares.

## 2. Corporate Development Committee

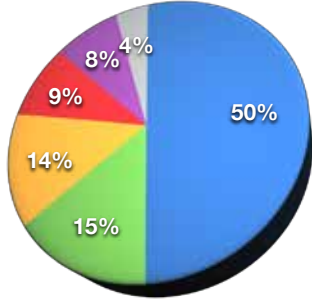
With our board moving from a working board to a governance board the role of assisting in the funding efforts of the society has also come of age. The CDC is a board committee with oversight in this area.

## 3. Annual Fund - Founder's Group

The annual fund consists of undesignated gifts to the Passion Play Society. The seasonal nature of the Play makes it difficult to keep operations funded for the other 8 months of the year. Contributions to the annual fund are monthly gifts (often through credit card donations) that assist with the paying of ongoing bills. Although this fund is not as exciting as some of our other campaigns it is the foundational giving upon which the other key projects can be built. **Our goal is to have 50 monthly donors** who are supporting the Passion Play on an ongoing basis. We invite you to consider joining with us through a monthly donation.

## 4. Performance Sponsorship Program

Sponsorships were available at three different levels.  
 \$10,000 - Performance Sponsorship of one full weekend (three performances).  
 \$5000 - Performance Sponsorship of a single performance.  
 \$2500 - Performance co-sponsor of a single performance with another organization.  
 Sponsors are mentioned from the stage at the start of the show they have sponsored.



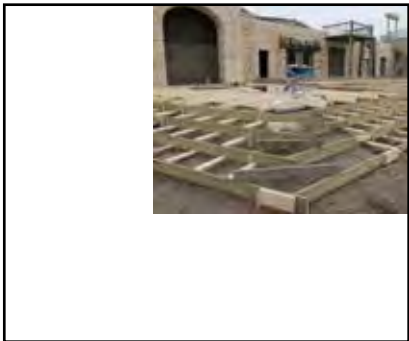
**Funding Sources**  
 Tickets - 50%  
 Donations - 15%  
 Grants - 14%  
 Fundraising - 9%  
 Sales - 8%  
 Advertising - 4%

# 2012 Attendance

Ticket sales in 2012 were tracking well through the winter months and it appeared we would reach our ticket sales goals for the year. But a wet spring dampened the enthusiasm of our patrons and it became evident that we would end up just below our record sales of 2011. Going into the performance weeks we had an attendance of 13,500 in the ticket system. Unfortunately a storm rolled through on the first Saturday's performance and the show was cancelled. Our policy is to give tickets for another performance of their choice and most of the people in attendance opted to request vouchers for 2013. Giving them vouchers removes them from the statistics and revenue for 2012 and moves them instead into 2013. We still achieved just over 12,000 in attendance (our new 5 year average) but the cancelled show and slower sales had a negative effect on our budget for the season.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Preview							431	394
1st Friday	700	936	1026	1433	1623	1435	1663	1283
1st Saturday	1541	1545	1810	1925	2286	2078	2275	601
1st Sunday	1165	1035	1524	1360	2021	1819	2308	1877
2nd Thursday							1267	1729
2nd Friday	1044	1475	1412	1545	1795	1789	1208	1405
2nd Saturday	1333	2065	2185	2208	2385	2626	2556	2637
2nd Sunday	1094	1414	1315	1652	1925	2456	2332	2077
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6877</b>	<b>8470</b>	<b>9272</b>	<b>10123</b>	<b>12035</b>	<b>12203</b>	<b>14040</b>	<b>12003</b>

Of the 800 people who completed our annual survey, 85% said that the tickets were affordable, 60% have never attended in the past, 70% attend church on a weekly basis and 98% say they will recommend the Passion Play to others. The average spending per patron was just over \$100. As a result our audiences are infusing 1.4 million dollars into the local economy. In addition we have the equivalent of 14 full time employees who live and shop in Drumheller. Add in the Badlands Summer School (70 students and staff) and the portion of our operating budget that gets spent in the local area and the Passion Play is a significant factor in the economic viability of Drumheller. In 2013 we anticipate more growth in this area as we add two more performance dates.





# 2012 Site Report

What an incredible journey we have taken together this year! We attempted the impossible and succeeded in making significant improvements to the Passion Play site. In the words of one of our long-term supporters, "the set has never looked so good and the changes fit so well with the beauty of the badlands."

At every turn we have experienced God's supply for our needs. Whether it was a truck to move dirt, sod for the set, or blocks to build the forum, everything arrived at the perfect time. Our "daily bread" in ticket sales and donations was supplied as needed, at times on the very day that our payroll was due. We had an overwhelming sense that God was supporting us in our work. When I travelled to speak at churches about our Nehemiah experience in building up the Passion Play walls I was confident to share Nehemiah's words, "The people realized that this work had been done with the help of our God."

The retaining walls that hold up the new stage area also double as a crossover to allow actors to move around the stage out of the view of the audience. This was a large project but it makes staging the play much more efficient and adds to the dramatic effect of the actors entering and leaving a scene.



**The 2011 Set**

**The picture above is from July 2011 and the one below is from the same vantage point a year later.**

**The Baptism** - The former rubber-lined pond was replaced with a poured concrete pool and larger stones that permitted more actors to gather around the pool.



This new backstage stairway allowed larger groups of actors to move quickly onto the stage for the wedding and the last supper.

**The Forum** - A barren slope in 2011 has been transformed into a small outdoor theatre/foyer space called The Forum. It is used during the play as the home of Annas and a trial of Jesus.



**Altar** - This year we added onto the "stone" apron in front of the temple and then built a massive stone altar where the priests sacrificed lambs. At the trial of Jesus, the "lamb of God" was scourged upon this Altar.



**2012 Set Changes**

**Actor Overpass.** The two new culverts backstage allowed actors to move into position while horses and wagons moved onto the stage overhead.