

# LIVE IT!

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## CHECK IT OUT!

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### 30 Rock ends tonight

By FRAZIER MOORE  
The Associated Press

You want resolution on the 30 Rock finale? You're gonna get it. Sort of. At least, the sort befitting 30 Rock, with its loopy storytelling mixed with joy in spoofing the culture of TV. Closure, if that's what it is, comes in a two-minute postscript on this hour episode. But maybe you should just stop reading right now, you 30 Rock purists who don't want to know what happens or might seem to happen, however wacked-out and ironic it may be.

Which, among other things, includes this sly touch: a reference to the snowglobe revelation with which the medical drama *St. Elsewhere* famously concluded a quarter-century ago.

But there's more. Just before the final fade-out, NBC President Kenneth the former Page (Jack McBrayer) is pitched a new comedy series taking place right there at network headquarters, 30 Rock.

Hmmm. This is no ending. It's a Mobius strip.

The comic coda suggests where many of the characters might be a year from now. But that's not the point of the finale, which mostly wants to have fun. And does.

This last yahoo of 30 Rock after seven brilliant seasons takes delight in tracking the unraveling of its characters as the show-within-the-show, TGS, comes to an end with its own final broadcast. After that, of course, its producer, Liz Lemon (Tina Fey), its stars, Jenna Moroney and Tracy Jordan (Jane Krakowski and Tracy Morgan) and other members of the TGS staff will have to leave the cosy, kooky nest of 30 Rockefeller Plaza. The prospect of doing that terrifies them all.

Meanwhile, Jack Donaghy (Alec Baldwin), the newly minted CEO of NBC parent Kabletown, is battling his own existential crisis.

He has gotten the top job he wanted all his life. And as the ultimate Republican capitalist, he has even scored a lash-out from a treasured enemy, House Republican Leader Nancy Pelosi.

# Connection through theatre

Beginner at Life ... finding Eden is being performed at Gallery Connexion and MacLaggan Hall

By LORI GALLAGHER  
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Alana Ruben Free's one-woman play *Beginner at Life* has been called transformative, inspirational and uplifting, and it has taken the writer all over the world.

Local audiences will have a chance to experience her work for themselves when *Beginner at Life ... finding Eden* opens at Gallery Connexion Feb. 7. The performances are directed by Linda McNutt and feature Rebekah Chassé in the role of Eden.

Ruben Free, who grew up in Fredericton and now lives in New York City, will be on hand for the performances and will be participating in post-show panels to continue the discussion she hopes her play sparks.

"Basically, what *Beginner at Life* is about is it starts off with saying I want connection, I want to be connected to you, I want you to be connected to me," said Ruben Free during a recent telephone interview with The Daily Gleaner.

"We're living in a time where we're not constantly being reinforced in our daily schedule with ways to continually maintain a very strong, healthy connection with ourselves."

*Beginner at Life* is the first of The Eden Plays. She's currently working on a fourth instalment.

"The goal of the entire series was really to come into a place of a love of the soul and love of your individual soul," she said. "This work has completely evolved from the doing. It's not like I can honestly say that when I began *Beginner at Life* I knew where it was going or wanted to go."

Ruben Free had some clear intentions, however.

"I wanted *Beginner at Life* to remove any shame that people have around the human experience," she said. "I felt like people grew up feeling too much shame for their failures, their mistakes, places inside themselves that weren't whole."

"Certainly after you've recovered like I did from an atypical form of anorexia, you're filled with shame because you feel like you've completely failed the human experience or experiment."

It took her years to get back to a healthy appetite, she said, admitting she was shocked at how long it took to recover.

"I was grateful I was able to recover and have a healthy relationship with food because anorexia is the most fatal of the mental illnesses. Up to 25 per cent of anorexics die."

For Ruben Free, the experience was rooted in deep wounding.

"The play is looking at what are those wounds that are very universal," she said. "That was the other thing that fascinated me. I don't know a person who doesn't suffer from these wounds. Why in my case is it manifesting in this eating disorder?"

"What I discovered is we're living in the most addicted society ever. There has never been a time in history when as many people are suffering from some form of addiction. What it turns out is people are coping with that wound in many different ways."

She believes people are coping with a lack of general preparedness around how to live in the modern era.

"Part of the reason I'm in theatre is I craved intimacy. *Beginner at Life* for me was my vehicle to bring more intimacy into the world," said Ruben Free. "I wanted more intimacy, I wanted more compassion, I wanted more wisdom, I wanted more soul and love. That's what all of my work is looking at."

Please See Performance/ C2



PHOTO BY SAMANTHA STEWART

One-woman show: Rebekah Chassé is Eden in the local production of *Beginner at Life ... finding Eden* by playwright Alana Ruben Free.



PHOTO BY TAYLOR HOOPER

Coming home: Writer Alana Ruben Free is returning to Fredericton in early February for performances of her play *Beginner at Life ... finding Eden*. She will be involved in panel discussions following each performance to continue the conversation she hopes her work will spark.

### Fast facts

**What:** *Beginner at Life ... finding Eden*  
**Information:** This one-woman play is being presented at Gallery Connexion from Feb. 7-9 at 8 p.m., and on Feb. 10 at 2 p.m. at MacLaggan Hall on the University of New Brunswick campus. Advance tickets for the performances are available at the Student Union Building box office. Tickets for the shows at Gallery Connexion are \$10 general or \$5 for students. This venue has limited seating, so tickets should be purchased in advance. The show at MacLaggan Hall is \$2 for students or a suggested donation at the door. All of the performances will include a post-show panel.  
**Contact:** To learn more, visit [beginneratlife.com](http://beginneratlife.com) or visit *Beginner at Life* on Facebook

# Negotiations are underway for this year's FredRock

Who's going to take the stage at this year's FredRock?

Wish I could tell you. But, I've been told it's still early yet and the offers are flying, the phone calls are happening, and the negotiations are very much underway.

This is the busy time of year for the promoters of large-scale local music festivals, the people behind shows like FredRock, the FeelsGood Folly-Fest and the biggest annual musical celebration in the capital region: the Harvest Jazz and Blues Festival.

FredRock co-organizer Nick Zildjian said things have been going well so far for Fredericton's outdoor summer rock concert, which is slated to happen Aug. 9-10 this year.

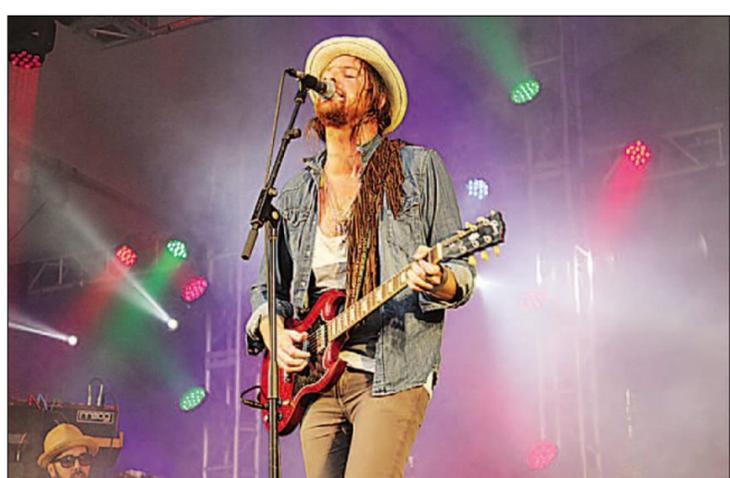
"It's been the most relaxed process in recent years because there is such an influx of possibilities this year," he said.

"Now it isn't more about worrying who we're going to get, who we need to reach out to. Now it's compiling a list of possibilities and weighing the pros and cons and trying to figure out some scheduling.

"We're hoping to see if maybe the band is close in the area and can be brought in for a certain date. And we're trying to balance the Friday and Saturday lineups."

Even though Zildjian was keeping his cards close to his chest, he did say that the festival's success over the past few years has helped open a few new doors.

"It seems like artists that we may



JAMES WEST / THE DAILY GLEANER

**Rock and roll:** The organizers of the FredRock music festival are working to secure the headlining acts for this year's annual summer rock concert, which will take place at the Loyalist Rugby Grounds on Aug. 9-10. Pictured above is a photo of 2012 performer Matt Mays, who was the first act to appear at two editions of the festival.

have approached in years past seem to be resurfacing, whether it was scheduling issues or whatnot (that prevented them from taking the stage at FredRock)," he said.

"The biggest thing this year is that some of the bands we've worked with in the past, their management or whatever, are presenting some of their other bands as well.

"That's good. They know that their bands are getting taken care of, are playing good shows, that this is a good festival."

He said running a solid festival and ensuring the acts get what they need to give the best performance possible has helped solidify the organizers' reputation in the industry.

"In this business, if your name is bad it will leak out soon enough. The important thing is paying your bills and executing on your promises. And securing a band is a big thing, but it's not only that.

"Once they get here, people want to know that their bands are going to get picked up at the airport, they'll

have a good place to stay, they'll be taken care of properly," he said.

"In the first couple of years, we had to beat on some doors, say, 'This is who we are.' Until you actually prove it, though, you're a bit of a gamble."

When asked how he gauges public interest for a prospective headlining act, he said FredRock organizers take a varied approach, mixing their own opinions and ideas with those they solicit from the festival's audience and fan base.

"The Internet is one thing," he said. "You can tread on that lightly. If people put out a lot of emails to us about bands, that shows they took some time to be a bit more personal. But mostly we just watch the bands."

"The whole time the event is going on, we're watching the show, scanning the crowd to see if people are taking a snooze during a set or if they're into it. You take mental notes about what genres seem to work or if we have a band that's maybe too classic or if the new stuff is going over. We try to balance the talent so that there's something for everybody."

With the capital region's festival landscape continuing to grow and expand, City Live asked Zildjian whether or not it's difficult for local concert promoters to avoid stepping on each other's toes from time to time.

"We've been booking bands in

town for 15 years now and we've always had a good relationship, actual friendships, with a lot of the other (promoters)," he said.

"It's never really been an issue. ... For Harvest, I've been working with them with my bar for 10-15 years now and Shivering Songs is (organized by) great people and it's a great event. People can't make it to every event. Basically, we want to get the best act for the festival. If one of them happened to play at another event, you're going to look at it, you might say, 'It's too recent.'

"But we haven't really come across that too much lately. I think we're a little more into the rock. We're trying to be a bit more youthful than some other events."

Ultimately, the goal is to give fans an experience — to create a relationship that's based on more than any one concert.

"It's only a bonus to have a big-name band," he said. "Right now, we're looking to bring in big names, which help us attract new FredRock fans. But we're trying to cement ourselves as an event in the summer where people are circling before they even know who's announced."

Adam Bowie is a staff writer with The Daily Gleaner. He's also a juror for the Polaris Music Prize, the East Coast Music Awards, and the Music New Brunswick Awards. If you have a community event happening soon, you can reach him at [bowie.adam@dailygleaner.com](mailto:bowie.adam@dailygleaner.com).



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