



The Bodø Big Band, above, joins the Longyearbyen Storband for a concert featuring Motown hits Sunday at Kulturhuset. At right, Queen Sonja explains her exhibit "Tre Reiser – Tre Landskap," created with artistically altered landscape photos she took during previous visits to Svalbard, during an official opening gala Thursday at Galleri Svalbard. Photos by Mark Sabbatini / Icepeople.



No way to run a town

Longyearbyen's government bloated, inefficient, pricey and in need of overhaul, report finds

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Longyearbyen has an ideal government – for a city 50 times its size.

But for a town of 2,000 people there are too many separate agencies and administrators, according to a report ordered by the municipal council. The report recommends eliminating the three "municipal corporations" separate from the council, thus consolidating them into a single entity.

"The firms are perceived as independent decision-making bodies on the side of – and to some extent over – the local council," the report notes. "This undermines the legitimacy of the local government."

The findings are generally supported by Longyearbyen's management staff and council members, according to a survey published in the report. Two-thirds to three-fourths of respondents agree with statements such as the current system limiting the council's power and creating unnecessary bureaucracy.

"In my mind we're organized for a city of 100,000 and we're 2,000 people," said Christin

See CONSOLIDATE, page 4

Royally shrewed

Queen Sonja, lots of ukuleles make Polarjazz a surprise success

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

There weren't a lot of big names – other than *that* one – and organizers weren't expecting to match the magnitude of last year's festival. But even when musicians unexpectedly didn't show up, the audience did in droves.

Nearly all of this year's Polarjazz played to capacity – or beyond – crowds, despite (or

perhaps because of) a near-total absence of the event's namesake musical genre. A visit by Queen Sonja on opening night, plus a few familiar names and intriguing novelty acts, was enough to ensure success.

"We had more people than I thought we would," said Lasse S. Hansen, the festival's director, who didn't notice an unusual amount of

See FESTIVAL, page 3

Inside

In case of war, turn off the webcam	Page 2
Headlines from Svalbardposten	
- 93 crimes in 2012 about 15% below average	
- Fixed entry/exit sought at Svalbardbutikken	
- Thai princess to visit, asks about hospital	Page 3
Weather forecast	Page 3
Events calendar	Page 4

Teens taking a trippy to the '60s

Longyearbyen students try to relate to the novelty of sex, drugs and bad clothes in 'Hair'

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

For those with screwy priorities, no, there won't be a nude scene. As if the clothes aren't more titillating anyway.

Besides, the audience still gets to learn about the joys of masturbation and drugs, and misery of authority.

Parents might be relieved to know it's a

See HIPPIES, page 4



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Torje Hanssen, 15, reveals a loincloth fit for the Arctic during a rehearsal of "Hair" at Kulturhuset.

Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

Editor

Mark Sabbatini

Copy Editor

Brennan Purtzer

Principal of principles

Kristan Hutchison

Psychiatrist

Irene Gallion

Mailing address

Icepeople
Vei 210 -2- 13
Longyearbyen, Svalbard
9170
Norway

Telephone

Norway: +47 41 51 46 38
U.S. +1 (970) 673-4472

E-mail

marksabbatini@yahoo.com

Web site

www.icepeople.net

Icepeople is published weekly (or thereabouts) on Tuesdays (or thereabouts), with printed copies available free on a limited basis in Longyearbyen. Additional printed copies are available locally and by mail upon request. Charges are on an "at cost" basis.

Copyright stuff

Original contents of this publication can be reproduced for non-commercial purposes free of charge if *Icepeople* is credited as the source. The original writers, photographers and other contributors retain their rights to all published works.

Corrections policy

When we screw up you'll know about it – on the front page. One of the big complaints about newspapers is they tend to bury corrections and clarifications deep inside where few people who read the original article see them. If we need to fix something, an alert box on the front page will state what story is in error and where the full correction is printed.

Submitting material

Letters, columns, photos and other material are welcome, but we can't offer pay for published items since nobody here is getting paid at the moment. Submissions in electronic form (text, Word documents, JPEGs, etc.) are highly preferred, although typing and/or scanning of items will be considered on a per-case basis. We reserve the right to edit submissions for length, clarity, accuracy, libel and other reasons, but we will also make every reasonable effort to contact the author about any changes prior to publication.

Time to switch on the Northern Lights



SVALSAT

A Web camera at the Svalbard Satellite Station (SvalSat) offers a 360-degree rotating view of the facility and skies above Isfjorden and Platåberget. The camera, positioned to capture the Northern Lights when they are active, is accessible to the public during morning hours at <http://svalsat.livecam360.net>. It is off-limits at other times for security reasons, according to station officials. Among the camera's features are zoomable views, HD quality for users with sufficient bandwidth and archived images. There are several other live webcams in Svalbard, including 24-hour views at Svea, Bykaia and The University Centre in Svalbard.

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

Somebody gets the best job and somebody gets the short end of the stick. All of the many locals helping out during Queen Sonja's visit last week will doubtless say it's an honor, but **our contenders for stagecoach/pumpkin duties are Hanna Skofteland, 9, who welcomed Her Majesty to the evening's ceremonies with flowers and Isa Iljasov, an engineer for the city responsible for keeping the red carpet immaculately free of snow spread by wind and pinheaded peasants.** We'll let you figure out who's at which end of the proverbial horse ... While the report declaring our city's government to be a bumbling, bloated bureaucracy is bound to cause a few administrators heartburn, **we can't help wishing former city council member Jon Sandmo had lived long enough to see the smackdown of a government he wanted abolished.** No, the report doesn't go that far, but obliterating three of the city's four independently managed entities for reasons described in scathing terms might have offered some respite during his illness (even if "mainstream" politicians happen to largely agree with the report's faults) ... A news item we may explore further next week about Svalbard's relatively lax alcohol policies compared to the mainland probably isn't offering much respite to **a woman arriving in Bodø with about 17 liters of spirits, wine and beer smuggled in her luggage following a visit to our lush land. Avisnordland, in a separate story, reports she got hit with an 8,000 kroner fine and state officials kept the booze ...** The Svalbard Satellite Station is getting some positive exposure this week with the public debut of its Northern Lights webcam (big photo



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Brainbuster – who has the better royal duty?
Hint: One entered a lottery drawing, the other has an advanced education in engineering.

at the top of the page, if you're really that clueless), but the bit about limited viewing hours for "security reasons" will likely offer more fodder for those who say the facility is involved in illegal wartime operations on behalf of foreign militaries. Those accusations got their own fresh exposure during the past week when **Agenta Nordberg, vice chairperson of the Swedish Peace Council, told the Voice of Russia that last year's war in Libya "was conducted by satellite from Svalbard."** She went on to state "Norway has allowed the United States of America to deploy radar installations, and in connection with the satellite they are conducting war" and that "missile defense systems near Russia can be used offensively." There's other accusations, much of it similar to the content of the 2011 book "Satelittkrigen" by NRK journalist Bård Wormdal. SvalSat officials have said the ruckus is largely about publicly available weather reports.



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

The Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain performs the first of two sets Friday at the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel. They agreed to the extended performance when a second scheduled band missed its flight.

Queen Sonja makes jazz fest an art

FESTIVAL, from page 1

interest beforehand due to the queen's visit.

Queen Sonja, who arrived in Longyearbyen last Wednesday afternoon and spent a day doing non-public activities, came primarily to preside over the debut of her art exhibit Thursday at Galleri Svalbard. Titled "Tre Reiser – Tre Landskap," the exhibit features landscape photos the queen took during previous visits that were transferred to polymer plate and processed in gravure.

The queen, explaining the project during the opening gala at the gallery, said she didn't arrive at places like an ice cave with grand plans, but once she saw the formations "I photographed like crazy."

The exhibit has been displayed in foreign locations such as London, but Queen Sonja said bringing it to Longyearbyen has extra meaning.

"You may understand better than others what I have tried to highlight," she said.

The mood, humorous but somewhat formal, got more casual when the queen presided over the opening of Polarjazz at Kulturhuset.

"Not once during these years have I thought

that I should start by welcoming you to 'Your Majesty,'" Hansen told the sold-out crowd. "It was not as dangerous as I thought."

Queen Sonja, noting she enjoys Longyearbyen for its close-knit atmosphere, wanted to know how close that camaraderie was during a preview concert the previous evening featuring any local musicians willing to perform.

"Was that with or without alcohol?" she said, earning a round of laughter.

While organizers kept to a minute-by-minute schedule for the queen, they had to do some hasty improvising Friday when one of the two scheduled bands missed its flight – a first in the festival's history. Luckily, the other was The Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain, which agreed to play a double set for an audience highly appreciative of its wildly eccentric and diverse compositions.

Hansen said next year's festival will focus almost entirely on jazz, mentioning Norwegian legends such as guitarist Terje Rypdal and trumpeter Nils Petter Molvær as possible performers. **There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.**

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

93 crimes in 2012 about 15 percent below recent average

The Svalbard governor's office handled 93 criminal cases in 2012, about 15 percent below the average for 2003-11. "The crime trend has been relatively stable since 2002, which indicates the governor has very good control of this mission field," said Lars Fause, a Troms region prosecutor and former Svalbard lieutenant governor. There were 57 reported felonies, 19 fewer than in 2011 when a large-scale drug bust occurred. There were seven more property crimes, six fewer domestic violence cases, and four fewer drunk driving arrests.

Fixed entry/exit for shopping center proposed in road plan

A road safety plan that includes an entry/exit crossing at Svalbardbutikken will be considered by the Longyearbyen Municipal Council at its Feb. 12 meeting. "The area outside has no marked entry and exit," a report by the city's Environment and Industry Committee notes. "This means that cars drive in and out all over the place. Then there is also some pedestrians in the area that could easily cause hazardous traffic situations." The number of cars in Longyearbyen has increased from 448 in 1994 to 1,060 in 2011. Other projects proposed in the plan are lower speed limits in some areas, new pullouts for buses and a speed bump on Vei 232 at the bottom of the hill of Gruvedalen.

Thai princess to visit, asks about medical emergencies

Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand is scheduled to visit Longyearbyen on March 12, according to the Thai embassy in Oslo. Her itinerary is still being determined, but Ambassador Theerakun Niyom, in a letter to Svalbard Gov. Odd Olsen Ingerø, requested details about local preparedness if the princess needs emergency medical treatment. Aksel Bilicz, leader of the medical department at Longyearbyen Hospital, said he is pleased to know in advance about such visits. "I think different countries have different traditions," he said. "When former U.S. President Jimmy Carter arrived, we were visited by people who checked out what the hospital could offer."



UNIS



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Queen Sonja and Svalbard Gov. Odd Olsen Ingerø, above left, ride a snowcat Friday to the Kjell Henriksen Observatory. At right, Liv Mari Schei and Arne O. Holm perform a music/poetry concert titled "Homesickness – Words and Music From the North" on Saturday at Kulturhuset.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Cloudy. SE winds to 25 km/h. High -8C (-14C wind chill), low -12C (-17C wind chill).	Cloudy. SE winds to 29 km/h. High -8C (-14C wind chill), low -11C (-16C wind chill).	Cloudy. SE winds to 35 km/h. High -4C (-9C wind chill), low -8C (-15C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. S winds to 29 km/h. High -4C (-9C wind chill), low -8C (-12C wind chill).
24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness
Extended forecast: Sunday, cloudy, -3C (-8C), -9C (-14C), light 0:00h; Monday, snow, -1C (-6C), -3C (-8C), light 0:00h; Tuesday, cloudy, -2C (-7C), -2C (-9C), light 0:00h; Wednesday, cloudy, -2C (-7C), -6C (-12C), light 0:00h			
Data provided by storm.no			



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Helena Gerez, 16, front left, sings "Aquarius" during a rehearsal of "Hair" this week at Kulturhuset.

Local youths wig out for 'Hair'

HIPPIES, from page 1

story their kids don't necessarily relate to, although the youths are going all-out to learn and tell it this weekend.

A journey 50 years back in time is scheduled Saturday when Longyearbyen School students perform "Hair" (subtitle: "The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical") at 2 and 6 p.m. at Kulturhuset. The highly controversial play – which Norwegians tried to ban with a human barricade back when it was Broadway hit – features the story of a "tribe" of hippies resisting involvement in the Vietnam War.

The outlandishly colorful clothing, covering much of the cultural center as well as the students, comes "from people like my grandmother," said Jiraporn Saenphet, 14, playing one of the singing tribe members. The school has a stash as well, plus borrowed uniforms of the much-reviled military.

All of the students watched the 1979 film

based on the play during their months of preparation, although most of the reviews are something less than laudatory.

"I didn't think it was that good," said Mats Åstrøm, 14, cast as Hud (who describes himself in the play as "president of the United States of love"). "I didn't really understand it...just that they dressed ugly."

Several students said the biggest challenge was learning the complex lyrics for the unusually large number of songs.

Some international and modern performances of "Hair" have adapted to reflect current political leaders and situations. Dagny Krogness, director of the local production, said the students are performing a straight interpretation of the original, although that does have parallels to modern situations they might be able to relate to such as the war in Afghanistan.

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.

Report: City gov't needs overhaul

CONSOLIDATE, from page 1

Kristoffersen, head of the municipal council, adding "I could have written the recommendations myself."

The problem goes beyond just size, as "high (population) turnover in the Svalbard community represents a challenge to the system and availability in general," the report states. "The distance between politicians and citizens is increasing as a result."

The agencies recommended for elimination in the report are Bydrift, responsible for the city's infrastructure; Culture and Leisure Enterprises, responsible for recreational and youth activities, and Growing Enterprises, responsible for youth and adult education services.

The report, prepared by KS-Konsulent in Oslo, also recommends eliminating numerous management positions at those agencies. But Kristoffersen said she doesn't envision a significant downsizing of the city's staff since the same functions would continue under a new leadership structure.

She said the council will wait until new

City Manager Lars Ole Saugnes begins work March 1 before formally considering the report's recommendations.

The city, which celebrated the 10-year anniversary of its local government last October, describes the existing structure at its website in terms sharply contrasting the report. Among the reasons for the model, the site notes, are it "best satisfies Longyearbyen social democratic principles," provides "maximum efficiency and minimum red tape," and "best strengthens the local board's role."

But Roger Zahl Ødegård, the city's cultural minister, offered a less noble explanation in the reader comment section of a *Svalbardposten* article about the report.

"It was the politicians and expensive consultants who decided the current model – partly on employees' willingness back in the tough old days," he wrote. "I hope any new structure will live longer and not be subject to ever-changing politicians and new, enterprising consultants."

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.

What's up

Feb. 9

2 and 6 p.m.: Musical "Hair," performed by Longyearbyen School students. Kulturhuset.

Feb. 10

11 a.m.: Family Mass w/ performance by Polargospel. Svalbard Church.

6 p.m.: Movie: "Isdragen," Swedish family film, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Flight," U.S. drama, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

Feb. 11

7 p.m.: Trivia quiz. Kulturhuset cafe.

Feb. 12

7 p.m.: Municipal Council meeting. Næringsbygget 3 Newtontoppen room.

7 p.m.: Fireplace gathering. Svalbard Church.

Feb. 17

No Mass at Svalbard Church.

6 p.m.: Movie: "Wreck-it Ralph" (3D), U.S. action/thriller dubbed in Norwegian, ages 7 and up. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: "A Good Day to Die Hard," U.S. action/thriller, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

Feb. 18

7 p.m.: Trivia quiz. Kulturhuset cafe.

Feb. 20

6 p.m.: Movie: "Tony 10," Netherlands family film dubbed in Norwegian, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

Feb. 23

7 p.m.: Spanish night with concert by vocalist Marthe Bjørkman and pianist Hedde Berg Hansen. Huset.

Feb. 24

11 a.m.: Mass w/ baptism and communion. Svalbard Church.

6 p.m.: Movie: "Karsten og Petra Blir Bestevenner," Norwegian childrens film, all ages. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Anna Karenina," British drama, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

What's online

Icepeople.net provides daily updates of news about Svalbard and the world's polar regions, plus extras for articles from the print edition. Among the latest news:

- *Stoltenberg rejects Lofoten oil drilling*
- *Critics: Arctic Council oil spill plan 'vague'*
- *Alarm over China's creep into Greenland*
- *Fox News: Polar bears 'doing just fine'*