



Svalbard 2011: The trivia quiz

More thick government reports published; guess what's up/down in population, crime, booze, etc.

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

Another batch of reports about life in Svalbard are out from the government and, roughly summarized, all is mostly well.

But reading that droning of statistics – even when filtered through the sixth-grade reading level of a typical newspaper article by a U.S.-educated journalist – is a drag. Since there's a trend toward people getting news from sources confirming what they already think, those pre-conceived notions are being put to the test in summarizing the bureaucrats' view of the year that was.

The questions are from the Svalbard governor's annual report for 2011 and Longyearbyen local council's updated long-term planning strategies. No prizes, since being an informed citizen ought to be rewarding enough.

Q: Compared to the end of 2010, the number of residents in Longyearbyen as of Dec. 31, 2011: A) increased; B) decreased; C) was about the same (+/- 20).

A: A. The 2,063 residents were up from 1,966 in 2010. The population at Svea, however, dropped to about 185 from 225 in 2010 as coal mining there continues a gradual decline.

Q: The number of Barentsburg residents as of Nov. 15, 2011, was: A) 320; B) 380; 420; D) 480.

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MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Emilie Sommervold, 17, right, takes a picture of Maria Mena performing Saturday at the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel as part of the Polarjazz festival. Sommervold was one of three volunteers taking official photos for the festival's website and other publications during the evening.

FREEMIUM JAZZ

Volunteers keep warm feelings flowing during sizzling Polarjazz

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

Elina Solstad, 19, experienced the full VIP treatment during Polarjazz thanks to knowing the right people. Or perhaps the wrong people, in the view of some, since she was the one doing the treating.

The Oslo resident spent her "vacation" in Longyearbyen dashing to greet arriving guests with glasses of champagne at Svalbard Airport and performing other tasks as one of the 32 volunteers at this year's festival. Her guilt-edged invitation came courtesy of the daughter

of Lasse Hansen, the festival's director.

"I'm her best friend," Solstad said.

By the third day, how much sleep did invitee Stener Hansen, 19, also visiting from Oslo, have on her sojourn?

"Five hours. Total," she said.

This year's Polarjazz artists got a warm welcome of an unpleasant sort thanks to freakishly warm temperatures that cancelled the snowmobiling and dogsledding tours that are part of the festival's unique allure. But the warmth from

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Change at new mine site sought

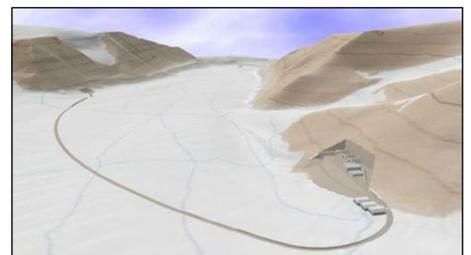
Governor seeking new round of comments as Store Norske asks for altered terms at Lunckefjell

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

Store Norske, after pushing through government agency approval of a new mine at Lunckefjell with warnings of dire consequences otherwise, now wants more favorable access and infrastructure terms.

"An application for change of solution for

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STORE NORSKE

An artist's rendering shows access and infrastructure changes being sought by Store Norske to a proposed coal mine at Lunckefjell.

Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

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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.

Balloons behaving bizarrely



VITTORIO TULLI / CNR



GIORGIO AMICO / UNIVERSITY OF ROME



ISTAR

Wilfried Ruhe and Sebastian Barrault, left, prepare a long-duration stratospheric balloon for launch in mid-January in Ny-Ålesund. At top right, Silvia Masi calibrates the payload for one of the two balloons launched as part of the Polar Observation Platform, with the objective of testing new equipment and observing stratospheric wind trajectories in the winter polar sky at night to aid planning for future launches. The first balloon ascended normally, according to the official log, but began descending at an altitude of only 15 kilometers, possibly due to an extreme cold of minus 68 degrees Celsius and sheer winds in the troposphere. The second balloon, despite better weather conditions, veered off on an unprecedented journey that baffled researchers. "The balloon turned from a westwardly climb-out to a southern track and continued in a SSE trajectory," the log notes. "The trajectory continued southerly through the next 28 hours crossing Norway and over Sweden. The winds were in excess of 80 km/h. Upon reaching Gotland Island, Sweden, it was decided to terminate the flight over an area of open fields ... The payload and flight system are in perfect condition. Amazing coincidence! The trajectory was unlike any flight profile experienced in the past 8 years of launching stratospheric balloons from Svalbard."

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

In yet another example of our ability to screw up, it seems we made an atonal call on our review of "Carmina Burana" last week. It doesn't quite rise to the level of full frontal (page) correction, but a quick clarification seems in order. Seems the one errant moment, which we called a false start by the conductor, was actually his pausing to explain something about the passage to be performed. To our ears that's still a start-stop moment, but some don't consider it a real miscue ... We may have also been on shaking ground when we (along with the rest of the tabloid press) mocked Alex Hartley's Nowhere Island art project, which involves him taking a 40-by-eight-meter boatload of Svalbard rocks and dirt on a cruise to London for the Olympics. Seems more than 4,000 people from 82 countries have signed up as mock inhabitants of the dirt pile, according to the latest update from the *Sidmouth Herald* ... Staying with Fun With Geography, turns out if you want to get sloshed at Barentz Pub (or Bar) you might end up in Murmansk, Luleå or Båtsfjord instead of Longyearbyen. Those are just some of the 58 Norwegian companies using the name "Barents" as part of their name,

according to the – wait for it – *Barents Observer*. There's also Barents Renhold for cleaning, Båtsfjord. Barents Naturgass and Barents Sjømat for nourishment, Dansefestival Barents, and Barents Danseråd for dance, Barents Musikk og Kulturforum and Barents Spektakel for festival-goers, the Tour de Barents ski competition and Barents Safari. The trend is also widespread in Lapland and northern Sweden, but we're sick of typing that word ... But we'll do so once more for the strangest-ever headline in the ongoing Arctic Cold War: "Norway in new Barents seismic swim." That tease from the newspaper *Upstream* refers to Norway's plan to do more mapping of maritime boundary of areas that Russia is also now trying to expand, apparently reviving a very long-running feud despite the much-hailed signing of a treaty last year. The article actually includes a photo of a goggle-clad swimmer (in what appears to be a pool, not a polar dip) ... All those climate change conferences here warning us about the end of the world are OK, but here's an upcoming gathering that's really important: the Norwegian Bakery and Confectioner Industry Association will be hosting their annual conference Sept. 7-10.



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Stener Hansen, left, Elina Solstad, and Linn Skadberg, all 19, pass out champagne and schedules to musicians and other travelers arriving at Svalbard Airport on Thursday for Polarjazz. More than 30 volunteers, many coming from the mainland at their own expense, helped with this year's festival.

Volunteers are money at Polarjazz

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volunteers providing everything from backstage assistance to keepsake photos helped ensure there was no chill in the overall trip.

Emilie Sommervold, 17, was one of three official festival photographers during Saturday night's concerts after she and other members of a local youth photo club were approached. She said she's only taken simple personal photos at concerts before, but Lasse Hansen didn't give any specific instructions for the assignment.

"He said 'Just have fun, play with your camera,'" she said.

Ragnhild Engan, 17, another photographer during the evening, said she isn't a regular listener of jazz. But the schedule, which on Friday featured the fusion-oriented Oslo group The Real Thing followed by the landmark deLillos rock band, was a good way to get some exposure to the genre.

"The people were sort of forced to listen to jazz," she said.

This year's lineup featured only two bands with jazz elements, with festival officials stating an emphasis on popular artists is necessary to make the event commercially viable. The format proved successful and will be used in future years, Lasse Hansen said.

"I guess it's an all-time high for ticket sales," he said. "I saw four nights crowded and people really happy, so that's what this festival is all about."

About 500 tickets were sold during each of the festival's four major nights, with Svalbard Church filled to capacity for a lone concert on fifth and final day Sunday. Surplus revenue from the festival is still undetermined.

"There were also some additional costs because we had to pay the artists more," Lasse Hansen said. The unseasonably warm weather resulted in some flight cancellations, so some artists found their stay longer than expected.

The volunteers were selected from about 50 who expressed interest, he said. Signup notices are sent to all students at The University Centre in Svalbard and posted at the festival's website, with officials also contacting additional people they are interested in. Selecting each year's group of volunteers from the excess of applications usually happens at single meeting of officials.

"It's not an audition," Lasse Hansen said.

While volunteers agree with the old saying that helping out is reward enough, they don't go entirely without compensation.

"We did get into the whole festival for free and you can hang out in the VIP lounge," said Trine Tveito Rund, 22, an Oslo resident selling tickets during Sunday's church concert.

They also get official festival sweatshirts – swag not available to mere mortals limited to paying 200 kroner for t-shirts.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

UNIS shocked as long-term stays at Guest House nixed

A ruling UNIS Guest House cannot be used to accommodate graduate students came as a shock to officials at The University Centre in Svalbard, who are now scrambling to find alternative housing. The original application for the facility completed last fall near the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel stated it was to be used only for guest speakers and short-term visitors. UNIS sought during construction to designate 20 flats as long-term housing for graduate students, but Norway's Environment and Industry Committee rejected the concept last week. "They just got what they sought," said Trond E. Johansen, who led the effort to reject UNIS' plan. "UNIS planned poorly, not the politicians." But UNIS officials are indeed upset. "We are a major player in Longyearbyen in many ways, including as a corporate citizen," said Helen Flå, acting director at UNIS. "A decision like this does not exactly get more goodwill towards the politicians."

Canada newspaper asks for world's northernmost person

The Canadian newspaper *Metro* in Montreal is trying to talk to the world's northernmost villager, who they believe lives in Longyearbyen. The paper stated it has rejected Ny-Ålesund and the Canadian settlement of Alert even though both are further north since they are science/military outposts rather than "normal" communities. The newspaper is planning a "Nordic Edition" for this month.

Man gets 45 days in jail for assaulting 2 in Longyearbyen

A man in his 20s has been sentenced to 45 days in jail after attacking two people in Longyearbyen last April. Prosecutors say the man strangled and slapped his ex-girlfriend while wearing hard plastic gloves, and stepped on the face and beat a man who was with her. The assailant pleaded not guilty, stating he not sane at the time. A psychiatric assessment concluded he had a mild disorder, but was aware of his actions and competent to stand trial. The exam delayed the trial, during which the man was in jail, resulting in a lesser sentence than sought by prosecutors.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Rain/snow. SW to 32 km/h. High 1C (-6C wind chill), low 0C (-7C wind chill).	Snow. SW winds to 22 km/h. High -1C (-6C wind chill), low -3C (-7C wind chill).	Snow. Variable winds to 11 km/h. High -4C (-8C wind chill), low -11C (-16C wind chill).	Cloudy. N winds to 11 km/h. High -13C (-18C wind chill), low -15C (-21C wind chill).
Sunrise 0:00; sunset 0:00	Sunrise 0:00; sunset 0:00	Sunrise 0:00; sunset 0:00	Sunrise 0:00; sunset 0:00
Extended forecast: Sunday, p. cloudy, -15C (-20C), -17C (-23C), light 0:00h; Monday, p. cloudy, -17C (-24C), -18C (-24C), light 0:00h; Tuesday, p. cloudy, -18C (-23C), -18C (-23C), light 0:00h; Wednesday, p. cloudy, -18C (-24C), -20C (-26C), light 0:00h			
Data provided by yr.no			

A police official sets off on a field assignment in this cover photo from the Svalbard governor's annual report for 2011. A polar bear attack on a British youth camp that killed one person and injured four, and an 11-person drug bust were cited as the year's biggest incidents. The report (in Norwegian) is available at <http://www.sysselmannen.no/hoved.aspx?m=44267&amid=3182310>.



IRENE SANDODDEN / SYSSELMANNEN

Nothing trivial about this quiz

QUIZ, from page 1

A: B. The governor's report notes the total, up from 370 at the end of 2010, was at a time when the population is low due to the absence of summer season workers. A reversal to a long-term decline is expected due to significant renovation and cleanup efforts by Russia, plus efforts to boost scientific research and tourism.

Q: The number of crimes investigated by the governor's office in 2011 was: A) 58; B) 76; C) 89; D) 104.

A: B. The 31 percent increase from 58 in 2010 is due to 20 additional drug incidents, including 11 people arrested last October. Also of note was one rape case, the first sex crime incident since 2008.

Q: The number of people arrested for drunk driving last year was: A) 2; B) 6; C) 9; D) 13.

A: D. The total is up from two in 2010, due in part to more sobriety checks by police. Seven drivers were in vehicles, the rest on snowmobiles.

Q: The percentage of Longyearbyen residents drinking alcohol two or more times a

week is: A) 18; B) 28; C) 48; D) 68.

A: B. About the same as in 2000. The percentage is higher than on the mainland, although the gap has narrowed during that time.

Q: The percentage of Longyearbyen residents who smoke is about: A) 30; B) 40; C) 50; D) 60.

A: A. The total is down from 63 percent in 2000, roughly the same trend on the mainland. About 20 percent of local residents smoke daily.

Q: The number of helicopter flights for ambulance, search and rescue, and training purposes in 2011 was: A) 43; B) 127; C) 194; D) 288.

A: D. The total is up from 253 in 2010 and down from 338 in 2009, but reflects a gradually increasing long-term trend.

Q: The number of marriages in Svalbard in 2011 was: A) 15; B) 20; C) 25; D) 30.

A: C. The total is slightly up from 2010. There were also two separations approved by the governor, but no divorces.

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

New scrutiny for Lunckefjell mine

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mass access and infrastructure" has been received from Store Norske, the Svalbard's governor's office said in a prepared statement.

"The change is requested is of such magnitude that it must be considered for (further) study," the statement notes.

The proposed change for the mine, which Store Norske hopes to open in 2013, affects extraction as well as a road over a glacier to the site. Store Norske report the alteration "can then make way for infrastructure to be established closer and partially into the hillside."

The mine seemingly cleared its last major government hurdles at the end of 2011 when the ruling Labor Party, plus Norway's environmental and industry ministries, endorsed the project. A vote by Parliament is still necessary,

which is expected later this year.

Store Norske, citing production at Svea that has dropped by more than half during the past four years, says the Lunckefjell site is critical to ensuring mining continues as Svalbard's economic foundation. Peak production at Lunckefjell is expected from 2014 to 2018.

Comments are being accepted by the governor's office, preferably by e-mail at firmapost@sysselmannen.no, until March 7. Taking further action or sending the proposal to the environmental ministry will then be considered.

The full proposal (in Norwegian) is at www.sysselmannen.no/hoved.aspx?m=44267&amid=3182322.

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

What's up

Feb. 10

6 p.m.: Movie: "Puss In Boots" (3D), U.S. animation/fantasy, ages 7 and up. Kulturhuset.

Feb. 11

11:45 a.m.-6 p.m.: Sports exchange between Barentsburg and Longyearbyen. Svalbardhallen.

Spitsbergen Up and Down 2012. Race to the top of Trollsteinen and back, with various age and gender groups in timed and untimed categories. Starting times range from 1 to 4 p.m. Prizes in "surprise" categories announced after. Details at spitsbergenupanddown.no.

Feb. 12

11 a.m.: Dogsled race to determine starting order for Trappers' Trail competition. Starts at Nordlysstasjonen i Adventdalen. Details at www.longyearbyenhundeklubb.no.

5 p.m.: UKM 2012.

9 p.m.: Movie: "Iron Woman," British drama, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

Feb. 15

6 p.m.: Movie: "Chronicle," U.S. action/thriller, no age limit determined. Kulturhuset.

Feb. 16-18

WinterBlues 2012, featuring artists from Dark Season Blues, which celebrates its 10th anniversary this fall.

Feb. 16

6 p.m.: Lecture by John-Eldar Pedersen about the memories of three generations of the Nøis family in Svalbard. Svalbard Museum.

Feb. 18

2 p.m.: Book presentation by Frode Skarstein, author of the triple biography "'Etterlysning: Gul Opel Kadett' - Polare Pilotpionerer i Krig" about WWI and WWII pilots Tryggve Gran, Hjalmar Riiser-Larsen and Bernt Balchen. Longyearbyen Library.

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:

- *Norway expands seabed survey*
- *Next supercontinent to form in Arctic*
- *Stealing a glacier to make cocktails?*
- *Arctic cold saves Czech wine production*