



Longtime Norwegian guitar icons Terje Rypdal, above left, and Ronni Le Tekro collaborate their vastly different styles during a rock-oriented concert Saturday at the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel as part of this year's Polarjazz festival. At top right, Kristin Asbjørnsen sings a modern spiritual Sunday at Svalbard Church. Late music until 3 a.m. was performed at the Radisson on Friday and Saturday by The New Orleans Collective, lower right. Photos by Mark Sabbatini / Icepeople.



## Genre stretch

*'All-jazz' festival didn't always sound like it, but crowds approve*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

May-Lill Eggen has been a regular at Polarjazz since moving to Longyearbyen five years ago, even though her taste is music is

everything but jazz. But at this year's festival, the first to focus on its namesake genre since its early years more than a decade ago, she said the mostly unfamiliar

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## Nice to visit, don't want to live here?

*Local hotel stays up 15 percent in 2013, bucking nationwide trend, but population drops 2.2 percent*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

Longyearbyen's always been a town where people come and go quickly. They just did so a

lot more often last year.

Hotel stays in Svalbard increased 15 percent in 2013, countering a slight decline in stays nationwide due to less in-country travel,

according to Statistics Norway. Much of the increase was due to the resumption of service to Svalbard by Norwegian Air, with flights and

See **SLEEPOVERS**, page 3

## Meltdown: 14° above normal



IVAN KELLENBERGER / FLICKR.COM

The *Noorderlicht*, which should be frozen in sea ice at this time of year, is instead still free in the unusually warm waters of Tempelfjorden.

*Tourism officials not panicking, but scientists say record-high temperatures threaten wildlife*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

Yes, snowmobiling conditions suck, but it's a whole lot worse being a seal or reindeer right now.

Temperatures during the past month have been an average of 1.6 degrees Celsius, 14.2 degrees higher than normal, according to the

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## Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

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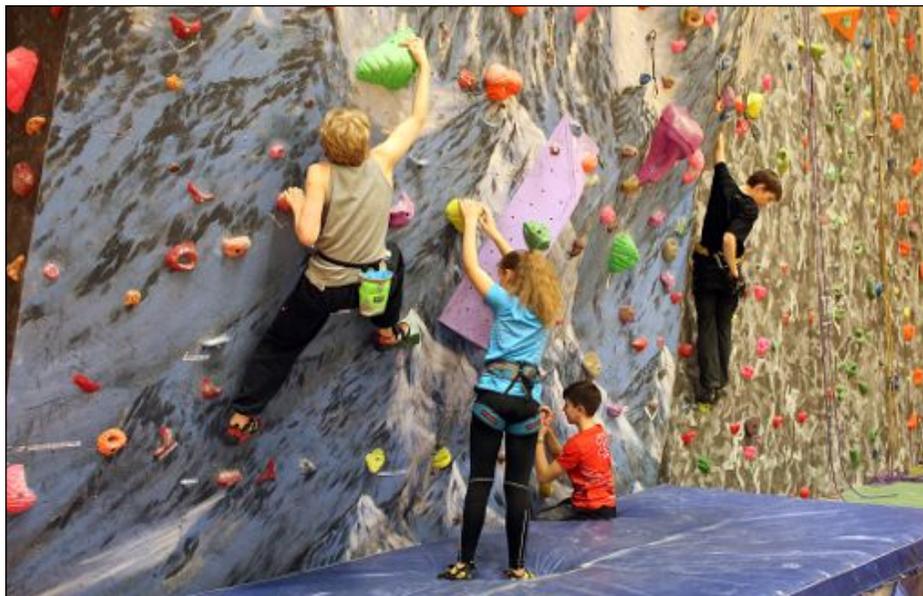
## Corrections policy

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.

## Getting their rocks on



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Longyearbyen youths practice their route-finding skills on the climbing wall at Svalbardhallen on Monday. A free-of-charge bouldering competition, featuring low-height navigation of challenges designed by participants, is scheduled for all ages from 2 to 4 p.m. Saturday.

## Icesheet

### Random bits of the week's weirdness:

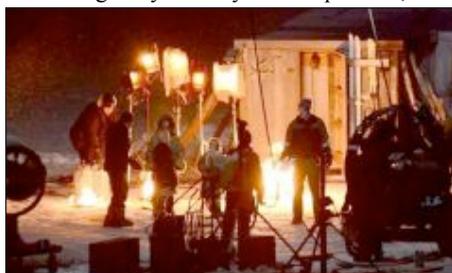
It's that time of year again when you need a meteorology degree to tell if it's night or day. As indicated on page three, **the first sunrise since last October is Feb. 15** (not Feb. 16, as various online almanacs were stating) although it's kinda hard to say if a simultaneous sunrise/sunset really qualifies as a day. Even when there's a measurable period of daylight the following day – which increases at a freakish rate daily until the end of the month – the sun won't actually shine on Longyearbyen because of all the surrounding mountains. We won't even get a glimpse of solar rays until the second week of March. Not that any of this really matters much since it's going to be mostly cloudy as long as the long-term forecast can see ... Since you're not going to be viewing a sunrise this week, we thought we'd try to at least offer something pleasant to look at with **yet another award-winning photograph of the local scene**. The polar bear at a safe viewing distance to the right is part of a Svalbard photo series titled "Birds and Bears" by Wilfred Berthelsen. The photo is a finalist in the travel category for the Sony World Photography Awards. Since it's also the first displayed overall in a gallery at [tinyurl.com/p9sxxr5](http://tinyurl.com/p9sxxr5), we're



WILFRED BERTHELSEN

**Not much different in color:** Or maybe it's really a color photo of a black and white scene.

guessing that's a positive sign ... Since we're on the extraordinarily rare topic of capturing polar bears on film, a heads-up to **the folks at Isfjord Radio who are getting invaded for eight days by a crew filming the movie "Operasjon Arktis," starring 12-year-old Kaisa Antonsen**. But there's no plans to share personal space with the local wildlife – they did that already in Vancouver, Canada, with "the world's only polar bear taking movie roles," according to *Fredriksstad Blad* ... This week's award for great headline writing goes to the greenies at the Natural Resources Defense Council for **"Hot Tub Time Machine"** which, alas, tops a rather dense article on the oft-written subject about how rising CO2 levels are acidifying our oceans and threatening our extinction. We'd love to see what a moviemaker or band could do with that title instead.



VIDAR SANDNES

**Who's the key grip?** Which, in Svalbard lingo, means the person on bear duty holding the rife.



EVA FUGLEI / NORWEGIAN POLAR INSTITUTE

Reindeer such as this one are struggling for survival due to record-high temperatures in Svalbard during the past month as they are having trouble foraging on the ice-covered tundra, according to researchers.

## Record heat chilling for wildlife

**WARM, from page 1**

Norwegian Meteorological Institute. Øyvind Nordli, a climate researcher for the institute, said that's a record high and, while there have been warm-weather periods since the recording of measurements began a century ago, "something is different about what has happened in recent decades."

The heat wave is due to weeks of warm winds from the south, caused by the combination of a low pressure system over the British Isles and a powerful high pressure system over Russia, according to the NMI. The system is also responsible for record droughts in central and northern Norway.

The warmth is affecting local winter tourism, including the *Noorderlicht* which should be housing guests in the frozen sea ice

of Tempelfjorden. Instead the ship is still in open waters as tour operators wait for the colder weather forecast during the upcoming weeks.

"We do not panic even if it is spring-like," said Ronny Brunvoll, head of Svalbard Tourism, in an interview with Yr.no. "The season is long and lasts until mid-May. We have much else to do while we wait for the ice."

Major concerns, however, are being expressed by Norwegian Polar Institute researchers who say the absence of sea ice makes seals increasingly vulnerable to polar bears and Arctic foxes, and that reindeer and other animals struggle for food when the tundra is covered with ice instead of snow.

**There's more! Visit [www.icepeople.net](http://www.icepeople.net) for the complete story.**

## Strong year for hotels, but mining worries locals

**SLEEPOVERS, from page 1**

hotel revenue rising by about 30 percent last March and April. The Russian communities of Barentsburg and Pyramiden also offered travelers another option at newly refurbished and reopened hotels.

There were about 95,000 hotel stays in Svalbard last year, compared to 19.8 million nationwide, the agency reported.

But longer-term occupancy took a drop in Longyearbyen as the population decreased by 47 to 2,043, according to the annual report by the Svalbard governor's office. The 2.2 percent decline isn't a statistical anomaly since the population is in constant flux due to an average residency length of six years, although some

locals are expressing concern it may become a trend due to the downsizing of Store Norske as coal resources continue to dwindle.

But Longyearbyen Mayor Christin Kristoffersen told *Svalbardposten* she isn't yet concerned as the city tries to focus on being a more diverse family-oriented community.

"Over years it goes up and down, and it is impossible that the cuts to Store Norske will not have an impact on society," she said. "But we've got two new businesses that have opened this year. There is too much pointing in the positive direction that we can call this a negative trend."

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### HEADLINES STOLEN FROM **SVALBARDPOSTEN** VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

#### Woman hospitalized after suffering burns in cabin fire

A 26-year-old woman sustained second-degree burns to about 15 percent of her body in a fire caused by a fuel accident Sunday morning at a cabin in Coles Bay, according to the Svalbard governor's office. A group of nine students was cooking breakfast on a multi-fuel burner when leaking fuel ignited and set the woman's wool clothing on fire, said Vincent Carrier, one of the trip's participants. "We have attempted to reason our way to what specifically went wrong, but we have not done it completely," he said. He said the flames spread from the kitchen table and at one point reached the ceiling. While some students extinguished the kitchen fire, others saved the woman by smothering her with blankets. Rescuers brought the woman by helicopter to the University Hospital of North Norway in Tromsø. Her injuries are described as moderate to severe, but Carrier said she is in good spirits.

#### NRK collecting VAT from viewers in VAT-free Svalbard

NRK is adding VAT to its annual license fee for some customers being billed in Svalbard, which is free of the national tax, but the network is blaming viewers for the incorrect charge. Rebekka Nordtømme, who have lived in Svalbard for more than 40 years, said she received a bill a week ago for 1,364 kroner, including 101 kroner for VAT. "A government channel should know better," she said, adding she has made repeated attempts to get NRK to eliminate the extra charge. "But when they clean up their computer systems at regular intervals, it then says in the population register that we are registered on the mainland." Freddy Lysfjord, head of NRK's license fee department, said the network's assumption is viewers are living on the mainland. "If people move to Svalbard, they must contact us and let us know about it," he said.

#### Snowmobilers are booze-free

A sobriety checkpoint for snowmobile riders was conducted by the Svalbard governor's office Friday morning at the old airport site in Adventdalen. About 20 people were checked, all of whom were sober.

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Cloudy. SE winds to 39 km/h. High 4C (0C wind chill), low 2C (-3C wind chill).	Cloudy. E winds to 39 km/h. High 2C (-3C wind chill), low -1C (-6C wind chill).	Snow. E winds to 39 km/h. High 0C (-5C wind chill), low -2C (-7C wind chill).	Cloudy. E winds to 29 km/h. High -1C (-5C wind chill), low -2C (-7C wind chill).
24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness	Sunrise 12:01p; sunset 12:01p
<b>Extended forecast:</b> Sunday, clear, -2C (-5C), -4C (-8C), light 1:55h; Monday, p. cloudy, -4C (-8C), -7C (-12C), light 2:42h; Tuesday, cloudy, -7C (-12C), -8C (-14C), light 3:19h; Wednesday, cloudy, -7C (-13C), -9C (-15C), light 3:50h			

Data provided by storm.no



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Keyboardist Frode Fjellheim plays to admiring audience members during a concert by the electronic jazz/Sámi band Transjoik on Saturday night at the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel.

## Jazz, in its 'other' forms, a festival hit

### POLARJAZZ, from page 1

musicians put up a strong showing.

"I'm surprised how much I like it," said Eggan, a payroll administrator for Store Norske. "It's nice music."

Part of the appreciation may have been because none of the performers reminded anyone of John Coltrane or Ella Fitzgerald. Instead listeners got a wide sampling of subgenres including fusion, avant-garde, folk, neo-Dixie, funk and punk that frequently didn't sound all that different than the rock, blues and Nordic folk that has dominated lineups in recent years.

Still, the most praise by those interviewed was for two of the concerts closest to what most people envision as jazz.

The Icelandic fusion band Mezzoforte received loud approval from a sold-out crowd on opening night at Kulturhuset with a concert that didn't sound like a note had changed from their origins in the late 1970s and '80s. That was perhaps not a coincidence, since it was the second stop on a tour where they're selling newly released collections of their first ten albums on USB memory sticks.

Like the concert, the band's trip was busi-

nesslike – arriving Thursday afternoon and departing the following day – but some members still got a first-time Arctic experience to break up the routine of an exhausting road schedule.

"A lot of the guys are just going to sleep, but a few of us are going out on snowmobiles tomorrow morning," said trumpeter/keyboardist Sebastian Studnitzky.

Perhaps the most popular and skilled performance was by Silje Nergaard on Saturday at the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel. An old Pat Metheny concert album playing on the loudspeakers beforehand proved a fitting prelude, as many of the sounds and even songs had notable similarities. A crowd of more than 500 people, by far the largest of the festival, frequently roared their approval while packing the main restaurant and lobby of the hotel.

While the festival often skimps on jazz, it tries to book a range of artists in the hope listeners hear something new they appreciate.

"If you have something really nice like that, then you have it," said Svalbard Church Priest Leif Magne Helgesen.

**There's more! Visit [www.icepeople.net](http://www.icepeople.net) for the complete story.**



A group of local "convicts," left, do time on ukeleles during the open-mic Vorspiel on Wednesday at Kulturhuset. At right, bassist Steinar Raknes and singer Unni Wilhelmsen perform at a "Dinner Music in Slippers" gathering Saturday at the Spitsbergen Hotel. Photos by Mark Sabbatini / Icepeople.



## What's up

### Feb. 12

6 p.m.: Movie: "Anchorman 2," U.S. comedy, ages 7 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Feb. 13

6 p.m.: "Out and Running" youth snowmobile safety/navigation course. Meet at governor's office at Skjæringa. Continues on Feb. 20 and March 30.

### Feb. 15

11:30 p.m.: Lunch concert by local students. Kulturhuset cafe.

2 p.m.: Movie: Karsten og Petra på Vinterferie," Norwegian children's film, all ages. Kulturhuset.

### Feb. 16

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

5 p.m.: Movie: "The LEGO Movie" (3D), U.S. animated film dubbed in Norwegian, all ages. Kulturhuset.

7 p.m.: Movie: "The Monuments Men," U.S. drama/comedy, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Feb. 17

8 p.m.: Trivia quiz. Barentz Pub.

### Feb. 18

7 p.m.: Organ meditation and social gathering. Svalbard Church.

### Feb. 19

5 p.m.: Movie: "The LEGO Movie," U.S. animated film dubbed in Norwegian, all ages. Kulturhuset.

### Feb. 20

6 p.m.: "Out and Running" youth snowmobile safety/navigation course. Meet at governor's office at Skjæringa. Continues on March 30.

### Feb. 22

1:30-5:30 p.m.: Broadcast of Olympics on large-screen TV. Longyearbyen Youth Club.

2 p.m.: Movie: "The LEGO Movie," U.S. animated film dubbed in Norwegian, all ages. Kulturhuset.

6:30 p.m.: "Messiah," performed by the Longyearbyen Mixed Choir and Den Norske Opera & Ballett. Huset.

## 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:

- Arctic autumns 13°C warmer by 2100?
- Atlas of sea ice since 1850 now online
- Insurers not covering polar bear attacks
- Brits give sad penguins anti-depressants

The balloting for Svalbard's best election starts Monday, as *Icepeople* prepares

## The Best of Svalbard 2014

[www.icepeople.net/bestofsvabard](http://www.icepeople.net/bestofsvabard)

(By the way, we'll be selling ads for this one so the winners can gloat and the losers can explain why we have our heads completely up our asses.)