



Miner hurts spine

Ukrainian man suffers back and head injuries in Barentsburg accident; legs may be paralyzed

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

A Ukrainian man in his 40s was hospitalized with spinal injuries and possible paralysis after apparently being injured in a conveyor belt accident inside the coal mine in Barentsburg, according to officials.

The accident occurred at about 4:30 a.m. Wednesday (Feb. 18, reflecting a delayed press time), according to The Governor of Svalbard. Arlid Lyssand, a police chief inspector for the governor, said workers were in the process of relocating the stope.

"What we know is that we're not talking about an accident caused by a falling object," Gov. Odd Olsen Ingerø told NRK. "The man must have gotten caught in a conveyor belt."

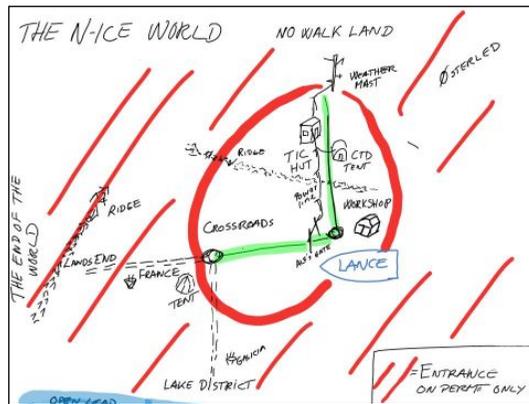
It took the victim's coworkers a couple of hours to bring him to the surface. He received

See **INJURY**, page 4



PAUL DODD / NORWEGIAN POLAR INSTITUTE

The *Lance* research vessel, above, rests in the sea ice at 81.58 degrees north latitude north Tuesday. The ship, which initially froze into the ice at 83.2 degrees north latitude on Jan. 14, was pushed steadily southward toward open water until a storm on Sunday reversed the ice floe's drift. A drift toward open water for a few more days would have forced a team of scientists aboard the ship to pack up research and other equipment deployed on the ice surrounding the ship, depicted in the drawing at right, so the vessel could sail north in search of a new freeze-in site.



NORWEGIAN POLAR INSTITUTE

Ship, water don't mix

Storm keeps Lance frozen in ice after nearly drifting into open sea

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

Usually one would have to wonder about a group of supposedly very smart people desperately hoping their boat doesn't float.

But that was a worst-case scenario facing

a team of scientists aboard the *Lance* research vessel during the past week, since the ship is supposed to be spending six months frozen into the sea ice north of Spitsbergen. Winds from the north were pushing the ship toward

See **FROZEN**, page 3

Inside

Ugh. We descend into d*ck jokes	Page 2
Headlines from Svalbardposten	
- Longyearbyen loves going to the dentist	
- Illegal dwellers have moved out of boathouses	
- Store Norske puts pricey new stope to work	Page 3
Weather forecast	Page 3
Events calendar	Page 4

Svalbard blows big time

Hurricane-force winds, heavy snow cause lots of disruptions, but no injuries or lost people

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

The forecast was scary, including hurricane-force winds in some areas. As it turns out, there wasn't much to be seen.

A storm on Sunday draped Longyearbyen and much of Svalbard in a zero-visibility curtain of white as the wind and heavy snow

See **WHITEOUT**, page 4



TROND OLSEN / SYSSELMANNEN

A police SUV and a few homes are briefly visible during a relatively tame moment Sunday as a blizzard with gale-force winds hits Longyearbyen.

Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

Editor

Mark Sabbatini

Principal of principles

Kristan Hutchison

Psychiatrist

Irene Gallion

Accomplice

Jeff Newsom

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.

Yes, the size of your dock matters

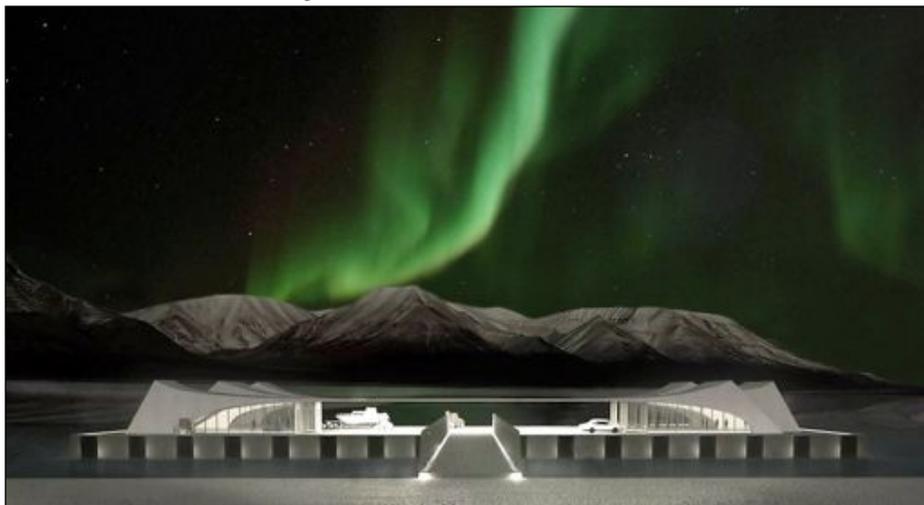


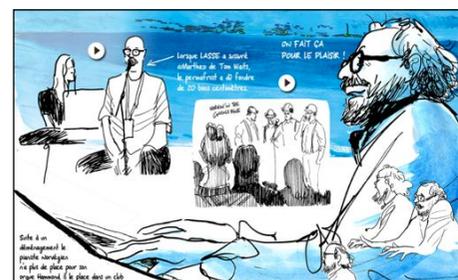
ILLUSTRATION BY SNØHETTA

A conceptual design shows a new 10,000-square-meter floating dock Longyearbyen officials are hoping will be included in the 2016 national budget. The dock, with two stories in the "hull" and up to three stories above it, is designed to accommodate large cruise ships at one end and a marine research facility at the other. City officials say the dock is needed because the existing one cannot handle the largest ships now arriving, while The University Centre in Svalbard is hoping to move all of its marine research activity to the site. The floating dock – essentially a giant, double-hulled vessel itself – is designed to withstand Arctic conditions such as ice floes during breakup.

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

We can't understand a word of it (beyond "Svalbard," "Longyearbyen" and a few names, course), but *Le Monde* nevertheless has one of the best online articles we've ever seen of Polarjazz (even if they got the name slightly wrong) by an uncredited artist who presents the festival as a graphic novel with song and interview audio clips. Organist Bugge Wesseltoft gets the most musician love, including (warning) a portion of his concert that autoplays when the page (tinyurl.com/lto93n9) is loaded, but there's also dramatic landscape and blizzard sketches, as well as some amusing caricature-like depictions of certain locals ... Meanwhile, certain folks in Britain continue to occupy the other end of the journalism scale, with a recent headline in *The Telegraph* of London proclaiming "The fiddling with temperature data is the biggest science scandal ever." It seems graphs temperatures at three weather stations in Paraguay for the past 60 years were "dramatically reversed" to show a warming trend rather than a cooling one. That "sparked some discussion between colleagues at the Norwegian Meteorological Institute," who **ran some tests comparing temperatures recorded in Svalbard by different institutes and – shockingly – found some "not been subject to the same quality control and homogenization" as others.** Oh, by the way, they also noted the *Telegraph's* "charlatan bent on spreading misinformation" neglected to mention there's tens of thousands of stations col-



LE MONDE

No, we didn't get permission to use this: But since it features bootleg recordings of musicians who are kinda well known, we're hoping we won't end up in prison alone if it comes to that.

lecting data worldwide, and adjustments up and down are made as more accurate information becomes available so, um, three stations isn't exactly a representative sample. People who want to read the technical details and more readers comments with the word "homogenization" than we care to count can check out tinyurl.com/lto93n9 ... Finally, the Svalbard Global Seed Vault celebrated its seventh birthday this week and, while there weren't any high-profile deposits like some past years, it got a shoutout from lots of geek and science publications as Swiss researchers announced they've discovered a way to **store massive amounts of data as a DNA-coded string in a way that, if kept in the -18C Doomsday Vault, could preserve the data for more than a million years.**

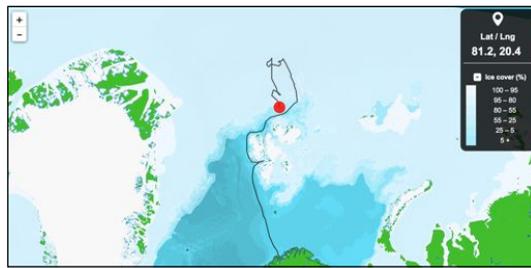
Get some real dirt on icepeople!

Our global headquarters available for rent during the March 20 eclipse! Sleeps three on actual furnishings (double bed and sofa), plus a few can squeeze in on the floor. Washing machine, turbo wi-fi and about a 5-10 minute walk to most places. Plus, you'll be helping provide our pitiful little newspaper with desperately needed funds. Contact marksabbatini@yahoo.com for details.



PAUL DODD / NORWEGIAN POLAR INSTITUTE

Instruments at a remote camp, above, collect data about 400 meters from where the *Lance* research vessel is frozen into the sea ice. The distance ensures that measurements are not influenced by turbulence caused by water flowing around the ship. At right, a map shows the drift path of the *Lance* since departing Longyearbyen on Jan. 11 and freezing into the ice three days later.



NORWEGIAN POLAR INSTITUTE

Storm keeps *Lance* in the ice

FROZEN, from page 1

open water, however, and the scientists were only a few days before having to hurriedly pack up the equipment on the ice and sail to a new freeze-in spot.

"On average, the distance to the ice edge shrunk by five kilometers per day, with peaks of 35 kilometers per day," wrote Harald Steen, leader of the Norwegian Polar Institute project, at the expedition's official blog (tinyurl.com/ksefnny) on Sunday.

But a massive storm that brought hurricane-force winds to some parts of Svalbard on Sunday proved to be a blessing for the *Lance*, as a shift in the wind's direction sent the ship north again.

"All is better now," Steen wrote in the same blog post, adding "we're currently cruising at 0.8 knots (about 1.5 km/h) with a 10 m/s tail wind. Pretty impressive, one might say."

An international team 20 scientists, aided by 10 crew members, are participating in one of the most ambitious voyages ever led by the Norwegian Polar Institute. The blog describes

the project as "monitoring the entire system of the polar winter ice from cradle to grave" in order to develop more accurate models of climate change and its likely impact on the Arctic.

So far the voyage has been promising, even when the researchers were worried about a temporary halt in their work, Steen wrote.

"Every morning, the scientists go out on the ice to tend to their instruments, check on the data, sample snow and ice, and launch weather balloons," he wrote. "Some remain on board, looking after CO₂-measuring instruments and working through samples, or running the deep-water CTD (conductivity, temperature, depth) as well as collecting water samples at different depths."

A new team of scientists is scheduled to take over this week until late March or early April, at which point the ship will return to Longyearbyen to take on a new crew and science team before heading north again to spend an additional three months in the ice.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM **SVALBARDPOSTEN** VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Fear of the dentist? Not in Longyearbyen, survey says

Rolf Johansen, 60, usually Longyearbyen's only dentist, is the most popular service provider in town, according to a survey of residents conducted last fall. Ninety-three percent of the 257 respondents said they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with local dentistry services. Johansen, who's been practicing in the city for the past 12 years, said his longevity, quality of his assistants, and general satisfaction with dentistry services in Norway are likely factors in the poll. The survey, conducted online and mailed to 1,193 households, consisted of numerous questions about public services and the general well-being of Svalbard. Other services with high rankings included nurse/midwife with 85 percent positive, governor/police with 79 percent, employment assistance with 74 percent, and physiotherapy with 67 percent.

Illegal dwellers have moved out of boathouses, city says

It appears there are no longer any folks living illegally in boathouses along the shore at Sjøområdet, according to an inspection by Longyearbyen city officials. Six of 40 respondents to an inquiry said they were living in the cabins and holiday homes in violation of rules limiting stays to residents and former residents – and then only temporarily. Astrid Meek, a city development consultant, said officials are planning follow-up inspections and a better definition of the rules, including specifically how long people can stay.

Store Norske puts pricey new stope to work despite crisis

A new 7,000-ton stope that cost more than 300 million kroner is in place at Svea and will be used to start extracting coal at the end of April, according to Store Norske. The stope was originally destined for the new Lunckefjell mine, but a crisis caused primarily by low prices has halted production there this year. Store Norske will extract easily obtained top-surface coal at Svea until October, after which the stope will be relocated to Lunckefjell for next year if the government agrees to provide a loan as part of a restructuring plan.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Partly cloudy. W winds to 29 km/h. High -3C (-7C wind chill), low -11C (-16C wind chill). Sunrise: 10:27a, sunset: 1:55p	Partly cloudy. Variable winds to 111 km/h. High -12C (-17C wind chill), low -15C (-20C wind chill). Sunrise: 10:12a, sunset: 2:10p	Partly cloudy. Variable winds to 29 km/h. High -13C (-19C wind chill), low -15C (-21C wind chill). Sunrise: 9:58a, sunset: 2:23p	Cloudy. S winds to 15 km/h. High -15C (-21C wind chill), low -17C (-22C wind chill). Sunrise: 9:45a, sunset: 2:36p
Extended forecast: Sunday, cloudy, -15C (-21C), -19C (-24C), light 5:13h; Monday, p. cloudy, -14C (-20C), -15C (-21C), light 5:35h; Tuesday, p. cloudy, -14C (-19C), -15C (-21C), light 5:57h; Wednesday, p. cloudy, -13C (-19C), -14C (-21C), light 6:17h			
Data provided by storm.no			



ARLID LYSSAND / SYSSELMANNEN

Peter Brugmans, Norwegian Directorate of Mining with the Commissioner of Mines at Svalbard, inspects a conveyor belt where a Ukrainian man was injured inside the coal mine in Barentsburg.

Mine still open after accident

INJURY, from page 1

initial treatment at the hospital in Barentsburg before being transported to University Hospital of North Norway in Tromsø.

"He has incurred spinal injuries, possible paralysis of the legs and some head injuries," Police Chief Inspector Arve Johnsen told *Svalbardposten*.

Work in the mine was halted until officials with the governor's office, Norwegian Mining Directorate and the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority inspected the scene. But Lyssand said the mine, which is not producing coal while the stope is being moved, was not closed pending further investigation as happened with some previous accidents.

The accident was the eighth since May of

2012, two of which resulted in deaths and one that resulted in a man having his foot amputated. The mine was closed in September of 2013 due to what Norwegian officials called a "totally unacceptable" lack of safety culture at Trust Arktikugol, the Russian state-owned company responsible for management of the settlement. The mine reopened in January of 2014 after the company agreed to make significant training and safety assessment improvements.

Lyssand said Trust Arktikugol officials were cooperative following this week's accident, but Norwegian officials still need to interview the victim – likely next week – to get a clearer understanding of what happened.

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

Storm puts Svalbard in deep freeze

WHITEOUT, from page 1

brought much of the activity in the area to a standstill. Flights and outdoor excursions were canceled, and large snow drifts clogged roads and building entrances, but officials said there were no reports of injured or missing people.

"We could not have gotten the rescue helicopters in the air, but we have a very astute Red Cross patrol in Svalbard," Trond Olsen, a police chief inspector for The Governor of Svalbard, told *Nordlys*. "Anyway we would probably have had to wait until the weather calmed before we could initiate any rescue."

The high winds struck at midday and continued through much of the night, reaching hurricane speeds off the southwest and north-

east coasts, and gale speeds in Longyearbyen. Temperatures rose rapidly from about minus 20 degrees Celsius at midday Sunday to above freezing by Monday, resulting in rain that turned much of the snow to slush.

While most Longyearbyen residents stayed indoors during the worst of the storm, *Svalbardposten* reported seeing a few people on "walking tours" and taking photos – and one on a bicycle.

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story (plus a rant from our idiot editor who mutilated his car and nearly froze to death in less than three minutes of stupidity, written at the request of those who saved his ass).

What's up

Feb. 17

7 p.m.: Evening Mass and fireplace social.

Feb. 22

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

3 p.m.: UKM Svalbard. Local stage of annual national youth talent competition. Kulturhuset.

7 p.m.: Movie: "Fifty Shades of Grey," U.S. drama/romance, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

Feb. 23

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

Feb. 24

7 p.m.: Candlelight Mass w/ candidates for Confirmation. Svalbard Church.

Feb. 25

6 p.m.: Movie: "Sauen Shaun," British animated/comedy, all ages. Kulturhuset.

Feb. 28

1 p.m.: Movie: "SpongeBob SquarePants The Movie - Sponge Out Of Water," U.S. animated/comedy dubbed in Norwegian, all ages. Kulturhuset.

3 p.m.: Movie: "The Imitation Game," U.S. drama/thriller, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

March 1-8

Solfestuka festival celebrating the return of the sun to Longyearbyen. Full schedule at solfestuka.no.

March 1

5 p.m.: Movie: "SpongeBob SquarePants The Movie - Sponge Out Of Water," U.S. animated/comedy dubbed in Norwegian, all ages. Kulturhuset.

7 p.m.: Movie: "Kingsman: The Secret Service," U.S. action/thriller, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

March 8

5 p.m.: Movie: "Amazonia," British/U.S. adventure/family, ages 7 and up. Kulturhuset.

7 p.m.: Movie: "Foxcatcher," U.S. drama, ages 14 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:

- Norway's oil exports drop by half from '14
- Russia builds airfield at Franz Josef Land
- New robot navy studying Arctic for U.S.
- Penguins are just tasteless, boffins say



the new icepeople.net lives!

really, we mean it this time after a (cough) few past false starts

- more local articles, with daily updates
- random rants, which you're free to ignore
- headlines from the region and polar latitudes

and most importantly after doing this for six years without pay:

you can give money to us and buy ads! (please)