



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

A relatively sturdy group of Trash People stand at attention today at Adventdalen. Only about one-fourth of the 1,000 "people" in the art exhibit were deployed, with bad weather knocking half over.

Trashed troops

Snow, wind topple many warriors of waste; architect of art exhibit says it's all part of the battle plan

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Look, *you* try standing at attention for 24 hours in a blizzard and see how upright you remain. Especially if you've just spent the winter in a barren, unheated metal trailer.

About half of the Trash People deployed in
See SCHULT, page 4

Finding light in misfortune

Tough times and frigid temps don't darken moods as sledding, satire and songs wrap up Solfestuka

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

It's not easy finding the sunny side of layoffs and corruption scandals.

Sending in the clowns to cheer up those affected might seem a little risky, but they offered a packed theater plenty of raucous and some reflective moments during the annual spoofing of the past year's events at the end of the week-long Solfestuka festival.

See BRIGHT, page 3



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

The "jet" engines of a pirate vessel are lit at the start line of the Ta Sjansen sledding contest Saturday at Hiorthamn. The jets died before launch, making the drag chute a limp accessory.

Arctic faces record ozone loss



MARKUS REX / ALFRED WAGNER INSTITUTE

Arctic clouds of frozen nitric acid and sulphuric acid, seen here, are a portent of imminent ozone loss due to human activity.

Half of protective layer lost in recent weeks due to cold; more depletion likely, scientists say

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

About half of the Arctic's ozone layer has been destroyed in recent weeks and more loss is expected in what may be a record depletion, according to measurements published Monday.

The loss is due to unusually cold temperatures, although climate change may also be a factor, said Markus Rex, a researcher with the

See DEplete, page 2

Inside

Own a limo biz in Svalbard, cheap
Page 2

Headlines from Svalbardposten
- Cruise passenger traffic sets record in 2010
- Allowing gun rentals for six months sought
- Progress Party hopes to return to local ballot
Page 3

Weather forecast
Page 3

Events calendar
Page 4

Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

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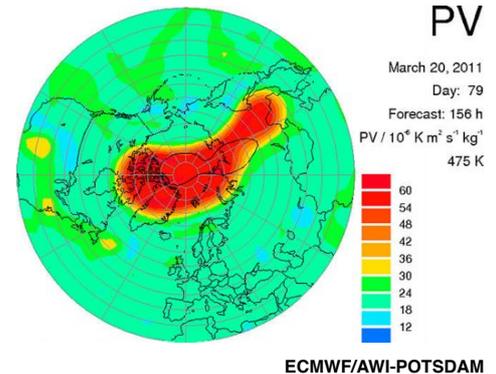
When we screw up you'll know about it – on the front page. One of the big complaints about newspapers is they tend to bury corrections and clarifications deep inside where few people who read the original article see them. If we need to fix something, an alert box on the front page will state what story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



MARKO HERRMANN / ALFRED WEGENER INSTITUTE



A researcher, left, launches an ozone sonde from Ny-Ålesund this winter. Two of the sondes are launched weekly as part of an international monitoring effort. Above, a chart shows Arctic air masses exposed to ozone loss as projected for Friday. The polar vortex with reduced ozone concentrations is expected to shift towards Eastern Russia early next week. Researchers say about half of the protective ozone cover has been depleted in recent weeks, with a record loss projected as unusually cold temperatures are expected to continue.

Svalbard at center of ozone-loss area

DEplete, from page 1

Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research in Germany. He said large depletions have previously occurred and the ozone layer should recover in the long term, but people living in the Arctic – and probably those in other areas as the less spreads south – are for now without a significant amount of protection from the sun's ultraviolet radiation.

"Our measurements show that at the relevant altitudes about half of the ozone that was present above the Arctic has been destroyed over the past weeks," Rex said in a prepared statement. "Since the conditions leading to this unusually rapid ozone depletion continue to prevail, we expect further depletion to occur."

Svalbard is near the center of a "red zone" of ozone loss projected this week. The area, extending from central Canada to Russia's Far East, is slowly drifting east.

The measurements were taken by an international network of more than 30 ozone sound-

ing stations in the Arctic and Subarctic. This year's loss matches a record pace in 2005 and "we expect that the record will soon be broken," Rex said.

The unusually cold temperatures have been fed by a stronger circulation pattern called the polar vortex throughout the winter, according to the institute's findings. The air inside this vortex, created by a combination of cold temperatures over the North Pole and the rotation of the Earth, is much colder than the air outside. That cooling leads to cloud formation inside the vortex and the ensuing chemical reactions that produce highly reactive molecules with unpaired electrons. These, in turn, react with ozone, breaking apart its three oxygen atoms.

In addition, trapped greenhouse gasses are warming the surface of the Earth, which actually cools the stratosphere.

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

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

Ever dreamed of being a slave to all those famous and important people who visit Svalbard (plus probably a fair number of eccentric and hard-to-please types)? Here's your chance and for much less than you might think. Svalbard's only limousine is still looking for a buyer several months after going on the market, with a current asking price of 68,000 kroner. Kenneth, owner of the white full-length stretch vehicle, says it's a 1997 model in good condition, it handles fine on snow and ice, and you don't even need a special chauffeur's license to drive it here. He's moved to the mainland, but call him at 9112 6792 and he'll arrange for a friend to show the car – in the Svalbardbutikken parking lot as this is being written – if you're interested ... Don't bother making reservations for that total solar eclipse in Svalbard

on March 20, 2015, since apparently most of us aren't going to survive until then. It seems Norway has a secret plan for the "doomsday date" of Dec. 12, 2012, involving our own Doomsday Seed Vault. Apparently there's 18 underground bunkers around the nation, including our vault which has lots of sections hidden from the public that connect to each other using streetcars. The Powers That Be will chose 2 million of Norway's 5 million people to survive the Apocalypse, but nobody over the age of 30 will be among them. All this is from a guy "reportedly inside the 'vault' in a military context," according to a blog post by "Final-fantasyfrelst" at gamereactor.no. Considering only 500 million of the world's 5.5 billion people are supposed to survive The Event, at least we're doing better than most and will have fresh veggies to plant when we come out.



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

An ensemble of clowns relives Longyearbyen's events of the past year in song and satire Friday at Huset. The set is a mock-up of the new cultural center, where most performing arts now take place to the chagrin of devotees of the 60-year-old Huset, now being renovated for multiple uses.

Bleak news, temps don't dim festival

BRIGHT, from page 1

"What we need is some humor, something to make us laugh," said Anne Lise Sandvik, one of the show's lead organizers. Every year in the community, she added, "there's always something controversial."

Sandvik set the stage, literally, by making light of her own controversy.

The set for the show was a mock-up of the new Kulturhuset, which she opposed in favor of keeping performing arts at the 60-year-old Huset where Friday's and Saturday's shows took place. The last letter of the sign for the main stage was clumsily taped on, and signs at the concession sign exclaimed "Donut: 87.50 kroner" and "Sushi: Now another day!"

Speaking of strange prices, an early show number featured a giant banana leading women in an, um, adjusted, song about the big leap in produce costs at Svalbardbutikken ("We have bananas, but only if you can pay the price").

Mostly, though, it was about the clowns. The occupational circus facing workers at Store Norske and LNS Spitsbergen after former top executives at both companies were charged with corruption, resulting in cancelled contracts and possible layoffs in already declining coal mining operations. The "face of a clown" worn by former Store Norske Administrative Director Robert Hermansen, who Sandvik said is "putting on a good face with others"

as he confronts a barrage of accusations from all sides as the main instigator in the case.

"We're not trying to say who is right and who is wrong," she said.

Sandvik did get to relish an all-night revival of her cherished building on Saturday as Solfestuka concluded with a concert by the Hellbillies that was sold out weeks in advance, followed by a post-midnight party on both floors of the building.

For those feeling the packed crowds made things a bit warm, it was probably a welcome feeling after the day's events outside celebrating the return of the sun after the polar winter.

Several hundred people made tracks by snowscooter, dogsled, skis and other means to Hiorthamn for the annual Ta Sjansen sledding contest, where a cookout and other activities offered diversions for those not readying their parade-like sledges.

The sky was clear and wind calm, a break from intense storms that halted mail flights for a few days. But the temperature was nearly minus 30 degrees Celsius, ensuring two tents with warming stoves were consistently packed with people seeking refuge.

Those in the sledding contest weren't necessarily trying to be the fastest, but just getting down was a challenge in many cases.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Cruise ship traffic sets record in 2010; 2011 also looks good

A record number of cruise ship passengers visited Longyearbyen in 2010, contrasting a significant drop in airline passengers and hotel guests. A total of 25,075 cruise tourists disembarked, up from 14,375 in 2003. "New players are emerging and smaller vessels are being replaced with larger ones," said Kjetil Bråten, the city's port manager. He said the outlook remains strong for 2011, with the scheduled arrival of the Grand Princess (capacity 4,200 passengers and crew) representing the largest ship to ever visit the port.

Allowing gun rentals for six months sought by governor

Allowing firearms to be rented for up to six months instead of the current limit of four weeks is being sought by Svalbard Gov. Odd Olsen Ingerø. "For us it means less paperwork, but first and foremost it is the renters who benefits from it," said Jacob Andersen, an employee at Ingeniør G. Paulsen, one of two licensed gun dealers in Longyearbyen. "Among other things, there are many researchers who want to be out in the field for more than four weeks at a time." People 18 and older can rent a weapon without a permit, but foreigners must provide a criminal background check and show they can handle the firearm. The governor's request is being evaluated by the Norwegian Ministry of Justice.

Progress Party hoping to return to local election ballot

Reviving the Fremskrittspartiet (Progress Party) in Svalbard is being sought by Siv Jensen, the party's national leader, after its absence from local elections in 2007. About 40 people attended a presentation by him Thursday at the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel, including Longyearbyen Mayor Kjell Mork, a Labour Party member who said it is important the Progress Party is represented. The absence of the party during the election meant losing the two members it had on the local council. An interim meeting is scheduled to determine if there is enough interest to list candidates from the party in this fall's election.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Snow. S winds to 40 km/h. High -1C (-9C wind chill), low -4C (-8C wind chill).	Snow and sleet. S winds to 22 km/h. High -2C (-7C wind chill), low -7C (-13C wind chill).	Snow. S winds to 29 km/h. High -4C (-11C wind chill), low -12C (-21C wind chill).	Snow. W winds to 25 km/h. High -12C (-18C wind chill), low -14C (-22C wind chill).
Sunrise: 6:26a Sunset 5:50p	Sunrise: 6:18a Sunset 5:57p	Sunrise: 6:10a Sunset 6:05p	Sunrise: 6:02a Sunset 6:12p
Extended forecast: Sunday, snow, -14C (-22C), -18C (-27C), light 12:25h; Monday, p. cloudy, -18C (-25C), -20C (-29C), light 12:40h; Tuesday, p. cloudy, -18C (-25C), -19C (-26C), light 12:55h; Wednesday, p. cloudy, -19C (-27C), -21C (-29C), light 13:10h.			
Data provided by yr.no			



Assistants, top, carry Trash People from storage containers to a sled Monday in Adventdalen, where about 250 of the humanoid figures were lined up in rows. Entire rows lie in the snow today, bottom left, after about half of the "people" were knocked over by storms. At bottom right, Anna Zlotovskaya, wife of Trash People creator H.A. Schult, serenades some of those still standing with her violin during the official opening of the art exhibit today. Photos by Mark Sabbatini / Icepeople.

Events, weather kick up a storm

SCHULT, from page 1

Adventdalen fell victim to the elements between their deployment Monday and the official opening of the art exhibit today.

But their leader, H.A. Schult, who brought his army of Trash People for the final stage of a 15-year global campaign to raise awareness of pollution problems, said letting the Arctic lay waste to the intrusive debris is a statement in itself.

"Some of them are sleeping," he said, "I love the situation. It's like a dream."

Schult's troops have been to the Matterhorn, Great Wall of China, Moscow's Red Square and many other global landmarks, but he said this is the first time the elements have taken their toll like this.

The threat of an overnight storm when Schult arrived Monday afternoon in Longyearbyen resulted in the hasty and only partial deployment of the 600 Trash People he has kept here in storage trailers since late last year. A dozen (real) people lined up about 250 of the (trash) people, which is actually only one-fourth of the 1,000 figures in the full exhibit Schult has shown elsewhere.

Trash troops along the front lines survived the subsequent storms – or were propped up again for the ceremony – but entire rows of rear-echelon grunts weren't up to the task.

Still, the smaller, more mobile army secured a place in the hearts and minds of a few dozen people at the exhibit's opening.

"I like the colors," said Turid Telebond, a Longyearbyen resident for 30 years. "I think they're pretty even though it's trash."

At the same time, "I think this must be the strangest project I've seen here," she said.

The surrealism got a boost from Schult's wife, Anna Zlotovskaya, an acclaimed violinist who serenaded some of the Trash People still standing with trembling and mournful improvisations. She said the tones were inspired by the clash of natural and man-made elements.

"The music speaks with the art, its nature," she said.

Schult said he hopes to deploy the rest of the Trash People by Friday if the weather permits. The exhibit will remain on display until Sunday.

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

What's up

March 16

8 p.m.: Movie: "Burlesque," U.S. musical/drama/romance, all ages. Kulturhuset.

March 19

11:30 a.m.: Cake lottery by candidates for Svalbard Church confirmation. Proceeds go to Norwegian Church Relief. Svalbardbutikken.

March 20

11 a.m.: Family Mass. Svalbard Church.
6 p.m.: Movie: "The Karate Kid," U.S. action, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.
8:30 p.m.: Movie: "Sykt Lykkelig," Norwegian comedy, ages 11 and up. Winner of the jury's Grand Prize at this year's Sundance Film Festival. Kulturhuset.

March 21

10:15 a.m.: Environmental and Economic Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

March 22

10 a.m.: Administration Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.
7 p.m.: Discussion featuring Anne Lise Sandvik. Coffee money proceeds go to NCF. Svalbard Church.

March 23

8 p.m.: Movie: "Jeg Reiser Alene," Norwegian drama, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

March 24

2 p.m.: Board of Culture and Leisure Authority meeting. Næringsbygget 1, Tundra room.
6 p.m.: Board of City Operation Authority meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

March 25

9 a.m.: Board of Growing Enterprises Authority meeting. Næringsbygget 1, Tundra room.

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:

- *Japan quake first detected in Svalbard*
- *Norway takes EU seal ban to WTO*
- *No to Lofoten, yes to Barents Sea for oil*
- *Tale of Far North history starts w/ tooth*