



# Mining giants merge

*Store Norske's technology, Trust Arktikugol's frugality seen as 'marriage made in heaven'*

**By MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

It seems pressure isn't needed to turn coal into diamonds after all.

A matrimony involving Svalbard's crown jewels is scheduled this summer as Norway's Store Norske and Russian's Trust Arktikugol announced Tuesday they will merge into a single coal mining company. Officials said uniting Store Norske's cutting-edge technology and Trust Arktikugol's cost-consciousness will produce an offspring guaranteed to keep the pristine archipelago in the black for many years to come.

"It's a match made in heaven," said Robert Hermansen, a former Store Norske administrative director who is returning to lead the new company.

Workers will be contracted under Trust Arktikugol's labor regulations, the result of a secret negotiation dependent on the outcome of the recent annual sports exchange in Barentsburg where the Russians won every event for the first time ever. Hermansen denied

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**NORTH POLE MARATHON**

A Barneo ice camp worker makes a visit to a port-a-potty which, as with all aspects of life at 89 degrees north, is an undertaking not entirely without risk. "You should approach the North Pole Marathon toilet with caution...but it's really not so bad inside," a message from organizers of the world's northernmost race, scheduled for April 9, advises participants who will be visiting the camp.

# Wired to go North

*Some worry more about charges than cold as Pole season begins*

**By MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

Freezing to death would seemingly be among the main worries keeping this year's North Pole expeditioners up at night, but thanks to modern technology Bernice Notenboom's mind is on other things.

"What if the bluetooth fails or my keyboard, or the velcro start to itch on my skin or worse running out of toilet paper?" she wrote on the blog for Expedition Hope.

But lest one think of Notenboom as a hopeless technogeek, all the hard work and gadgetry is for a most organic purpose: planting a tree at the top of the world.

This week marks the beginning of another season of daring, novelty, political and scientific trips to the North Pole from the Russian-operated Barneo ice camp, located this year at 89 degrees 39 minutes north latitude. Workers setting up the camp on an ice floe in minus 25

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# Are the aliens an illusion?

*Devastating Svalbard data and images in IPCC report rebuffed by 'alternative' science groups*

**By MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

The invading aliens are offering a pretty good sense of the battle to come.

Invasive marine and land species are among the Svalbard-related impacts highlighted in the newest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report released Monday. An extensive list of such changes worldwide are

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**INSTITUTE OF MARINE RESEARCH**

The first snow crab caught in a crab pot in Svalbard, at a depth of 330 meters east of Spitsbergen, is measured in 2011. Researchers say the species is rapidly spreading into the area.

## 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.

## Imagine how snow-worthy their offspring will be



MOA-MARIA KERO / PRIVATE

A reindeer gets that tingling sense of spring on a snowmobile outside of a house in Longyearbyen on March 28. Moa-Maria Kero, 26, a Huset employee who spotted the amorous animal outside her window, captured the copulation on a video that quickly attracted plenty of viewers and media coverage. Those without internet filtering software can see the video at [tinyurl.com/qx523vp](http://tinyurl.com/qx523vp).

## For this wedding, wear black

### MERGE, from page 1

throwing the matches to save what the new company estimates will be 62 percent in salary and benefits costs. He also dismissed concerns about safety conditions, noting the number of patients treated at Barentsburg's hospital recently has dropped to virtually zero.

Employees will also be paid via Trust Arktikugol's scrip system, with the vouchers redeemable at Elvesletta Nord, Karlsberger Pub and the dining facility adjacent to Svalbard Museum.

*Editor's note: Yeah, this is lame and faux-*

*hipster newspapers so need to get rid of the urge to run April Fool's Day articles, but c'mon - it's our first April 1 issue ever and we'll probably be too senile to attempt this again if we're still around 11 years from now (as it is, our editor - desperate for copy on deadline - wrote most of this at 1 a.m. on his iPad in the bathroom after consuming a rare glass of wine). We figured no local got past past the headline thinking this was legit, but outsiders might want to glance at the past few issues to get clued in to the inside jokes contained in most of the sentences.*

## Icesheet

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

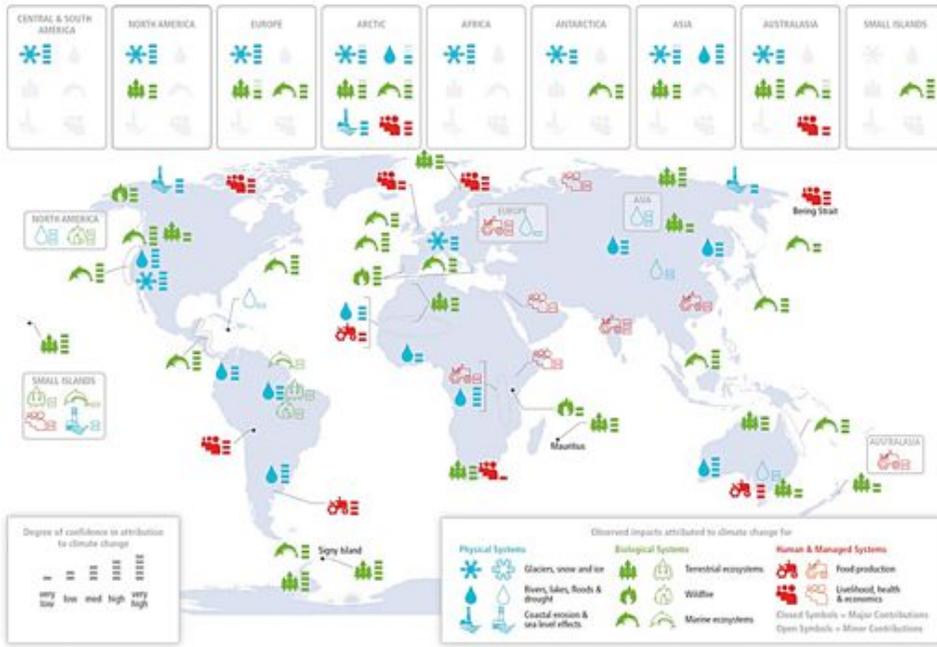
Trust us, we know the difficulties of reporting the news on a budget, since we're losing money on every issue printed and trying to make it up in volume, but pretending corporate shills are your reporters really isn't a great idea. **That has Nordlys and Bergensavisen in a bit of hot water as last week's feature about Svein Nordahl, the elderly technogeek living the extreme wi-fi life in his remote Svalbard cabin, saw both newspapers credit Telenor publicist Kristine Meek as a reporter.** Both newspapers published a video she provided that has since gone viral, with a Norwegian journalism organization estimating 50 news organizations may have posted the video in Norway alone. It was also one of the most-viewed news stories during the past week in *The Wall Street Journal*. But you won't be able to see it any longer at those two newspapers initially mentioned, as both pulled it after becoming a news story of their own ... And since we're short on remaining space, **we'll offer a not-subtle tribute to our top-of-the-page photo**



JOURNALISTEN.NO

**Words have meaning:** But in this case, I do not think it means what you think it means.

**with by proving an answer to the question "How Can You Tell if a Reindeer Is Pregnant?"** It's at [tinyurl.com/qjklja9](http://tinyurl.com/qjklja9).



INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE

A chart summarizing the global impacts of climate change notes the Arctic is experiencing all of the adverse circumstances and there is a generally high degree of confidence warming is the cause.

## Disputing Svalbard's case of the crabs

### IPCC, from page 1

noted in the report and, among other things, Svalbard's got a case of the crabs.

"In the seas, rising numbers of warm-water crustaceans have been found around Norway's polar islands, while the snow crab has extended its range northward by up to 500 kilometers," a summary of the report notes. In addition, "many species will be unable to move fast enough to track suitable climates, with plants, amphibians and small mammals in flat landscapes or those that remain close to their breeding sites particularly vulnerable."

Researchers are concerned the crabs will devour species that are essential for recycling nutrients into the upper layers of the marine ecosystem. Furthermore, a 2012 study found sea anemones in Kongsfjord declined 80 percent between 1995 and 2010 due to warming, with brown algae going from a scarce to major presence.

But the images of brown seabeds are apparently a case of lyin' eyes if a detailed rebuttal to the IPCC report is to be believed.

"Rising temperatures and atmospheric CO2 levels do not pose a significant threat to aquatic life," states the rebuttal from the Non-governmental International Panel on Climate Change (NIPCC), which describes itself as "an international panel of nongovernment scientists

and scholars." Backed by The Heartland Institute, a conservative think-tank based in the United States, the report also declares "many aquatic species have shown considerable tolerance to temperatures and CO2 values predicted for the next few centuries, and many have demonstrated a likelihood of positive responses in empirical studies."

Numerous similar rebuttals are being published by other organizations and even the IPCC report itself states climate change may result in some positive impacts for Svalbard despite an overall portrait of devastation.

The IPCC report, for example, states food security may be threatened in many regions if the average global temperature rises more than two degrees Celsius and the threat will become worldwide with an increase of more than four degrees – both considered feasible by the end of the century. But while commercial fishermen are concerned about the die-off of traditional species in the waters around Svalbard, it's possible they may be replaced by warmer-water species that provide more lucrative catches.

The IPCC report is available at <http://www.ipcc.ch>. The NIPCC rebuttal is at <http://nipccreport.org>.

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

## HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

### Spitsbergen Travel pays 50K to settle unpaid OT claims

Two Spitsbergen Travel employees are being paid 50,000-kroner to settle a two-year dispute about what they claim were unpaid overtime wages. Janice Tårnesvik and Trym Lauritzen, who both worked as restaurant servers, said they and other workers were frequently forced to work extended shifts without extra pay, in violation of the terms of their contracts. Tårnesvik said most disgruntled employees were too worn or fearful of taking action, since the company "can always get hold of new people because of its location in exotic Svalbard." Knut Harald Holst-Hansen, the company's new administrative director, agreed to the settlement shortly after beginning his tenure, agreeing job definitions and overtime policies need revision.

### Svalbardbutikken reports record sales, citing tourism

Svalbardbutikken had record sales of 113.6 million kroner and an after-tax profit of 6.8 million kroner last year, according to data presented at its annual membership meeting last week. Store officials are citing increased tourism, including the resumption of service by Norwegian Air, as a primary factor. Although some locals are complaining the town's only supermarket is charging high prices, such as 28.90 kroner a liter for milk, Administrative Director Morten Helliksen said such staples are highly subsidized and the store is actually losing six kroner a liter due to high shipping costs.

### New fire alert system likely saves two homes, chief says

A new direct-notification fire alarm system has already likely prevented the destruction of two homes, according to Longyearbyen Fire Department Chief Jan Olav Sæther. The alarm was triggered March 21 when the occupant of one of the houses left a pot on a stove that was still turned on. "The smoke rolled out of the entrance when we went into the house," he said. "At the same time there was the sound of an awful cackling from the kitchen, where a pot literally stood and jumped on the stove." The small resulting fire resulted in little physical damage, but the odor from smoke damage will require a complete cleaning of the house.

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Partly cloudy. N winds to 25 km/h. High -13C (-19C wind chill), low -15C (-21C wind chill). Sunrise 5:07a; sunset 8:53p	Cloudy. Variable winds to 25 km/h. High -13C (-18C wind chill), low -16C (-20C wind chill). Sunrise 4:58a; sunset 9:09p	Partly cloudy. E winds to 29 km/h. High -12C (-18C wind chill), low -16C (-21C wind chill). Sunrise 4:49a; sunset 9:18p	Cloudy. N winds to 29 km/h. High -13C (-18C wind chill), low -14C (-19C wind chill). Sunrise 4:40a; sunset 9:27p
<b>Extended forecast:</b> Sunday, p. cloudy, -12C (-17C), -14C (-19C), light 17:05h; Monday, p. cloudy, -11C (-16C), -14C (-19C), light 17:24h; Tuesday, snow, -9C (-14C), -13C (-19C), light 17:44h; Wednesday, p. cloudy, -11C (-15C), -13C (-19C), light 18:04h			
<b>Data provided by storm.no</b>			



A group of paratroopers, above, descends from a height of 2,500 meters to an ice floe to help set up the Barneo ice camp Tuesday. A group of tourists from Russia, Sweden, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, United States and Czech Republic also participated in the jump. Planes also dropped cargo ranging from tents to tractors for the construction of the camp. At left, support staff at the camp unload cargo from a plane after the ice runway is completed. Photos courtesy of the Expedition Center Russian Geographical Society.

## 'Ordinary' Pole trips are anything but

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degree Celsius cold are reporting conditions are generally good despite record winter heat that resulted in low sea ice cover, although bad weather is threatening to delay Wednesday's officially scheduled opening.

Notenboom's three-person expedition, among the first scheduled to arrive, will be among the many attempting a "last-degree" ski trek to the North Pole, a 112-kilometer journey that typically takes seven to ten days. But after planting their tree in a symbolic gesture to call attention to climate change – an issue frequently highlighted by expeditions – they will continue with an "epic Arctic march" to Canada expected to take about 50 days if successful.

The lure of reaching the top of the world

also draws people like Richard Donovan, a seven-continent marathoner who ambitiously owns the domain names lunarmarathon.com and marsmarathon.com. The Galway, Ireland, resident will also be among the early visitors to Barneo as an organizer of the North Pole Marathon, scheduled April 9. About 50 racers from 20 countries are paying nearly 100,000 kroner apiece to slog through 42 kilometers of jagged ice.

"It is all about taking on something new, a fresh extension of the joy of running," he told the *Irish Times*. "And I can tell you this is about the least expensive means by which anyone can make it to the North Pole."

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



COURTESY OF EXPEDITION HOPE

Bernice Notenboom inspects cargo sled equipment in a warehouse in Longyearbyen this week as she prepares for a ski expedition to the North Pole as part of Expedition Hope, which is seeking to call attention to climate change and environmental issues by planting a tree at the top of the world.

## What's up

### April 2

6 p.m.: Movie: "Captain America: The Winter Soldier" (3D), U.S. action/sci-fi, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

### April 3

7:30 p.m.: Unconventional classical concert by violinist Alexander Rybak and pianist Stefan Zlatanos. Kulturhuset.

### April 5-6

Trappers Trail sleddog race to Bikkjebu and back. Begins at noon at UNIS, concluded April 6 at Huset. Registration details at [longyearbyenhundeklubb.no](http://longyearbyenhundeklubb.no).

### April 6

5 p.m.: Movie: "Natt til 17," Norwegian youth/drama, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

7 p.m.: Movie: "Glassdukkene," Norwegian thriller, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

### April 7

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

### April 8

1 p.m.: Administration Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

### April 9

6 p.m.: Movie: "Noah" (3D), U.S. drama, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

### April 10

7 p.m.: Exhibit opening: Jewelry and other objects by Morten Haugmo. Galleri Svalbard.

### April 11

6 p.m.: Baptism Mass. Svalbard Church.

### April 13

11 a.m.: Confirmation Mass. Svalbard Church.

1 p.m.: Confirmation Mass. Svalbard Church.

5 p.m.: Movie: "Rio 2" (3D), U.S. animated film dubbed in Norwegian, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

7 p.m.: Movie: "Divergent," U.S. action/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:

- *Iceland relishes warming's 'opportunities'*
- *Arctic sea ice maximum fifth lowest ever*
- *Japan ordered to stop Antarctic whaling*
- *Canada mints \$50 silver polar bear coin*