



Greenpeace returning to Svalbard

'Purely scientific expedition' will study ocean acidification, says group that shut down Svea mine

This time Greenpeace is promising – it seems – to be good.

The environmental group, which shut down the Svea coal mine last summer during Svalbard's first-known political protest, is scheduled to return this weekend with a group of scientists aboard the vessel *Esperanza*. Their stated intention is studying ocean acidification primarily in the Ny-Ålesund area until July, as well as raising awareness about other threats facing the Arctic environment.

But deep in a press release detailing the scientific objectives are statements such as "governments need to realize the impacts of each new coal-fired power plant they approve, and we'll be in the Arctic for the next three months to show them." That was also the motivation behind last year's takeover of the mine.

So are there going to be any more takeovers or publicity stunts from a group well known for them?

See GREENPEACE page 2



Several hundred people march in a human train toward the Skjæringa memorial at midday Monday as part of Longyearbyen's traditional Norwegian Constitution Day celebration.

Blown away by Syttende Mai

High winds, spirits and awards mark national day celebration

Yes, we love this country as it rises forth, rugged and weathered, but sometimes it'd be easier to honor it with a little less weathering.

Birgitte Bossart, 13, is among the latest women to stand up and fight as if she were a man. But it was the elements rather than an in-

vading army threatening to topple the flag as high winds constantly threatened to knock it from her hands during this year's Norwegian Constitution Day memorial salute Monday.

A midday human train marching through

See HOLIDAY, page 4

Ash cloud halts Svalbard flights for a day

Another eruption from Iceland's Eyjafjallajökull volcano halted all Svalbard air traffic this week as the ash cloud passed directly over the area, but the disruption was much less severe than a month ago when a blanket of ashes passed over mainland Norway and much of Europe.

About 70 people were stranded each way on passenger flights scheduled Wednesday between Longyearbyen and Tromsø, with Scandinavian Airlines rebooking them on regularly scheduled trips that resumed Thursday. (Note: Days reflect a delayed press time of noon May 20).

Air ambulance and Svea mining flights that were suspended Wednesday remained grounded Thursday due to lingering ash. Air space was classified as Zone 2, meaning it may contain some volcanic material presenting a danger to some aircraft.

See FLIGHTS, page 4

Flames, tattoos, cruising – and tunes

Second Spitsbergen Rock shakes things with new location, events



Fire and smashed guitars are a regular part of concerts by The Carburetors, who perform May 29 at the Spitsbergen Rock festival.

Being where cell phones work should make things smoother this year. So will being near the fire department.

Concerts are closer to civilization for the second annual Spitsbergen Rock festival, but additions such as a rock cruise, tattoo artist and fire-breathing band will seek to shake things up with a different kind of wild. The festival features several pub performances May 27 and 28, and a concert marathon on the shore by the sailing club May 29.

"The bands are a mix of well-known, popular bands and more up-and-coming ones,"

See ROCK, page 3

Inside

No arrests in large Kings Bay heist
Page 2

Headlines from Svalbardposten

- Seeds inside vault hotter than they should be
- Whale transmitter starts working after 27 days
- Classic Pizza can sell beer, airport must wait

Page 3

Weather forecast

Page 3

Events calendar

Page 4

Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

Editor

Mark Sabbatini

Copy editor

Kristan Hutchison

Psychiatrist

Irene Gallion

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

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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.



The *Esperanza*, seen here during a 2007 voyage to Antarctica, is scheduled to arrive this weekend in Svalbard for a scientific expedition expected to last until July. Photo provided by Greenpeace.

Group says trip will focus on science

GREENPEACE, from page 1

"We generally can't talk about any actions beforehand," said Beth Herzfeld, a Greenpeace spokeswoman working in the United Kingdom. But "this is definitely a scientific expedition."

Freda Bengtsson, a Greenpeace oceans campaigner aboard the vessel, was more definitive, stating "we have a good relationship with Svalbard authorities" and saying the trip is a "purely scientific expedition."

"We will not do any actions when we're in the area of Svalbard," she said.

The Svalbard governor's office, which didn't seek charges after last year's protest of more than 24 hours, isn't taking any extraordinary precautions this time, wrote Vice Gov. Lars Fause in an e-mail interview.

"The governor is familiar with the visit this summer, but of course not with the details in Greenpeace's planning," Fause wrote. "I believe the governor is interested in monitoring the activities as far as we are able to do so."

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

Briefly

No arrests in Kings Bay theft of 250,000 kroner

An investigation into the apparent theft of 250,000 kroner from the state-owned company Kings Bay in Ny-Ålesund is being suspended by the Svalbard governor's office, which failed to find enough evidence against five suspects to file criminal charges.

The suspected theft from a company safe early in 2009 followed the disappearance of 300,000 kroner from a safe in 2007. The governor's office, investigating with assistance from Norway's economic crimes division, issued a statement Friday that they have exhausted all leads in the case.

"Even after extensive investigation and interrogation we have not found information that indicates one or more specific work people," the statement notes.

Almost one-fourth of Svalbard vehicles illegal

Nearly one-fourth of Svalbard's 622 vehicles are in some way illegal, according to the Norwegian Public Roads Administration.

About 2.3 million Norwegians are being mailed blue stickers this week certifying their

vehicles meet insurance, licensing and other requirements. But about half a million vehicles in some way failed to meet standards, according to the agency.

Svalbard has 149 vehicles not meeting the sticker standard, an NPRA report states. The ratio is considerably higher than most regions of the mainland, including Troms (15,074 of 86,733 vehicles not ready) and Nordland (23,363 of 131,405 not ready).

Cod making a comeback in the Barents Sea

Warmer waters are resulting in more Barents Sea cod, say researchers who note the situation is similar to that of 80 to 90 years ago.

The population was high during a warming period between the 1920s and 1930s, with fishermen catching about 50 percent more cod than previous decades, said Ken Drinkwater, a researcher at the Institute of Marine Research in Bergen, in an interview with *Forskning*.

Temperatures and population went into a decline starting in the 1960s, but new spawning activity was spotted along the coast of Finnmark in 2003 after a 40-year lull. Recent cod catches have matched those of last century's peak period.



Cyaneed, which performed at the inaugural Spitsbergen Rock and just released the album "Dr. Daniel," will perform concerts May 28 and 29 at this year's festival. Photo courtesy of Cyaneed.

New events, location for music festival

ROCK, from page 1

wrote Line V. Roksøy, one of the festival's organizers, in an e-mail interview. "Two of them sing in Norwegian. We have, and were aiming for, a good variety as the genre 'rock' includes countless different styles."

Returning bands include Cyaneed, a four-woman hard rock group, and Ingenting, a Sandnes band with numerous hit songs and albums since the 1970s. Among the newcomers are The Carburators, who festival organizers say are "known for their flame show and guitar smashing," Heroes & Zeros, a classic rock group that "deny the rock myth which claims that the more hard work you put into it the more you deserve success;" and Kråkesølv, a new four-man pop/post-rock group from the north that released its first album last year.

Last year's festival marathon was several kilometers from Longyearbyen at Endalen, praised by performers and listeners for its rugged mining infrastructure. But things like getting permits, transporting people and making calls proved difficult, resulting in this year's relocation. The festival is also taking place earlier to allow students finishing classes at The University Centre In Svalbard to attend.

Another change is the May 29 half-day-cruise to Nordenskiöld glacier and Pyramiden, which last year was limited to band members.

"This year, we thought it would be a great option for other people as well, and it's been very popular," Roksøy wrote, noting tickets are sold out.

In addition, Tommy Loke Eilertsen, a tattoo artist from Harstad, will be offering to ink those willing to endure the needle.

The biggest logistical challenge this year may be one with firepower beyond organizers'

Schedule for Spitsbergen Rock

May 27

- 9 p.m.: Free vorspiel concert by festival musicians at Svalbar.

May 28

- 9 p.m.: Inminor concert at Kroa.
- 9:30 p.m.: Jack Dalton concert at Svalbar.
- 11 p.m.: Kråkesølv concert at Kroa.
- Midnight: Cyaneed concert at Svalbar.

May 29

- 8:30 a.m.: Festival cruise to Pyramiden. Sold out.
- 8 p.m.-1 a.m.: Concert marathon on the shore. Order of lineup is Simen Henriksen and Inger-Johanne Mørk; The Carbourators; Ingenting; Heros And Zeros; Skambankt.

Prices for tickets (available at Svalbar): 450 kroner Friday, 550 kroner Saturday, 850 kroner both days.

control. Iceland's Eyjafjallajökull volcano has halted thousands of European flights with constant eruptions for more than a month, including two periods when air travel between Svalbard and mainland Norway was suspended. Roksøy said there aren't any contingencies to deal with musicians or others getting stranded.

"We're staying positive and hoping it will blow away," she wrote.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Seeds inside vault are hotter than they should be

Operational problems are making the temperature inside the Svalbard Global Seed Vault hotter than it should be, according to a note from Barlindhaug Consult. The vault, which has experienced numerous technical problems since opening in February 2008, has failed to reach the intended storage temperature of minus 18 degrees Celsius due to incorrect coolant settings. There are also problems with water flowing into the vault's outer tunnel because permafrost disrupted by construction has not refrozen yet. Officials say both problems do not present a danger to the seeds. Nordgen Director Jessica Kathle said minus 18 degrees is an international standard many gene banks are using, but is not an absolute necessity for preservation. "The last report I received showed minus 16.5 degrees and we are satisfied with that," she said.

Whale transmitter begins working after 27 days at sea

A satellite transmitter that initially failed to work when attached to a bowhead whale has started sending signals after 27 days, allowing scientists with the Norwegian Polar Institute to track the rare animal. Christian Lydersen, a marine biologist with the institute, said he believes the lower part of the transmitter was obstructed in the whale's blubber before working its way free April 30. He said they will track the animal as long as possible and it has not traveled far since being tagged. Scientists estimate there are between 10 and 100 bowhead whales of the Spitsbergen stock.

Classic Pizza allowed to sell beer, airport has to wait

Longyearbyen board officials voted May 11 to allow Classic Pizza to sell beer, despite some questions if it is a snack bar rather than a restaurant/pub and if an alcohol-free place for youths should exist in the center of town. But they voted 8-7 to delay a similar decision for Svalbard Airport, with some members saying better analysis of the impacts of serving alcohol there is needed in the application.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday

A possible flurry. SSW winds at 5 km/h. High 2C (2C wind chill), low -2C (-9C wind chill).

Thursday

Partly cloudy. WNW winds at 4 km/h. High 0C (-1C wind chill), low -3C (-3C wind chill).

Friday

Low clouds. SSE winds at 2 km/h. High 0C (0C wind chill), low -3C (-3C wind chill).

Saturday

Low clouds. E winds at 2 km/h. High -2C (-2C wind chill), low -3C (-4C wind chill).

Extended forecast: Sunday, sunny, 1C (1C), -6C (-6C); Monday, sun and patchy clouds, -3C (-3C), -6C (-6C); Tuesday, increasing clouds, -3C (-3C), -6C (-6C); Wednesday, low clouds with a possible late flurry, -3C (-3C), -6C (-6C).

Data provided by AccuWeather.com



Simen Henriksen, left, and Inger-Johanne Mørk perform a song during an evening gala Monday at Huset. Mørk was named the winner of this year's 10,000-kroner youth cultural scholarship at the event. Henriksen won the award in 2007.

Awards put final touch on Syttende Mai

HOLIDAY, from page 1

Longyearbyen's streets, ending with a salute at the Skjæringa memorial is one of the holiday's traditional events. Bossart, among the youths volunteering to hold a flag as hundreds listened to a series of songs and speeches, ended up enlisting the services of fellow countrywoman Aina Malerud, 14, to ensure there was a banner to pay tribute to.

"I don't want to do that again," Bossart said.

Norway's national holiday, known as Syttende Mai, focuses on youths as the country's future and source of patriotic pride. The salute was followed by an afternoon of children's activities at Svalbardhallen, and ended with a variety of performances at an evening gala and the presentation of one of the community's biggest awards, a 10,000-kroner youth cultural scholarship.

This year's winner is Inger-Johanne Mørk, 16, who received a standing ovation from the capacity crowd at Huset just minutes after performing a song with Simen Henriksen, who won the award in 2007.

Mørk is "a person who has in a few years evolved and grown as a player on the stage – both as a singer and actor," according to the ci-

tation honoring her. It also recognizes her previous holiday and other concerts, being one of the "driving forces" of last year's "Skal Vi Handle?" fundraising performance of consumer satire, and her "fresh and positive" work during this year's Solfestuka.

Locals making longtime contributions are also recognized during the holiday with the Tyfus Statuette, presented to the person doing the most to get the community out of "everything that is bad."

The winner this year is Svend Rendal, a resident of Longyearbyen since 1982, whose lengthy list of contributions includes serving as a youth swim coach, helping boat owners with maintenance, being a leader in golf and shooting groups, and helping start an annual ski race from Svea to Longyearbyen that has exploded in popularity.

"Almost from the start, he was involved in union work and has been active on the board of the Longyearbyen Supervisor Society for 25 years," the citation to him states. "In addition to an interest in employees' working conditions, he soon made a huge commitment to work with children and youth."

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

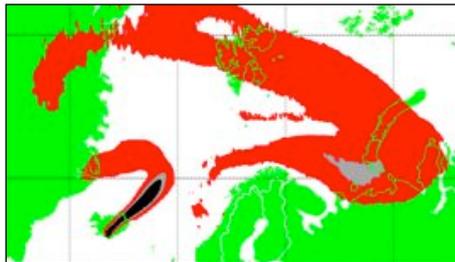
All-clear for air travel expected by Friday

FLIGHTS from page 1

"It's up to the air operators to decide," said Sgt. Erik Nygaard of the Svalbard's governor's office, adding he expects the designation to be lifted by Friday. "The flight companies that own the planes have to figure out their procedures in these circumstances."

Emergency transportation is in place, with the Coast Guard vessel *Senja* standing by with a doctor on board, as well as being able to provide ambulance service to the mainland. Other vessels with the Svalbard governor's office and Longyearbyen operators are also available.

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



A cloud of ash lingers over Svalbard at midday Thursday, according to this chart by the United Kingdom's National Weather Service. The red zone indicates limited flight restrictions, with black zones indicating a total ban.

What's up

May 22

11 a.m.: Cultural exchange in Barentsburg. Longyearbyen clubs showcase their talents for their Russian counterparts. Ship for first 35 participants departs at 11 a.m., others depart by helicopter at 1:30 p.m.

May 23

11 a.m.: Liturgy. Svalbard Church.

6 p.m.: Movie: "Alice In Wonderland," U.S. family/fantasy, ages 11 and up. Huset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Green Zone," U.S. action/thriller, ages 15 and up. Huset.

May 27-29

Spitsbergen Rock festival. See story on page 1 for details and full schedule.

May 30

8 p.m.: Movie: "En Ganske Snill Mann," Norwegian comedy, ages 11 and up. Huset.

May 31

10:15 a.m.: Environmental and industry committee meeting. Næringsbygget 1, Tundra room.

June 1

10 a.m.: Administration committee meeting. Næringsbygget 1, Tundra room.

June 5

10 a.m.: Spitsbergen Marathon. Registration and other race information at <http://svalbardturn.no>.

6 p.m.: Cultural exchange from Barentsburg. Huset. 100 kroner for adults, 50 kroner for students/seniors.

June 6

11 a.m.: Liturgy. Svalbard Church.

6 p.m.: Movie: "Yohan - Barnevandrerr," Norwegian family film, ages 7 and up. Huset.

June 10

10:15 a.m.: City operations authority board 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:

- *Amputees to try unsupported Pole trek*
- *BP's secrecy keeps oil spill facts hidden*
- *Earth sets April temperature record*
- *Raising Supreme justices in Svalbard?*