



# Record PCB over Svalbard

*Forest fires and other burning in N. America, E. Europe causing rise in air pollution, study finds*

Forest fires and burning on farmlands as far away as North America and Eastern Europe are having a devastating effect on the Arctic's environment, according to a Norwegian study published today.

The fires release persistent organic pollutants (POPs), including the toxic compound polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB), the Norwegian Institute for Air Research states in its report. These POPs, accumulating in North American and Eastern Europe soils over time, are brought by winds and now exist at record

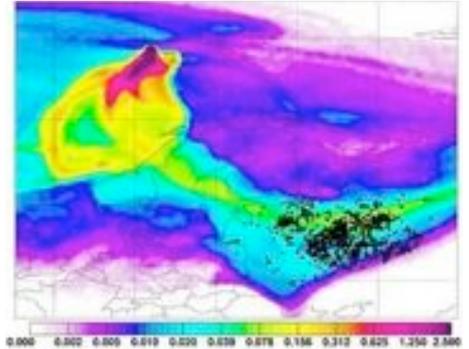
levels in Svalbard.

"As far as we know, this is the first study that shows a connection between the burning of biomass and PCB concentrations in the atmosphere far away," said Sabine Eckhardt, a council researcher, in a statement.

The study indicates distant-source POP sources are still a significant threat to the Arctic environment, countering progress made by the 2001 Stockholm convention banning several man-made POPs.

"With a climate that is constantly changing, we expect the extent of such fires to increase," Eckhardt said. "In such case, it also means that the fires may represent an increasing environmental problem in the Arctic. That in turn will

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Transported air mass from straw- and stubble-burning regions in Russia (black dots) is seen drifting in high concentrations over Svalbard in this Norwegian Institute for Air Research chart.

# Spitsbergen Rock gets the chills

*Multiple problems result in small crowds; festival organizers may lose as much as 100,000 kroner*

King O'Men saw the fire go out of his band's show before it started.

The bass player for The Carburetors said their trademark pyrotechnics were doused by organizers forced to move the Spitsbergen Rock festival indoors to the aging wood Huset building after an outdoor stage tent failed to arrive. The move and other mishaps devastated ticket

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Members of The Carburetors take in the sights of Pyramiden during a Saturday cruise aboard the *Polargirl* as part of this year's Spitsbergen Rock festival.

# Svalbard: Fashion design paradise?



This winter outfit is among the works of Jörg Bivendørf, hailed as a Svalbard fashion legend.

*Apparel by mysterious 'resident' Jörg Bivendørf and others at exhibitions turns heads abroad*

While taking a taxi from Barentsburg to Longyearbyen, Jörg Bivendørf had no idea life as a famous Svalbard fashion designer was about to begin at the age of 81.

Finding inspiration after getting separated from a polar bear guide in a fit of delirium and wandering into the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, he now "plants the fashion seeds of individuality and self expression." He says as the vault preserves plant diversity in the event of a

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## 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.

## What a drag – the Russians are coming



A cultural performance of song and dance by Barentsburg residents, seen here at last year's show, is scheduled at 6 p.m. Saturday at Huset. The performance is part of an annual exchange between the Russian community and Longyearbyen, with the Norwegians taking their neighbors' stage two weeks ago. Tickets for Saturday's performance are 100 kroner for adults and 50 kroner for students/seniors.

## Briefly

### Second Russian trawler detained for dumping

The second Russian trawler in a month has been detained by the Norwegian Coast Guard for illegally dumping fish in Svalbard waters, officials said Saturday.

Crew aboard the *Izumrud* were filmed by a Coast Guard helicopter flushing fish overboard and subsequently escorted to Tromsø. The ship's captain denied the accusation, which remains under investigation.

The *Izumrud* was detained in 2004 and fined 750,000 kroner for poaching.

In early May of this year the *Viking* trawler was detained for illegal poaching and fishing. The vessel was released after the captain and shipping company were fined a total of 150,000 kroner.

### New cultural center gets a Steinway grand piano

Longyearbyen's new cultural center will feature a Steinway & Sons grand piano, courtesy of Store Norske which is donating a newly made model.

The 2.3-meter-long small concert grand has a performance life of 70 to 100 years and retails for more than 800,000 kroner. Longyearbyen cultural officials will select one of three available models after hearing them auditioned by an acclaimed Norwegian pianist.

The two-stage cultural center is scheduled to open in December.

### Longyearbyen Day offers historic walking tour

A historic walking tour, plus free admission to Svalbard Museum and Galleri Svalbard, are being offered June 10 as part of Longyearbyen Day.

The tour, beginning at 6 p.m. at the Skjæringa monument, concludes at 9 p.m. with a discussion about the "Polar Bear Affair" of 1941, when six men died at the hands of German forces following the failed hijacking of an icebreaker by coal miners and crew. *Svalbard-posten* Editor Birger Amundsen, who researched archives and tracked down people involved, will present his findings at the Longyearbyen Library.

Other tour highlights include Priest Leif Magne Helgesen presenting the history of Svalbard Church at 7:15 p.m. and a tour of Longyearbyen's cemetery.

### Ny-Ålesund running short of summer space

Accommodation space in Ny-Ålesund is limited or fully booked for some periods the summer, according to Kings Bay officials.

Dates from June 21 to 23 and June 30 to July 1 are unavailable, and space is limited from Aug. 8 to 25. Schedules, prices and other information is available at [www.kingsbay.no](http://www.kingsbay.no).

### Spitsbergen Marathon hits the streets Saturday

Longyearbyen's main streets will be heavy with foot traffic Saturday as more 100 people run full, half and 10K courses during this year's Spitsbergen Marathon.

The race, beginning at Svalbardhallen and looping as far as the airport, begins at 10 a.m. for those running the full 42-kilometer course. The half marathon begins at 11:30 a.m. and the 10K race at 12:30 p.m.

Participants in competitive races pick up their numbers and other information between 6 and 8 p.m. at Svalbardhallen. Non-competitive entry into the 10K is possible at 11 a.m. the day of the race for 200 kroner.



Prototypes of "smart textiles" for extreme climates are displayed during an April 25 presentation at Galleri Svalbard by students from the Swedish School of Textiles. The students also went to Japan, Iceland and Uganda to seek design ideas. Photo courtesy of the Swedish School of Textiles.

## Designers find Svalbard an ideal fit

### FASHION, from page 1

doomsday scenario, "Jörg too is here to prevent the extinction of Garment Diversity."

These and other unbelievable aspects of Svalbard's fashion scene are turning the heads of apparel worshippers aboard at Bivendørf's new show, "Granfalloon: Any Color As Long As It's Green." Early reviews indicate his designs might give those clown-like Norwegian curling pants that became famous during this year's Winter Olympics a run for their money.

"Not only are the works funny, they are profound," said James Scarborough, a Los Angeles art critic. "With great tongue-in-cheek incision they address issues of self-conscious, trendy fashion and the fabrication of identity."

The narrative of Bivendørf is offered by Angela Beloian and Adam Walker, two artists in the small U.S. town of Longmont, Colo., where the exhibition is currently displayed. In an e-mail, they explained the designs are a response to the Arctic fashions seen in the *New York Times*' fall fashion magazine last year.

"During an economic period of housing foreclosures and bank bailouts, the advertisements in the *New York Times* magazine are jarringly out of touch with Middle America," the artists declare. "The use of salvaged clothing and deliberately plebian settings highlights this disparity. Jörg Bivendørf is a reminder that we

are unique in our own right and the marketing of consumer identity is both absurd and potentially damaging."

Bivendørf's success story seems to have triggered a mass repressed memory hysteria among Longyearbyen's residents, who say they have no idea who the hell he is. Even asking them to define Svalbard fashion tends to draw puzzled looks.

"I would say Svalbard fashion is sports clothes," said Gry Sneltuedt, owner of both an outdoor wear and fancy apparel store.

Assuming she means fleece rather than a jacket without a tie, another fashion exhibition featuring people actually known to exist and dwell at some time in Svalbard might offer more fitting attire.

Prototypes of "smart textiles" were presented to residents in April at Galleri Svalbard by students from the Swedish School of Textiles. The designs for extreme climates, such as a bulky one-piece "security layer/safety shelter/mobile home" wraparound, were part of a larger project by 12 students developing appropriate wear for places they visited worldwide.

"The climate is tough and rigid, perfect requirements for the extreme weather conditions we are looking for," the students' blog notes.

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

### HEADLINES STOLEN FROM

## SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

### Oil ban could cost more than 20m kr. in cruise business

A proposed ban on heavy oil beginning in 2015 could cost Longyearbyen businesses more than 20 million kroner annually if cruise ships bypass the town, according to local officials. The revision to the Svalbard Environmental Act, extending a ban enacted for areas of East Svalbard and some national parks, would force nearly all existing ships to use more expensive marine diesel, which industry officials indicate they are unwilling to do. About 24,000 people from overseas cruise ships go ashore in Longyearbyen a year, with each visitor spending an average of about 1,000 kroner, said Port Director Kjetil Bråten. Norwegian and Svalbard officials say they hope a decline in cruise traffic could be avoided by promoting a more pristine environmental experience resulting from the ban.

### Transportation strike keeps cargo ship out of Svalbard

Bring Logistics has cancelled Friday's sailing of the *Norbjørn* from Tromsø due to a strike by the Norwegian Transport Workers' Federation and says future trips are on hold indefinitely. The ship usually carries cargo to Longyearbyen every two weeks, but an application for a strike exemption due to "Svalbard's unique situation" was rejected, said Karl Henry Karlsen, the company's district manager. Another cargo ship, the *Green Frost* operated by Zahl Transport in Bodø, is not affected by the strike and is continuing regularly scheduled voyages.

### Dogs may need passports to come to Svalbard in future

Rules for keeping dogs in Svalbard are outdated and cumbersome, say officials with Norwegian's Food Safety Authority who are proposing the animals' owners obtain permission from the agency and complete a health declaration. The FSA is also proposing Svalbard's governor require passports for dogs that provide identity, vaccines and licenses, with a "tourist visa" available for dogs on shorter trips.

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

### Wednesday

Sun and some low clouds. SSE winds at 5 km/h. High -3C (-3C wind chill), low -4C (-7C wind chill).

### Thursday

Cloudy with a few flurries. ENE winds at 11 km/h. High -1C (-3C wind chill), low -2C (-4C wind chill).

### Friday

Mostly cloudy. NNE winds at 14 km/h. High 0C (-3C wind chill), low -3C (-7C wind chill).

### Saturday

Mixed clouds and sun. NE winds at 6 km/h. High 0C (-2C wind chill), low -4C (-4C wind chill).

**Extended forecast:** Sunday, sunny with late clouds, 0C (0C), -3C (-3C); Monday, cloudy, -0C (-0C), -1C (-1C); Tuesday, sun and clouds, 0C (-2C), -1C (-3C); Wednesday, cloudy with a flurry or two, -1C (-3C), 0C (-3C).

Data provided by [AccuWeather.com](http://AccuWeather.com)



Ingenjering performs at Huset as part of a Spitsbergen Rock concert marathon Saturday night. The concerts were supposed to take place in a tent near the shore, but a shipping mishap in Tromsø kept it from reaching Svalbard. Ticket sales were further hurt because the festival was inadvertently scheduled at the same time as the Eurovision Song Contest in Oslo.

## Small crowd still rocks hard and loud

### FESTIVAL, from page 1

sales and resulted in the second-year festival losing as much as 100,000 kroner.

Yet during a day-long cruise past glaciers, walrus and the abandoned mining town of Pyramiden before Saturday's concert, O'Men said the trip was a blast and the festival has enormous potential.

"I could imagine this festival could get too big," he said. "They could get some pretty big bands up here. It's going to be hard to keep people away.

Organizers can only hope.

About 150 tickets were sold for concerts Friday and Saturday, said Patrik Jonsson, manager of Svalbar and one of the festival's organizers. The total is a far cry from the 600 people who could have fit into the tent for Saturday's shows alone and drastically lower than last year's total attendance of about 400.

The hope is to continue the festival for a third year, but a loss of 80,000 to 100,000 kroner must first be remedied, Jonsson said.

"Our thought is still going strong, but we will have to look forward just to filling up the coffers from this year," he said.

## Fires abroad cause record Arctic PCB

### POLLUTION, from page 1

reduce the effect of the international agreements that aim to reduce emissions of these environmental toxins."

The connection was shown thanks to new research methods allowing scientists to trace the origin of pollutants to North America and Eastern Europe.

"In 2004 and 2006, big fires ravaged these areas ... Several weeks later, the researchers found record-high values of PCB in the atmosphere above Svalbard," a statement by the council notes.

PCB enters the food chain as it is stored in the fatty tissues of living organisms. Polar

Among this year's problems:

- A cargo container carrying the tent for a marathon of shoreside concerts Saturday wasn't loaded as scheduled in Tromsø last Tuesday. Moving to Huset meant a smaller, less central and less unique venue. Also, some people left after The Carburetors – seen as the best of the visiting bands – performed first.

- A Saturday afternoon concert by the rock band Cyaneed and local youths was canceled when not enough performers signed up.

- The dates of the festival, scheduled earlier than last year's so students from The University Centre In Svalbard could attend before the end of their term, were the same as this year's Eurovision Song Contest in Oslo. Jonsson said organizers didn't know beforehand the events were at the same time.

Asked what organizers will do different next year, Jonsson said "everything."

"We can start to get a tent, we probably need to get a new date and we need to hire some professionals who have done this before," he said.

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

bears in Svalbard carry higher levels of PCB than any other wild animal on the planet, with humans in the area carrying higher amounts than those living elsewhere as well.

Recent studies indicate two-thirds of the world's 25,000 polar bears will be lost during the next 50 years because of climate change.

The PCB emissions come primarily from Eastern Europe, and the study shows emissions from straw and stubble burning in Russia were the cause of the very high PCB concentrations measured at the Zeppelin station near Ny-Ålesund in early May of 2006.

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

## What's up

### 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 - Barnevandrer," Norwegian family film, ages 7 and up. Huset.

8:30 p.m.: Movie: "Iron Man 2," U.S. action, ages 11 and up. Juset.

### June 10

10:15 a.m.: City operations authority board meeting. Næringsbygget 1, Tundra room.

2 p.m.: Board of culture and leisure meeting. Næringsbygget 1, Tundra room.

6-10 p.m.: Longyearbyen Day historic tour and discussion. Begins at Skjæringa monument. More details on page 2.

### June 11

9 a.m.: Control of growth enterprises meeting. Næringsbygget 1, Tundra room.

4:30 p.m.: Sirkus Svalnardo classes for fifth- to eighth-grade students by visiting instructors. Continues June 12.

Svalbardhallen. Register by June 9 at [strak\\_salto@hotmail.co](mailto:strak_salto@hotmail.co).

### June 13

11 a.m.: Liturgy. Svalbard Church.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Kick-Ass," U.S. action/comedy, ages 15 and up. Huset.

### June 15

7 p.m.: Meeting of the local board. Lompensenteret, Mediateket.

### June 18

Last day of school before summer break.

### June 20

11 a.m.: Liturgy. Svalbard Church.

## 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:

- *Oil from Gulf spill reaches U.S. shores*
- *Stop Gulf oil spill with nuclear blast?*
- *Building artificial glaciers to stop warming*
- *N. Pole mystery: 26 headless chickens*