



COURTESY OF NICO WIDERBERG

Nico Widerberg poses with one of the sculptures he made in tribute to the people killed during the July 23, 2011, massacre at the Utøya youth camp. Funding for the sculptures was provided by an anonymous donor, with Longyearbyen scheduled to receive one later this year.

# Grinders an utter muck up

*Faulty garbage disposals to be replaced as city prevails against vendor after two-year dispute*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

It took less than two minutes for plenty of Longyearbyen residents to discover their newly required garbage disposals were mucked up. It took the government two years to confirm it, but the finding announced this week means replacements can finally be installed this summer.

Clogging, malfunctions and even several instances of nearly catching fire plagued the food grinders under the sinks of most of Longyearbyen's homes almost immediately after being installed in late 2010. The troubles occurred after long delays merely obtaining the grinders and officials in other municipalities questioning their quality.

Longyearbyen officials sent a letter in December to the vendor, Activum Consulting, demanding replacements, but the company argued the grinders were reliable and trouble was due to improper use by residents. A report this week by the Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning (DSB) sides with the city, allowing the replacement work to proceed.

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# Moving, lasting tributes

*Choir concerts, memorial statue honor victims of Utøya tragedy*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

A month before the one-year anniversary of the massacres in Oslo and the Utøya youth camp, tributes to local victims are already in full swing.

A series of performances by a visiting internally acclaimed choir are scheduled starting Friday, days after the Longyearbyen Municipal Council approved placing a statue at Svalbard Church as a memorial to Johannes

**Breivik to avoid prison?** Prosecution to seek insanity verdict, psychiatric care for confessed killer; 75 percent of Norway residents in poll disagree.

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**Buø, 14, who was among the 69 people fatally shot at Utøya during the July 23, 2011, attack by Anders Behring Breivik.**

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# It's official: We live 'the good life'



STATISTICS NORWAY

The revised "This Is Svalbard" report finds prices lower, incomes higher and housing cramped in Longyearbyen compared to the mainland.

*Updated 'This Is Svalbard' report finds locals drink more, pay more for veggies – and in better health*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

Time to light the cigars and pour a celebratory drink, especially since they only cost one-third of what our less-wealthy, less-healthy, less-literate and less-playful fellow citizens are paying on the mainland.

A revised "This Is Svalbard" profile released this week by Statistics Norway finds the area similar in many ways to the last report in 2009. It remains "a male-dominated society"

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## Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

### Editor

Mark Sabbatini

### Staff writer/photographer

Karla Paz

### 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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## 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.

## Hottest party of the year Saturday



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Members of the Svalbard Sailing Club grill burgers for guests during last year's annual summer solstice beach party and bonfire outside the club's facility. This year's party begins at 6 p.m. Saturday, with a performance by the Keystone State Boychoir at 7 p.m.

## Legal battle about grinders ahead

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"The new model is from a completely different company," wrote Håkan Eriksson, head of technical infrastructure for Bydrift, the city agency responsible for implementing the grinder policy, in an e-mail interview.

"We have started installing the new mills, which will be completed during the summer."

The city is trying to recover the replacement costs from the vendor, but residents will be stuck paying the bill via higher waste collection fees if the effort fails, Eriksson wrote.

"We have not compiled the cost yet," he

noted. "We have a law firm working on it, but we have not come to any solution."

The city originally mandated food grinders be installed in all residences by July 1, 2010, in an effort to reduce the volume of waste. Bydrift stated at the time the units were "the most economically advantageous" despite the concerns raised by officials elsewhere.

A limited number of replacement grinders were obtained and installed while the dispute lingered.

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

## Icesheet

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

We're sick of reading the annual barrage of "gee-whiz" travelogues about Svalbard since nearly all are the same experiences rather breathlessly told. But an article in last week's *Dagbladet* gave us a buzz by telling perspective visitors how to get one with class. The profile of Karls-Berger Pub lets boozers with loaded wallets know they can get hungover with vintage 1888 cognac from Lheraud that you can't "get any other place in the world other than in private collections." Only 11,400 kroner for four centiliters, according to a bartender interviewed, smiling in apparent relish at the accompanying tip. Owner Steve Torgersen claims the 15,000-liter-collection representing 1,000 different types of liquor "may be the best selection in the world," which seems to be a bit tipsy, but he also gets the disclaimer of "for all I know" since there's no official announcement of the world's largest assortment of spirits ... And since man can't live respectfully by beer alone, we were lucky enough to discover one of the most amusing Svalbard-re-



MYKLE WHALE PRODUCTS

Calling all Greenpeace folks: Here's your chance to savor the whales.

lated food articles we've seen at about the same time. The industry publication *Horeca* published what looks like a verbatim press release by a group looking to put "Norwegian whale meat on the summer menu." It touts a long list of the "fantastic, tasty and healthy" aspects of the sea mammals from Svalbard, while blowing off those annoying PC types by noting "it is captured in very safe sustainable limits, with a population of 80,000 to 100,000 animals, where this year's quota is 1,286 animals."

## 'Truly wonderful, the mind of a child is'



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Bishop Per Oskar Kjølås confers with youths while giving a sermon Friday at Svalbard Church during the Bishops' Conference, bringing Norway's bishops together in Svalbard for the first time. After touring the archipelago they issued a statement titled "We Want More," expressing dissatisfaction with Norway's aggressiveness in combating climate change. "It was important that Parliament on June 7 passed a climate agreement with a binding and concrete package of measures," the statement declares, but "the Bishops' Conference believes that the objectives are not ambitious enough, and is critical of the fact that Norway does not take a larger share of emissions cuts at home. Short-term national gain considerations overshadow the long-term and global perspectives." Members acknowledged some climate advocates may be unhappy about a lack of specific proposals by the bishops, but the intent is offering general guidance without the church excessively intruding on politics.

## Svalbard weathering economic storm

### PROFILE, from page 1

with men representing 60 percent of the population, for instance. But it also notes shifts in continuing long-term trends such as a decline in mining workers. There's also unusual contrasts, such as Longyearbyen residents finding it easier to make ends meet than their mainland counterparts during a lingering period of economic uncertainty, but far less able to deal with a large unforeseen expenditure.

Prices in Svalbard are about 16 percent lower than the mainland which, combined with higher incomes and the area's much lower tax rate, makes residents comparatively affluent.

"But the variations are great between the different product categories," the report notes.

Alcohol, along with tobacco, costs one-third as much in Svalbard compared to the mainland, while transportation is 30 percent cheaper. But food is nearly 20 percent more

expensive, with the largest price differences in essential food groups like fruits, vegetables, bread and dairy products.

Housing tends to be less expensive but more cramped in Svalbard, with only 13 percent of residents owning homes compared to 80 percent on the mainland. But the study notes the figures are due to most residents being provided with housing by their employer.

Ninety percent of Svalbard residents consider themselves in good health and only two percent unhealthy, compared with 80 percent and six percent on the mainland. About 16 percent in Svalbard say they have long-term health issues, compared to more than half on the mainland.

The full report is available in HTML and PDF formats at from [www.ssb.no/svalbard](http://www.ssb.no/svalbard).

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

## HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

### Svalbardposten going to paywall, e-paper this fall

A paywall for most *Svalbardposten* articles will be implemented Sept. 14, with e-newspapers also replacing PDFs for subscribers on that date. Major articles such as rescue operations, accidents and floods will still be available free. Circulation has dropped from a peak of 3,352 in 2006 to 2,772 today. "When you're used to getting something for free, one is not happy to pay," said Editor Birger Amundsen. "It is natural, but we have no choice. We do it to strengthen the newspaper." The update will include custom versions for smart phones and e-readers such as iPads.

### Warming doubles reindeer population, but health worse

Climate change has doubled Svalbard's reindeer population during the past 20 years, according to northern Norway researchers. The University of Tromsø study found warmer climates are resulting in more vegetation and abundant food for the reindeer. On average, summer temperatures have increased by two degrees Celsius during the period of the study. "It is surprising that only two additional degrees gives a strong increase in the population," said Erik Ropstad at the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science. Ropstad said because more animals are in a limited area, their average weight has decreased by two kilograms. Adult females weigh an average of 50 kilograms, compared to 52 kilos in 1994. "The animals that fail when there has been little to eat are the youngest and the oldest."

### More than 60 youths clearing trash exposed by snow melt

More than 60 local youths are spending two days this week cleaning up trash now exposed with the winter snow melting away. Bydrift, the city's infrastructure agency, hires the youths each year for the citywide pickup. "We don't do any clearing until after school ends so that the youths will have the opportunity to earn summer money," said Kjersti Holte, operations manager for the agency. "It's a win-win situation – they get money and we get a clean city."

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Cloudy. Variable winds to 18 km/h. High 6C (6C wind chill), low 4C (0C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. W winds to 15 km/h. High 3C (-1C wind chill), low 2C (-2C wind chill).	Rain. SW winds to 15 km/h. High 2C (-2C wind chill), low 0C (-4C wind chill).	Rain. SW winds to 11 km/h. High 1C (-2C wind chill), low 1C (-3C wind chill).
24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight

**Extended forecast:** Sunday, rain ending, 1C (0C), 1C (-2C), light 24:00h; Monday, cloudy, 2C (0C), 1C (0C), light 24:00h; Tuesday, cloudy, 1C (-1C), 1C (-2C), light 24:00h; Wednesday, p. cloudy, 1C (-2C), 0C (-2C), light 24:00h

Data provided by yr.no



KEYSTONE STATE BOYCHOIR

The Keystone State Boychoir performs while exiting a Baptism service in Oslo during their tour of Norway to honor youths at the Utøya camp when it was attacked by Anders Behring Breivik.

## Concerts, statue honor Utøya victims

### TRIBUTES, from page 1

The main concert by the Keystone State Boychoir is scheduled at 7 p.m. Friday at Kulturhuset. The U.S.-based group, on a month-long tour of seven Norwegian cities, will also perform at the annual summer solstice beach party Saturday at the Svalbard Sailing Club, during Sunday's Mass at Svalbard Church and – arrangements pending – on Monday in Bartsburg. All performances are free.

The 160-member choir of boys ages eight to 18 made history in 2009 by being the first choir to travel to Antarctica and thus the first to perform on all seven continents. Steven Fisher, the choir's conductor, said that was a factor in selecting Svalbard as a stop among the dozens of municipalities with victims of the tragedy.

"Once we did (Antarctica) the boys wanted to go to the North Pole," he said, noting about half of the current choir were part of the 2009 group. "We knew we wanted to hit the summer solstice and we knew we wanted to do a church service."

Among the choir's other stops on its Norwegian tour was a performance last Saturday for freed Burmese dissident Aung San Suu Kyi at a Nobel Peace Center event in Oslo.

A blog of their tour, with links to videos and audio, is at [ksbnorway.wikispaces.com/Norway+Tour](http://ksbnorway.wikispaces.com/Norway+Tour).

The sculpture honoring Buø was approved by the council during their meeting today, but it is not scheduled to arrive until after summer,

## Prosecutors seek insanity verdict for Breivik

A request Anders Behring Breivik be declared insane and receive psychiatric care, rather than be sent to prison, was made by prosecutors this week during closing arguments at his trial.

Breivik, who confessed to killing 77 people and injuring 242 during attacks in Oslo and Utøya last July 22, is seeking to be declared sane, arguing his actions were needed

said Vigdis Hole, secretary of the city's memorial committee.

"There is no longer a plan of putting a statue up on the July 22 anniversary because there is a national event" where the attacks occurred, she said. "On that day, many local people will be there."

The sculptures, created by Oslo artist Nico Widerberg, were offered by an anonymous donor to all 56 municipalities with residents killed at Utøya. A total of 44 accepted, with Utøya among those rejecting the offer, due to concerns such as the sensitivity of survivors of the tragedy and the undemocratic process in creating the sculptures.

No such concerns were raised by Longyearbyen officials or Buø's family.

"It is important to us that John is not forgotten, and we are very happy and grateful that Longyearbyen is accepting this gift," Buø's parents, Einar and Laila Buø, declared in a statement to *Svalbardposten*.

Svalbard Church Priest Leif Magne Helgesen said he welcomes placing the sculpture next to the flag pole at the building's entrance. Memorial committee members "all agreed the church was the best place for the statue," Hole said.

The donation doesn't cover shipping and installing the statue. Hole said she doesn't know what the cost will be to the city.

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

to "stop the 'Islamisation' of Norway."

Prosecutors said they are uncertain about Breivik's sanity, and doubt must go in the defendant's favor in such cases. A poll of Norwegians conducted for NRK show 75 percent favor prison for Breivik, with 10 percent saying he should be declared insane.

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## What's up

### June 20

8 p.m.: Movie: "LOL," U.S. comedy, all ages. Kulturhuset.

### June 22

7 p.m.: Free concert by the Keystone State Boychoir. Kulturhuset.

### June 23

6 p.m.: Summer solstice beach party, barbecue and bonfire at Svalbard Sailing Club. Keystone State Boychoir will perform during the evening.

### July 24

11 a.m.: Mass by visiting priest Margrethe Ølberg and performance by the Keystone State Boychoir. Svalbard Church.

### July 1

Q2 meter reading due.

### July 1 - Aug. 5

Movie theater at Kulturhuset closed for renovations.

### Aug. 15

Deadline for master plan for water supply.

### Aug. 31

6 p.m.: Movie: "Til Ungdommen," Norwegian documentary about youth activism in the summer of 2011, premier screening, no age limit determined. Kulturhuset.

### Sept. 2

6 p.m.: Movie: "Til Ungdommen," Norwegian documentary about youth activism in the summer of 2011, no age limit determined. Kulturhuset.

### Sept. 15

7:30 p.m.: Performance by the Norwegian National Ballet Company. Kulturhuset.

### Oct. 1

Q3 meter reading due.

### Oct. 13

7 p.m.: Free Flow Film Tour, featuring winter sports movies. Kroa.

## What's online

[Icepeople.net](http://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:

- *The mysteries of Svalbard's insects*
- *In Rio, yet another U.S. climate summit*
- *Climate claims 1/3 of penguin colony*
- *U.K. food bank gets Antarctic rations*