



# Hermansen confesses

Former Store Norske leader admits bribery; LNS to sue to keep contract as their charges are dropped

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

The main figure in a large-scale corruption case involving companies hired to perform work for Store Norske is admitting to receiving about four million kroner in bribes.

Charges are also being dropped against one of the accused companies, LNS Spitsbergen, which says it will pursue a lawsuit against

**Hefty burden:** Store Norske says heavy oil ban at new mine site could cost 55M kroner  
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Store Norske to keep a contract that was terminated due to the scandal.

Robert Hermansen, administrative director

of Store Norske from 1999 to 2008, "has made a full confession" to "a case of gross corruption by him that on four occasions he has received transfers totaling approximately four million Norwegian kroner from (a) Store Norske supplier," wrote Bård Thorsen, lead prosecutor in the case, in a prepared statement Friday.

Charges of gross corruption remain for the  
**See SCANDAL, page 4**



S. GAEBLER-BLACK / AWI

A zooplankton known as *calanus finmarchicus*, above, is captured on film in the Fram Strait during this summer's research voyage aboard the *Polarstern*. At top right, expedition members work with a large piece of multi-networking equipment that helps take current and life readings.



D. MONTICELLI / AWI

## Rough, yet fine, waters

*Polarstern* sees setbacks, but beauty and progress in research

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

Considering they're at sea trying to determine man's harmful impacts there, it seems fair that nature cause a few problems in return.

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## Riddles for a warming planet

*International youth expedition looks for clues, future leaders to help solve climate enigma*

By **SÉBASTIEN DUYCKI**  
Guest contributor

How can the impacts of climate change be effectively communicated? And how can governments be convinced to cooperate to protect the Arctic?

The answers are an elusive riddle for many of the world's biggest leaders who visit Svalbard seeking them, the most recent being

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LUCA TOMAC

Samuel Lee-Gammage takes notes during a shore landing with a youth climate activist group.

## 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.

## Rising above the bubble wrap generation



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Youths play on the skateboard ramp in the center of Longyearbyen this week after the construction of a new base elevating and leveling the structure is complete. Young children frequently play alone or in unsupervised groups year-round on the ramp – with or without bikes and skateboards – at a time when other places such as Australia and the United States (whose residents frequently denounce Norway's "freedom-denying socialism") are putting in ultra-protective safeguards at school and public play sites. Such actions include banning swings, competitive sports even with items such as whiffle balls, and installing foam rubber surfaces so kids can't hurt themselves if they fall down. Lawsuits from a broken arm or similar injury can exceed 500,000 kroner in damages in U.S. courts. Many "helicopter parents" also forbid children from playing outside unsupervised due to fears of abduction, vehicles and other dangers.

## Polarstern 'resetting' schedule

### SHIP, from page 1

The *Polarstern*, carrying more than 130 scientists from six countries, is now cruising the waters between Svalbard and Greenland studying how ocean currents, animal life and plants are changing. The 26th annual expedition is adding a free-floating measuring device to supplement stationary equipment providing constant readings for the past 14 years.

But, like many trips, researchers ran into a few snags during the second week of their summer-long expedition.

"Despite intensive testing and various programming efforts, we were unable, for the (new equipment) to ping," the expedition's weekly log ending Monday notes. The result was "resetting of the entire trip planning."

Also, "foggy weather after reaching the ice-covered surfaces was found to be (of the) greatest inconvenience and disabled the helicopter used for ice surveys and marine mammal observations," the log notes.

But they ultimately detected the problem in the new equipment – a faulty energy supply to the internal batteries – which they were able to fix. In use, so-called Seaglider submerges down to a depth of 1,000 meters along its course line, regularly returning to the surface to transmit data via satellite and receive new position coordinates.

The *Polarstern*, belonging to the Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research, can be followed at [www.awi.de](http://www.awi.de).

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

## Icesheet

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

Ah, progress ... there's no stopping it, especially when it comes to better ways to drink beer. A new 17-kroner iPhone app, Ølpriser, lets people compare prices of pints at (as of this writing) 675 restaurants in 32 Norwegian communities including Longyearbyen. We're among the cheaper cities, with a half-liter (or four-tenths in some cases) costing from 39 kroner at Fruene to 52 kroner at Huset. But even a high-end buzz here goes down smooth com-

pared to getting hammered in Lillehammer, where prices start at 74 kroner and top out at a hangover-triggering 100 kroner at Fosse kroa. The cheapest suds in the land are at Olhallen in Tromsø, which charges a DUI-motivating 30 kroner. The city also has one of the wider ranges of prices, with Aquarius doing its bit to contribute to "know when to say when" at 90 kroner. The app also can show where you and the nearest locations are on a map so no matter how many you have you won't be lost.



SAMUEL LEE-GAMMAGE

Members of a youth climate research cruise in Svalbard get their first experience with a calving glacier as part of their project "Climate, Governance, and Europe," with the voyage ending Sunday.

## Youths try to alter climate of change

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CNN founder Ted Turner and a delegation including former Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland.

But the day after they left a more humble international group arrived for a week of research they hope will inspire those whose leadership days are still ahead.

Seventeen "Climate Champions" ages 20 to 30 from 11 European countries and Canada participated in the British Council's Arctic Climate Training voyage aboard the *Antarctic Dream* during a cruise along the western and northern coasts of Spitsbergen. They underwent an intensive program combining seminars, networking and observation of Arctic wildlife.

The wide range of backgrounds and geographic origins among the members enabled a constructive atmosphere for sharing knowledge and best practices. Also, like their high-profile predecessors, they said first-hand experience offers lessons not found in lectures and pictures.

"It will be a once in a lifetime experience for many of us and we can't ever overlook that fact," wrote Andreas Forrest, a participant from Denmark, in a log of the expedition. "But what

we also can't overlook is the evidence we're being presented with during our time on a vessel in the middle of the Arctic Ocean, for no one here is disputing that something is happening to the Arctic region."

The group is sharing video blogs of the voyage and is scheduled to develop projects through the European Union's Youth In Action program. Participants will also discuss their findings with policymakers and peers.

"With the peace that I have seen in the Arctic, I can now inspire others," said Ieva Lace, a participant from Latvia. "I am sure that this Arctic dream will stay with me and hope that humans will be wide enough to save this beauty."

The project was organized jointly by the British Council, the European Commission and UNEP/Grid-Arendal. A log of the trip and links to related information is at <http://arctic-climate.tumblr.com>.

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*Sébastien Duyck is a doctoral candidate at the University of Lapland in Finland who has been active in youth climate projects for several years.*

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

## HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

### Fire, illegal parking concerns raised about new road fence

Concerns continue to be voiced about a new fence under construction along Longyearbyen's main road in front of Sportscenteret. Fire officials said they are concerned the retail complex is more difficult to reach and numerous motorists are parking illegally in front of barriers where a sidewalk is planned. Police and city planning officials said they can't take action against illegally parked vehicles since there are no valid signs informing motorists. Some local politicians, responding to concerns voiced by Sportscenteret tenants about the fence hurting their businesses, said the matter should be reconsidered. "What's going to happen is people will park on the far side and jump over," said Trond E. Johansen, a member of the Right Party. Vigdis Hole, the city's planning and development director, said fire officials had input into the decision process, with a road to the back of the center among their requests.

### Pair fined, warned of being expelled for marijuana use

A man and a woman, both 30, have been fined for drug use and warned they will be expelled from Svalbard if a repeat violation occurs. Officers with the Svalbard governor's office raided a Longyearbyen apartment in May due to suspicions drugs might be there, seizing a small amount of marijuana and arresting the two people, both residents of the city. The woman, who admitted buying about five ounces of the drug, was fined 5,000 kroner for purchase and use violations. The man was fined 2,500 kroner for drug use.

### Art exhibit seeks balance of natural, industrial materials

Terje Roalkvam's quest for balance between natural items such as coal and wood, and industrial items such as aluminum can be seen in his exhibit "Vippepunkt" at Galleri Svalbard until Aug. 15. "I have been to Svalbard several times and collected various materials," he said. "It provides an interaction between dark and light, hot and cold, rough and smooth. The materials tilt towards each other and try to find balance within a geometric form."

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Light rain. NW winds to 11 km/h. High 5C (2C wind chill), low 2C (-1C wind chill).	Rain. NE winds to 15 km/h. High 4C (1C wind chill), low 2C (-1C wind chill).	Rain. Variable winds to 11 km/h. High 2C (-1C wind chill), low 1C (-2C wind chill).	Cloudy. E winds at 11 km/h. High 2C (-1C wind chill), low 1C (-2C wind chill).
Sunrise/sunset: 24-hour light	Sunrise/sunset: 24-hour light	Sunrise/sunset: 24-hour light	Sunrise/sunset: 24-hour light
<b>Extended forecast:</b> Sunday, cloudy, 2C (-1C), 0C (-2C), light 24:00h; Monday, rain, 2C (-1C), 1C (-2C), light 24:00h; Tuesday, rain, 2C (-1C), 1C (-2C), light 24:00h; Wednesday, rain, 2C (-1C), 1C (-2C), light 24:00h.			

Data provided by yr.no



KRISTIAN JEBSEN REDERI AS



TV2



LNS SPITSBERGEN

LNS Spitsbergen workers, above right, load Store Norske coal into a truck in preparation for shipment from Svalbard. At top left, a cargo ship from Kristian Jebsen Rederi AS approaches the Svea mine to provide coal transport by sea. Agreements with both companies were negotiated by Robert Hermansen, bottom left, who confessed to receiving about four million kroner in bribes.

## Hermansen: Actions were 'stupid'

### SCANDAL, from page 1

supplier, Kristian Jebsens Rederi AS, which transports Store Norske's coal by ship from Svalbard, Thorsen wrote.

Hermansen originally denied the accusations by stating, among other things, his actions were approved by Store Norske board members seeking to make him a scapegoat after the contracts came under government scrutiny. But, in an interview with *Nordly's* following his confession, he described the payments received as "personal loans I sometimes paid back (that) went to industrial projects in Finnmark."

"Yes, it may subsequently said to be stupid, but it was not about personal gain, but the desire and willingness to innovate in rural Norway," he said, adding the money had no connection with Store Norske's contracts.

Hermansen was often hailed as a mining industry leader during his Store Norske tenure and a bust of him stands inside the main entrance of Longyearbyen's main municipal government building. He also was heavily involved in numerous other Norwegian companies projects, but has resigned all such positions in wake of the scandal.

A government audit made public last year revealed numerous Store Norske subcontracts negotiated by Hermansen of unusually long duration and far above market value. Store Norske said the agreements could cost the company hundreds of millions of kroner.

The specific charges and punishment from

Hermansen's confession are still being determined, according to Thorsen.

Thorsen also stated charges are being dropped against LNS Spitsbergen, which has for years provided infrastructure services such as construction and land-based transport of materials for Store Norske. The scandal has already shaken parent company LNS, with two top executives signing last September.

Store Norske also announced it was terminating its contract with LNSS as of Sept. 1 and recently hired a new company to provide infrastructure services. LNS filed a lawsuit when the contract was terminated and Chairman Inge K. Hansen said they intended to continue pursuing it now that charges have been dropped.

"We are now sending the request for a temporary injunction to Nord-Troms District Court seeking that the agreement is maintained until the arbitration court has ruled," Hansen said in an interview with *Byggeindustrien* magazine.

Store Norske's decision resulted from an internal investigation, not the government's, said Bjørn Arnestad, the company's administrative director, in the same article.

"That LNS will not be prosecuted, does not affect our relationship," he said. "The decision about the termination of the contract was independent of the prosecutors' investigation and based on a lack of confidence in the company."

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

## Heavy oil ban costly for new mine

*Store Norske says bringing coal from Lunckefjell will cost 55M kroner extra, challenges policy*

By MARK SABBATINI

Editor

Store Norske is challenging a ban on ships using heavy oil to transport coal from its planned Lunckefjell mine, stating it will cost an extra 55 million kroner to do so.

The ban is vital to reducing emissions and

the damage caused by a spill, according to the Svalbard governor's office. But Store Norske, in a letter to the Norwegian Ministry of the Environment, argues modern ships are designed with extensive precautions and there has not been a shipping accident at its Svea mine for the past ten years.

Lunckefjell is scheduled to start production in 2014.

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

## What's up

### July 10

11 a.m.: Mass w/ substitute preist Ragnar Aase. Svalbard Church.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Transformers 3" (3D), U.S. action/sci-fi, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

### July 12

7 p.m.: Fireplace gathering. Svalbard Church.

### July 17

11 a.m.: Mass w/ substitute preist Ragnar Aase. Svalbard Church.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Elle S'appelait Sarah," French/British drama, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

### July 19

7 p.m.: Fireplace gathering. Svalbard Church.

### July 24

11 a.m.: Mass w/ substitute preist Ragnar Aase. Svalbard Church.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Submarine" (3D), British drama/comedy, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

### July 26

7 p.m.: Fireplace gathering. Svalbard Church.

### July 31

11 a.m.: Baptism Mass w/ substitute preist Ragnar Aase. Svalbard Church.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Priest" (3D), U.S. action/horror/sci-fi, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Aug. 7

8 p.m.: Movie: "Hanna," U.S./British/German action/drama, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Aug. 14

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

### Aug. 21

8 p.m.: Movie "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Part 2," U.S./British adventure/family. 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:

- *Russia, Canada boosting Arctic military*
- *Russia to ask UN for bigger Arctic claim*
- *Arctic wealth a dilemma for indigenous*
- *Ireland is Garden of Eden for polar bears*