



SPACE CASES IN SVALBARD



NASA



AMASE

Separated at birth? A researcher near Longyearbyen, above right, tests prototype equipment during a simulated mission to Mars. A valley on the actual Mars near a large soil deposit known as "North Pole," above left, is captured by the NASA probe Opportunity earlier this year.

Probing Martians

Instruments tested in Svalbard to help Curiosity's search for life

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

OK, so maybe it's not that hard to tell them apart.

The photo credits obviously spoil the mystery, since everyone knows AMASE is the abbreviation of a Mars research project where the "S" stands for "Svalbard." NASA, of

course, is the space agency more likely to have a cool set of wheels on the planet itself.

A few other subtle differences may be noticeable to keen observer. But their many similarities are scheduled to be bolstered Monday when the Curiosity probe lands on Mars with equipment tested in Svalbard.

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MYSTERIOUSUNIVERSE.ORG

A UFO that landed in Spitsbergen in 1952 is towed to a hiding spot in this unquestionably authentic top-secret government photo.

REVEALED! UFOs IN SVALBARD!

'Now-declassified CIA files' expose 1952 landing of flying saucer found by Norway pilots

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

Could it be this is *really* why they closed the seed vault to all visitors?

Lost in the excitement of Monday's scheduled landing of a probe on Mars is an even more captivated alien scoop sweeping certain elements of the internet press.

"Now-declassified CIA files of 1952 on the Spitsbergen affair begin: 'Writing in the
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Pyramiden a new 'hot' gig?

Aggie Peterson concert, album the second major music project for Russian ghost town this fall

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

Maybe they can promote it as the polar opposite of Burning Man.

The long-abandoned Russian mining town of Pyramiden is suddenly a music hotspot as singer Aggie Peterson is planning a concert there at about the same time albums from her and a Danish band featuring recordings from

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INGVILD KOLNES / FROST

Aggie Peterson, left, performs as part of the duo Frost during a 2011 concert in Longyearbyen.

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.

What's wrong with this 'Longyearbyen' photo?



SOURCE: WE DON'T HAVE A CLUE

"Now you can eat your fill of Thai food in Longyearbyen" is the caption below a large photo (above) accompanying an article at Nordys.no about the new Lompensenteret restaurant Taste of Thai. While the owners doubtlessly appreciated some media exposure beyond Longyearbyen, you won't spot them – or any of the employees – in the photo. Exactly who and where are pictured is unknown (there's no photo credit, which is why we're publishing it here with the hope of avoiding a lawsuit). So for those who've been to the local eatery, see how many "errors" you can spot. Among those on our list: 1) The outdoor sidewalk location; 2) paper plates; 3) styrofoam containers; 3) the burners; 4) the type of pans; 5) the noodle dish (none at Taste of Thai so far); 6) no idea who the identifiable employee is; 7) the apron; 8) the table; and 9) the tablecloth.

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

We've been agonizing about the decline of decent journalism ever since we entered the profession (coincidental timing? Hmmm...), but anyone questioning The Local Paper of Record Latitude creds needs to **check out the profile of summer intern Helle Gannestad in *Norske Ukeblad***. "She wrote the words that touched the entire world after the terrorist attacks" is the headline description of Gannestad, 19, who cancelled her third planned trip to the Utøya youth camp last summer due to her parents moving. The aspiring journalist, despite having friends on the island, kept her wits during the July 22 shooting there that killed 69 people, telling those with her not to call anyone at the camp because "it's dangerous, especially if their ringers are on." A phrase she wrote afterward, "When a man can cause so much harm - imagine how much love we can create together," were prominently repeated by news and other organizations worldwide, and was regarded by *Dagbladet* as the "fourth most-powerful words in Norway." After her internship she is planning visits to the West Bank and Jerusalem to "live in a time and see how people who experience terror every day do," according to *Norske Ukeblad*. If she applies for a job with anything affiliated with Rupert Murdoch with a resume like that we will personally recruit goons to kidnap and return her sanity ... With the Olympics in full swing a special Norwegian haven beginning with "L" is getting love from a newspaper touting alternative

places for those wanting an experience involving the Games that doesn't require setting foot anywhere near the various fiascos in London. That's right – **Longyearbyen is among the *Montreal Gazette's* picks of "Olympic cities (that) let you run with history."** The article declares "if you're adventurous, head to the Arctic island of Spitsbergen. Part of the Olympic athletes' village from the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway, was moved there after the games and is now a Radisson Hotel." Seems Lillehammer, best remembered for the Tanya and Nancy Show, is still getting clubbed after a Games that failed to generate the tourism boost officials there hoped for ... And speaking of alternative reasons to come to Svalbard, **here's an article by *Business Insider* that may or may not warm the hearts of locals: "A secret paradise for gun rights and residency."** The feature, detailing numerous "incredibly unique benefits," reads like a fringe right-winger's idea of paradise. "For centuries, Svalbard was completely lawless, devoid of any government authority. It attracted whalers, hunters, merchants, and fishermen from all over the world ... amazingly enough, they were all able to co-exist for hundreds of years without a sovereign authority or central government telling them what to do." Modern times are more regulated, of course, but there's still perks such as no VAT and easy gun licenses. "It's definitely a place to be aware of, especially if you need to hit the escape button quickly," the article declares.



COURTESY OF FROST

One of the main buildings in the abandoned mining community of Pyramiden is photographed long ago by the grandparents of Aggie Peterson, a singer scheduled to perform a concert there Sept. 1.

Ghost town alive with music

CONCERT, from page 1

the desolate community are released.

"We will awaken the beautiful 'dead' city to live, and fill it with music and images that hold memories of the 'live' time," wrote Peterson in an e-mail interview.

The concert will be the first professional music performance in Pyramiden since it was abandoned in 1998 by the state-owned Russian company Trust Arktikugol, said Birger Amundsen, editor of *Svalbardposten*.

Peterson will team with other performers including electronic instrumentalist Per Martinsen, who comprise the duo Frost which performed in Longyearbyen last November. Their new album, "Radiomagnetic," is scheduled for release Sept. 17 and is strongly influenced by Peterson's grandparents and "ghost radio" broadcasts from what may have been Pyramiden years after it was abandoned.

Peterson's grandparents, Herta and Leif, "documented diligently life on inspections in Svalbard from the late 1950s and in several tiara forward," according to a promotional brochure for the concert. She revisited the images after receiving a tape from a Russian amateur radio operator who claimed he saw a per-

formance of Frost to a silent Russian movie.

"Aggie and Per immediately took out their old cassette player and listened to the tape that contained a radio broadcast of the most beautiful selection of pop music, the music from a radio ghost filtered through the noise and time," the brochure notes.

The experience sparked hopes of performing in Pyramiden, Peterson wrote in her e-mail. She said the logistics were a challenge, but Russian officials were cooperative, and transportation for musicians and listeners aboard the *Polar Girl* tour vessel have been made.

The event will include a 45-minute concert in an old workshop, a photo exhibition in the cultural center and a guided tour of Pyramiden. The *Polar Girl* is scheduled to depart Longyearbyen at 8:30 a.m. and return at about 8 p.m. Tickets, costing 1,300 kroner (800 kroner for local residents), are available at www.frostpyramiden.net.

Also scheduled in September is the release of "Piramida," an album by the Danish band whose members collected more than 1,000 sounds from the ghost town.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM **SVALBARDPOSTEN** VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Arctic guide program gets record applicants, new home

The Arctic nature guide program, which received a record number of applications for this fall, will be moving into a new building when the training begins. The program conducted by the University College of Finnmark received more than 80 applications for the 24 available seats. The students will meet for classes in Longyearbyen's Red Cross building after being unable to afford rent at The University Center in Svalbard where the program previously took place. "For us it was very natural to get in touch with the Red Cross, which stands for more of the same values as us," said Sigmund Andersen, study coordinator for the program. He said the building lacks the reading rooms and some other advantages of UNIS, but is more suitable for intimate classroom instruction. The one-year contract is a temporary solution and the program may again collaborate with UNIS in the future.

Nordsyssel gets extra year of work before new ship sought

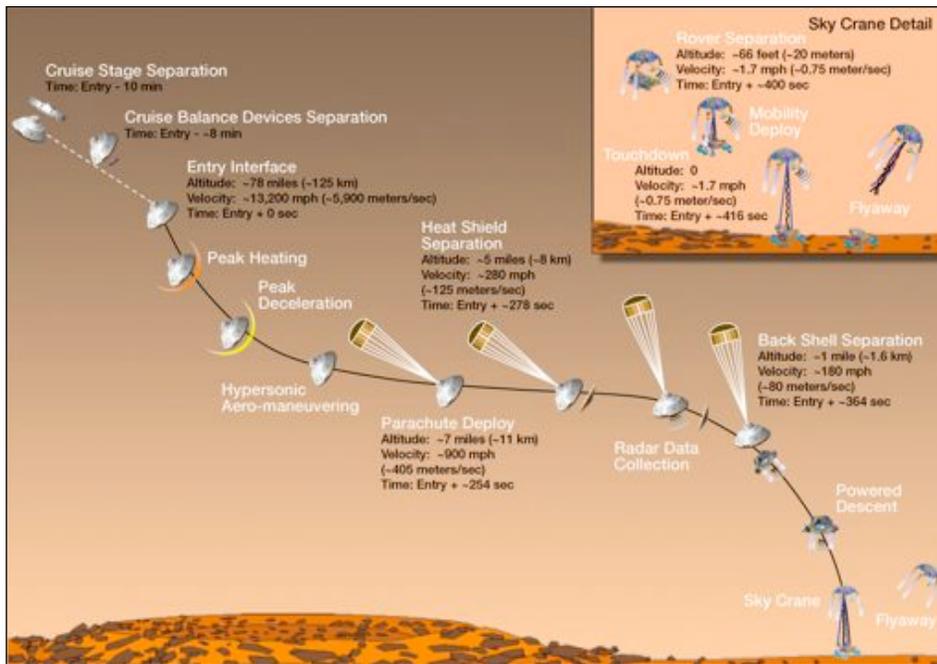
The *Nordsyssel* will continue to be used as a service vessel by the Svalbard governor's office for another year, extending a 10-year agreement before bids are sought for a new long-term contract beginning in 2014. The ship is used for duties such as emergencies, inspections and surveillance involving other vessels. The governor is seeking a new long-term contract when two upgraded large helicopters are put into service in 2014. Because the specific aircraft models are not determined yet, the one-year delay is to ensure the new ship can accommodate the new helicopters.

Youth football team loses on field, tries for better with girls

The year's first Norway Cup meeting on grass ended with a 4-0 loss for the young men's football team from Longyearbyen – but the ladies they're meeting in Oslo are just fine. "We have it only good here, except for a little sunburn on the neck," said Erlend Foss Telstø, 16. The players, when not playing football, are trying to pick up girls. "We are not so good," Telstø said, but "practice makes perfect."

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Cloudy. N winds to 7 km/h. High 12C (10C wind chill), low 8C (7C wind chill).	Rain late. Variable winds to 7 km/h. High 8C (7C wind chill), low 6C (4C wind chill).	Rain ending. Variable winds to 7 km/h. High 6C (3C wind chill), low 5C (2C wind chill).	Cloudy. Northeast winds to 11 km/h. High 5C (3C wind chill), low 5C (2C wind chill).
24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight
Extended forecast: Sunday, cloudy, 5C (1C), 4C (1C), light 24:00h; Monday, p. cloudy, 4C (1C), 3C (0C), light 24:00h; Tuesday, cloudy, 4C (1C), 3C (0C), light 24:00h; Wednesday, cloudy, 4C (0C), 3C (-1C), light 24:00h			
Data provided by storm.no			



NASA

The planned course for Monday's landing of the Curiosity probe on Mars is depicted in this artist's rendering. The probe contains equipment tested in Svalbard that will search for signs of life.

Seeking life on Mars in Svalbard

TWINS, from page 1

A chemical sensor for organic molecules and an advanced X-ray machine will help search for evidence of life on Mars if the tricky landing of the Curiosity probe is successful. The pinpoint landing inside the 154-kilometer wide Gale Crater, which NASA calls the "most ambitious Mars project ever," will be what the space agency describes as "seven minutes of terror."

"It's a pretty hairy landing, and there are many who come to sit and bite their nails," said Hans Amundsen, a Norwegian geologist who helped test the two instruments in Svalbard, in an interview with TV2.

Amundsen, who was at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida when the rocket carrying Curiosity was launched last October, has been involved with Arctic geology since 1981 and is credited with discovering the first meteorite from Mars found in the Arctic.

He and other members of the Arctic Mars Analog Svalbard Expedition (AMASE) have been conducting research since 2003 in the archipelago, with participants stating its conditions are the closest to the red planet available on Earth. The instruments aboard Curiosity can

distinguish the difference between liquid water and ice and up three meters below the surface.

The presence of water on the Martian surface early in the planet's history is the most critical factor in determining if life existed, according to NASA.

The Gale Crater is an ideal location, according to the space agency, since water on the planet's surface billions of years ago likely would have flowed downhill into what's one of the lowest places on Mars. NASA scientists believe the crater was created by a meteorite about the size of Manhattan about four billion years ago, when the planet had a thicker atmosphere, plate tectonics and a climate warm enough for liquid water.

The crater is also likely to reveal clues to climate change occurring since that time.

NASA's live online coverage of the landing, at www.nasa.gov/ntvis, is scheduled from 5:30-10 a.m. Monday (Norwegian time). The exact time of landing is scheduled at 7:31 a.m.

Details about current and previous AMASE expeditions are available at <https://amase.gl.ciw.edu>.

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

Even hoax of Svalbard UFO a hoax?

ALIENS, from page 1

German magazine *Der Flieger*, Dr. Waldemar Beck says that a flying saucer which recently fell at Spitsbergen has been studied by eminent Norwegian and German rocket experts," reports *Mysterious Universe* in an online expose republished by a plethora of fellow conspiracy busters. "He writes that Dr. Norsal, a Norwegian expert in rocket construction, went to the place where the flying saucer had fallen a few hours after it had been discovered in the mountains of Spitsbergen by Norwegian jet planes."

Among the many mysteries, according to the article, is the UFO has a Russian inscrip-

tion. Another is where the 47-meter craft is now, although some sites are prominently displaying photos of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault with its space-age exterior lights and ominous underground tunnels.

But those skeptical about the report may be right, according to *Mysterious Universe*.

"There's another possibility too, however: That the story was a deliberate, government-created 'plant' to confuse the truth about tales of UFOs crashing to Earth, whatever that truth might really be," the article notes.

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

What's up

July 1 - Aug. 5

Movie theater at Kulturhuset closed for renovations.

Aug. 12

8 p.m.: Movie: "The Amazing Spider-Man" (3D), U.S. action/drama, no age limit determined. Kulturhuset.

Aug. 19

8 p.m.: Movie: "The Dark Knight Rises," U.S./British action, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

Aug. 26

6 p.m.: Movie: "Madagascar 3," U.S. animated/family film dubbed in Norwegian, no age limit determined. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Kon-Tiki," Norwegian dram, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

Aug. 28

6-8 p.m.: Activity fair. Demonstrations and signups for Longyearbyen's recreational clubs. Svalbardhallen. More information at svalbardturn.no.

Aug. 29

6 p.m.: Movie: "Ice Age: Continental Drift" (3D), U.S. animated/comedy, all ages. Kulturhuset.

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.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Albert Nobbs," U.S. drama/romance, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

Sept. 9

6 p.m.: Movie: "Brave" (3D), U.S. fantasy, no age limit determined. 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 protests new Svalbard fish fine*
- *Majority of U.S. a drought disaster area*
- *Unprecedented Arctic voyage for China*
- *Surfers ride waves, ice in Arctic Norway*