



Tourist killed at glacier

Woman dies as inflatable boat hit by calving ice; distance from glacier still under investigation

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

A French woman in her late 40s was killed today when ice from a calving glacier hit a sightseeing boat, officials said.

The woman was on an inflatable zodiac with 11 other passengers and two guides when

the accident at Esmarkbreen in Ymerbukta occurred, said Per Andreassen, a police inspector for the governor's office, which was notified at about 10:20 a.m. He said officials have interviewed those aboard the vessel and collected numerous photos from them, but declined to say if it appears the guides brought the boat too close to the glacier for safety.

"We sent the pictures from the accident to the central police agency in Oslo," he said. "I'm not going to speculate on distance."

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GOOGLE MAPS

Ice falling from Esmarkbreen, shown by the blue pinpoint, apparently killed a woman when it hit a sightseeing boat today.



PHOTO BY ERIK TUNSTAD

Pat Druckenmiller digs briskly near the end of a two-week excavation of prehistoric fossils at Isfjorden, hoping to uncover the skull of Britney, the nickname of a long-necked plesiosaur known to scientists only by the bodies of previously discovered skeletons. The skull, apparently torn off from the neck found nearby, was discovered just before the end of the excavation.

FOSSIL FORTUNES

Dino diggers make history in final year; geologists at another site surprised by subtropical reefs

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

The headline was *thisclose* to being "Headless Monster Found in Topless Soil."

But a last-second revelation shows Britney isn't a head case, although she's certainly tiny brained. Excavators unearthed the 20-centimeter skull on her five-meter-long body as the last of Jørn Hurum's annual dinosaur digs in Svalbard was wrapping up earlier this month.

"At the same time (we) solved a 150-year-old mystery," wrote Erik Tunstad, a Norwegian research journalist, in the expedition's blog.

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As sun sets, skies get new life

Northern Lights fans get free mobile app, weather watchers get 132-million-kroner upgrade

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

One's tiny and free, the other larger than Earth and massively expensive. But both take the art of watching those soon-darkening Svalbard skies to the next level.

Immediate gratification for amateurs is now available in an iPhone and Android app detailing Northern Lights forecasts. Pros will

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KONGSBERG SATELLITE SERVICES

The Svalbard Satellite Center will be a major beneficiary of a five-year, 132-million-kroner contract awarded by NASA to a Tromsø company providing support for new weather satellites.

Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

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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.

A heavy metal tribute



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Christin Kristoffersen, center, removes the necklace for the Longyearbyen Municipal Council's chairperson so it can be placed into a new Svalbard Museum exhibit commemorating the 10-year anniversary of the city's local government. A ceremony today unveiling the first part of the exhibit, which also includes a gavel from council meetings, featured historic presentations by Kristoffersen and Jørn Holme, left, head of the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage. A larger celebration with lectures and social activities is scheduled Oct. 29 at Kulturhuset.

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

There's sobering news for locals – literally – in the Global Summer of Freaky Weather as the "champaign glass" on Operafjellet still hasn't shattered despite an unusually warm summer. The stem has severed in late July in recent years, but an overabundance of cloudy days means everyone hoping to win a special shotglass from The Local Paper of Lushes for being one of the first two to guess the correct date can't hold their liquor. Even less intoxicating, the mountain got its first dose of termination dust this week. We're told there have been years where the stem didn't break and people have submitted "not gonna happen" entries this year, so the best hope of stragglers who haven't entered is to 1) hope the rain that inevitably makes life miserable for UNIS students as they begin their field work works its magic or 2) grab shovels and take a boat ride across the channel (which we're told has also happened in the past) ... We've kept an eye on the hijinks of Britain's Prince Harry since his Excellent Arctic Adventure here a year-and-a-half ago, since



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Mother Nature does less than the full monty and is now reaching for a coverup as snow begins falling in the mountains this week.

it seems like every breathless exposé features the same photos of The Third Man (from the throne) freezing his crown jewels off during his expedition with some wounded soldiers to the North Pole. But **we're predicting the days of seeing Hypothermic Harry are over, since nude photos from a weekend in Las Vegas are heating up the Brits.** The tabloids aren't printing the photos, apparently "fearing royal rage," but we have no such scruples since we're guessing Her Royal Majesty is the only Brit who can't find roughly 71 million online links to her stripping successor in 0.19 seconds ... Kudos appear due to the crew of the *Scorpius*, **a Russian yacht that just completed the first successful sailing voyage around Spitsbergen from the north**, according to *The Voice of Russia*. Alas, we're forced to relegate the sailors to the rumors section since the news broke too late to confirm the claim. But we're not done keeping an eye on them, as the vessel is attempting to be the first to circumnavigate the Arctic and Antarctic in the same year.



SOMEONE WITH POOR CAMERA SKILLS

What happens in Vegas stays in vagueness thanks to TMZ.com stamping watermarks all over its photos of Prince Harry, lest anyone think they can discern naughty parts amidst the blur.



PHOTO BY ERIK TUNSTAD

Excavators at Isfjorden, above, reach the end of the neck for Britney, a long-necked plesiosaur, but are disappointed to find the head missing. Days of subsequent digging, however, revealed the skull nearby. At right, a subtropical coral reef discovered near Ny-Ålesund will offer geologists a first-ever chance to study the prehistoric marine life that would exist with the climate conditions that formed the reef.



NORWEGIAN POLAR INSTITUTE

Two fossil projects make history

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"What an ending – not only for this year's season, but for the whole project."

It took more than a week of digging to expose Britney, who is believed to be a long-necked plesiosaur species known as Colymbosaurus. Bodies of the species have been found in the United Kingdom dating back to the 19th century.

"No one on the other hand, had ever seen the skull of such a plesiosaur," Tunstad wrote.

The discovery may also reveal if Britney is more than a kissing cousin to another species known as Kimmerosaurus. In a similar oddity, only skulls of the latter have been found. Now that the full skeleton of one of the species is available, they can be compared to see if they're actually the same species.

The two-week excavation at Isfjorden is the last for Hurum, who's earned worldwide headlines during the past nine years for uncovering numerous new species of plesiosaurs and

ichthyosaurs. But the Oslo paleontologist, who periodically teaches fossil history courses at The University Centre in Svalbard, said at least a decade of work analyzing the fossils remains.

Another startling discovery of the prehistoric marine environment was made near Ny-Ålesund when geologists Dierk Blomeier and Thomas Goode found a "perfectly exposed" subtropical coral reef along the coast of Brøggerhalvøya, according to the Norwegian Polar Institute.

"Because of its exceptional preservation and unprecedented exposure, it constitutes a major (source of) information about Svalbard's geological history, and provides unique insight into the marine life in the past," said Blomeier, a researcher for the organization.

His planned subsequent investigation into such a reef will be the first in Svalbard, according to the institute.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

New owners means higher rents at private apartments

Renting a private apartment will be more expensive in Longyearbyen than Oslo as new buyers of multiple buildings are raising rents as of Sept. 1. The cost of a 28-square-meter studio flat in buildings on Vei 232 will cost 6,900 kroner a month, up from 4,857 kroner. The owners are also refurbishing units, which will cost an extra 500 kroner. The 246-kroner-per-square-meter price is well above the average price of 170 kroner in Oslo.

Store Norske hopes two big deals help in tough market

Two landmark agreements by Store Norske will stabilize its operations in Svalbard as it copes with a "transitional phase" and trying to sell its coal in an oversupplied global market hit by a year-long price decline. A settlement with Leonhard Nilsen & Sonner, which formerly provided logistic services for Store Norske, resolves a two-year dispute when the service contract was terminated due to a corruption scandal. Store Norske will pay 60 million kroner for LNS' buildings and machinery, which officials said is more than the book value but less than the cost of reacquiring the assets through the legal process. Also, a new sales agreement has been signed with Swiss company Glencore International, which comes after a contract with Oxbow Coal was terminated two years ago. Store Norske will now officially control its sales, but "Glencore has a bigger network than we have, and acts as an advisor and door opener," said Aleksander Askeland, the mining company's marketing and product manager

Worker aboard trawler killed in accident near Hopen

A Norwegian man in his 30s working aboard a trawler southeast of Hopen was killed Thursday in an accident, according to the governor's office. Co-workers "did everything right" administering first aid to the man, but he was dead when officials arrived by helicopter, said First Lt. Inge Meløy. Details have not been released about the cause of the accident, which is being investigated by the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Cloudy. N winds to 11 km/h. High 4C (0C wind chill), low 1C (-3C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. E winds to 18 km/h. High 4C (-2C wind chill), low 0C (-4C wind chill).	Cloudy. E winds to 29 km/h. High 5C (-3C wind chill), low 2C (-4C wind chill).	Cloudy. E winds to 22 km/h. High 5C (0C wind chill), low 4C (-2C wind chill). Sunset 12:11a; sunrise 1:50a sunset (2nd) 11:45p
24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	
Extended forecast: Sunday, cloudy, 4C (-2C), 2C (-4C), light 21:11h; Monday, p. cloudy, 5C (0C), 2C (-3C), light 20:35h; Tuesday, cloudy, 4C (-2C), 2C (-4C), light 20:05h; Wednesday, rain, 5C (2C), 3C (-1C), light 19:38h			
Data provided by storm.no			



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

A worker washes down the deck of the *Polaris I* after it returns to Longyearbyen following the death of a female passenger apparently hit by ice from a calving glacier during a sightseeing trip today.

Women dies when ice hits boat

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The woman was sightseeing with her husband aboard the *Polaris I*, a French vessel chartered by the French company Grands Espaces. The guides, who don't live in Longyearbyen but have many years of experience in Svalbard, brought two groups of passengers in the smaller inflatable boat to get a closer look at the glacier about 40 kilometers west of Longyearbyen.

Rescuers responding to the accident by helicopter pronounced the woman dead at the scene. While the cause has not been officially determined, Andreassen said her injuries are consistent with being hit by a large block of ice.

Another passenger received minor injuries and was flown to Tromsø for treatment.

The guides have not told officials how close the boat was to the glacier and any accusations of negligence are pending the investigation in Oslo.

Staying at least 200 meters away from glaciers is among the guidelines issued by the Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators, but Andreassen said there are no legal requirements.

"If we make rules about that then we have to make rules about every danger in Svalbard and that's not our intention," he said.

The most recent similar incident of significance occurred in August of 2007 when 23 British tourists were injured, eight seriously, when the Russian captain of an Oceanwide Expeditions cruise ship navigated the vessel too close to an iceberg in Hornsund. A lengthy search for the captain was unsuccessful, but Oceanwide was fined 300,000 kroner. In addition, Discover The World, a British tour operator chartering the vessel, paid an undisclosed settlement to 16 passengers who filed a lawsuit against the company.

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

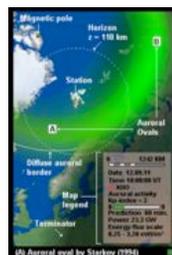
Skywatchers get a technology boost

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need to wait a bit, but their patience will be richly rewarded as Kongsberg Satellite Services (KSAT) is receiving a five-year contract worth 132 million kroner from NASA to provide ground station services for a new generation of weather satellites.

The Auroral Forecast app shows projected Northern Lights activity up to an hour ahead of time, according to observations from the Kjell Henriksen Observatory in Longyearbyen and six other auroral observatories. Also available are local weather conditions, solar illuminations and star charts.

The app, also available for Windows, was released on the 50-year anniversary of the Andøya Rocket Range as a tribute to its contribution to space physics and cooperation with The



AURORAL FORECAST

University Centre in Svalbard.

Download links to the app are at <http://kho.unis.no/News/3xMobile.htm>.

Much of the NASA funding will be used for data collected by the Svalbard Satellite Center (SvalSat), said Rolf Skatteboe, administrative director for KSAT, in an interview with NRK today.

"This is, in fact, a significant contract that allows us to continue the development of both of our stations on Svalbard and Antarctica, and the main office in Tromsø," he said.

SvalSat has experienced controversy recently as its been accused of illegally providing data for military operations. Chinese hackers have also accessed the system.

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

What's up

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. 7

9 a.m.: Board of Youth Enterprises meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

Sept. 9

6 p.m.: Movie: "Brave" (3D), U.S. fantasy, no age limit determined. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "The Expendables 2," U.S. action/thriller, no age limit determined. Kulturhuset.

Sept. 10

11 a.m.: Environmental and Industrial Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen 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:

- *Antarctic warming started 600 years ago*
- *U.S. carbon emissions at 20-year low*
- *China to open Arctic institute in Iceland*
- *Court: Cool if drilling harms polar bears*