



Participants in the Northern Traveling Film Festival inspect the projector room of the movie theater in the abandoned Russian mining town of Pyramiden on Aug. 17.

## Screening a rough cut

*Watching films takes back seat to action at northernmost festival*

Attending the world's northernmost film festival isn't so much about watching action/adventures as being in one.

Exciting as that may sound, divas and popcorn warriors may find themselves thinking more about the Red Army than red carpets during a week in two crumbling Russian mining towns less than 800 miles from the North Pole. It depends on how you feel about drinking vodka for breakfast in the cramped bowels of an old fishing trawler while straining to hear a DVD on a laptop computer above the

**See more than the trailer:** Full festival coverage including blogs, travel and film reviews, photos and more at [icepeople.net](http://icepeople.net).

roar of the engine.

Or trouncing through mounds of ancient filmstrips instead of watching them in an abandoned theater. Or stealing toilet paper from an unlocked room down the hall because hotel staff who neglected your room have gone home for

**See FILM, page 4**



Capt. It Helge Telle poses next to the Hugin 1000 robot being used this week to scan the sea floor near Bear Island for remnants of the plane carrying Roald Amundsen that vanished mysteriously in 1928.

## Searching for Amundsen's lost plane

*Sea expedition using robots to find remnants from 1928 crash that killed famed polar explorer*

Technology has come a long way since famed polar explorer Roald Amundsen's plane disappeared during a 1928 rescue mission to Svalbard, but those beginning a search for the aircraft this week say the challenges of the Arctic remain formidable enough the mystery may never be solved.

An international team aboard two ships set sail Monday from Tromsø for the two-week search in a 117-square-kilometer area about 20 nautical miles northwest of Bear Island, near where the last radio message from Amundsen's plane was sent on June 18, 1928. Underwater robots will scan the sea floor using sonar, recording high-definition images participants will analyze aboard the ships.

The project is headed by Rob McCallum, a  
**See AMUNDSEN, page 2**

## U.N. leader's visit on despite memo

*Ban Ki-moon to tour Svalbard next week after Norwegian official calls him 'spineless'*

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is coming to Svalbard next week to learn about global warming, but the introduction couldn't have been much icier.

An internal memo by Norwegian Deputy U.N. Ambassador Mona Juul calling Ban "spineless and charmless" was leaked to the press last week, prompting speculation the visit might be canceled. But after public and private apologies by Norwegian officials, he is scheduled to arrive next Monday for a three-day tour of Longyearbyen and Ny-Ålesund.



**BAN KI-MOON**

"He will visit polar research stations and the (Svalbard) Global Seed Vault, get the latest updates on issues relating to the thinning ice, and make his way to the polar ice rim," said Michèle Montas, a spokesperson for the secretary-general, during a press conference Monday at the U.N. headquarters in New York City.

U.N. officials, despite announcing the planned visit months ago, initially declined to say the trip was confirmed after the memo was published. This week Ban, after receiving a conciliatory call this week by Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre, said it's normal for diplomats to report to their home countries and "you have the right to say what you believe and what you have seen in my job as the secretary-general."

"As a matter of principle I welcome all these criticisms," Ban said. "Criticisms, when

**See U.N. VISIT, page 3**

### Inside

**Headlines from Svalbardposten**

- Tourists behaving well in nature areas
- Record number of students as school starts
- More reindeer hunting permits issued

Page 3

**Weather forecast**

Page 3

**Events calendar**

Page 4

## 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

*Icepeople* is published weekly (or thereabouts) on Tuesdays (or thereabouts), with printed copies available free on a limited basis in Longyearbyen. Additional printed copies are available locally and by mail upon request. Charges are on an "at cost" basis.

## Copyright stuff

Original contents of this publication can be reproduced for non-commercial purposes free of charge if *Icepeople* is credited as the source. The original writers, photographers and other contributors retain their rights to all published works.

## 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 Latham 47 seaplane, seen here in 1928 in Bergen, vanished that year while carrying explorer Roald Amundsen and four Frenchmen during an attempt to rescue Umberto Nobile and eight survivors after their airship crashed on the sea ice in Svalbard. Only a few small pieces from the plane have been found.

## Missing plane may stay a mystery

### AMUNDSEN, from page 1

New Zealand expedition leader with extensive experience on land and at sea in Earth's polar regions. In his blog of the trip, which along with other members' diaries are online at [www.searchforamundsen.com](http://www.searchforamundsen.com), he wrote he has "always had a love for polar history, rich as it is with tales of triumph and tragedy, success and failure, passion and cruelty."

"For my part this has spanned back a few months and several trips to Norway, but for others such as (retired Norwegian Air Force Maj. Gen.) Kjell Lutnes, this has been almost a decade in the making," McCallum wrote. "For all of us, Norwegian or New Zealander, filmmaker or mariner, technician or strategist, we

are about to embark on a bold initiative which provides the only opportunity to solve one of Norway's most enduring mysteries."

Amundsen, perhaps most noted for leading the first expedition to reach the South Pole in 1911, joined a rescue operation on June 18, 1918, after fellow explorer Umberto Nobile's airship *Italia* crashed due to harsh weather during its return voyage from the North Pole.

A Latham 47 seaplane carrying Amundsen and a team of four French Air Force pilots was among the rescue vehicles deployed. It is believed the plane crashed due to fog, with the plane possibly being unfit for the Arctic.

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

## Trash 'lottery' winners bag record prize

A record 154 cubic meters of trash was cleaned from north Spitsbergen beaches by winners of a lottery selected for the tenth annual summer cleanup, with officials declaring enough waste has now been removed an assessment is needed to determine if and when such efforts will continue in the future.

The haul during this year's five-and-a-half-day pickup along 35 kilometers of shore means a total of 951 cubic meters of trash have been removed by 257 volunteers along 310 kilometers of beaches.

"As in previous years, there is still waste from the fishing fleet, which dominates, with yarn balls, plastic metal cookware, fish boxes, plastic cans, and other household waste like bottles...plastic packaging and shoe soles," a



Volunteers bag waste from the north shore of Spitsbergen earlier this month.

statement by the Svalbard governor's office notes. There was also fishing-related waste such as trawler bags that have inadvertently trapped and killed reindeer.

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

## Crime down first half of 2009; cases resolved fast

Crime in Svalbard decreased 36 percent during the first half of 2009 compared to a year ago, due primarily to a drop in property thefts, according to the governor's office.

The governor's office investigated 35 crimes this year, down from 39 in 2008. The ratio of cases resolved relatively high with 60 percent of felonies and 90 percent of misdemeanors cleared compared to 35 percent and 81 percent, respectively, on mainland Norway.

Svalbard's time to resolve cases also compares well, with 41 days for felonies and 49 days for misdemeanors compared to 123 days and 101 days on the mainland.

One area of increase is traffic violations, likely due to increased enforcement, the governor's office notes.

Two significant incidents during the first half of 2009 involved Russian nationalities. The captain and first mate of the Russian cargo vessel *Petrozavodsk* were convicted of a total of four negligence-related charges when the ship ran aground on Bear Island.

The governor's office is also pursuing a case claiming the mining company Trust Arktikugol violated aviation regulations. The company was convicted, but is appealing the judgment.

## Dousing the midnight sun



The sun approaches the horizon in Barentsburg as the four-month polar summer comes to an end Aug. 23. Darkness comes quickly in Svalbard, with the polar night beginning Nov. 14.

## UNIS forum, seed vault part of Ban's trip

### U.N. VISIT, from page 1

they are constructive, help me improve my work, my performance."

Ban, who calls fighting climate change a top priority, is making the trip as part of a longer series of visits and meetings focusing on the issue before the annual General Assembly debate Sept. 23-26 in New York City and the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December.

The secretary-general will arrive in Oslo on Aug. 31 to meet with Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg and Støre, the foreign minister. He will also place a wreath on the tomb of Trygve Lie, the first secretary-general of the United Nations. He is scheduled to fly to Longyearbyen and be greeted by Svalbard Governor Per Sefland that evening, then depart for Ny-Ålesund aboard the *KV Svalbard* about an hour later.

Ban will visit research facilities in Ny-Ålesund, including the Korean Polar Research Station and Norwegian Zeppelin station, during the morning of Sept. 1. He will fly by helicopter to the research vessel *Lance* at the polar ice rim between 81 and 82 degrees north, spending the afternoon walking on the ice and

discussing climate-related issues. The day concludes with a return helicopter to Longyearbyen and dinner at the governor's residence.

A tour of the seed vault is scheduled the morning of Sept. 2, followed by a visit to the Svalbard Science Center and The University Centre in Svalbard. An hour-long panel discussion with government and NGO officials is scheduled at 10:15 a.m., with Ban departing Longyearbyen early in the afternoon.

Hard feelings from Juul's memo may be sufficiently smoothed over, but some of his concerns will likely surface during Ban's visit.

Juul's memo accused Ban of "constant outbursts of rage which even the most cautious and experienced staff find hard to tackle." The deputy was equally critical of Ban on a range of global issues, calling him a "powerless observer" during crises in Sri Lanka and Burma, and a missing presence on subjects such as the financial crisis and disarmament.

"In the environment/energy area the U.N. also struggles to be relevant, despite the planned climate summit at the opening of the General Assembly in the fall," Juul wrote.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM

**SVALBARDPOSTEN**

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

## Tourists behaving well in nature areas, inspectors say

People are behaving well in nature areas this summer, according to field inspectors with the Svalbard governor's office. The five officials inspected 42 boats with more than 500 tourists during a six-week period in response to an environmental violation involving a large expedition in an area limited to groups of 12 or less. The inspectors are also helping researchers with animal and vegetation observations, spotting 178 walrus and 31 polar bears.

## Children light fire under home; no damage reported

Two children, ages 7 and 10, who said they found matches and a lighter lit a fire Monday under the platform supporting a house at Blåmyra, officials said. The fire was extinguished without damage, but officials said the incident presented considerable danger. Playing under such platforms, which are common in Longyearbyen, is also being discouraged because of the danger presented by the technical installations under the homes.

## More reindeer hunting permits as season begins

A total of 344 people are being allowed to hunt one reindeer this year, 35 more than last year, with 132 taking hunting cards during opening weekend, the Svalbard governor's office reported Friday. Last year 191 reindeer were killed, the second-highest since totals have been tallied in 1983. Officials are conducting checks in hunting areas to ensure people have permits.

## Record number of students

A record 241 primary school students are enrolled at Longyearbyen School, 28 more than last year. Officials said they have increased staff and made some minor building changes to accommodate the increase.

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

### Wednesday

Intervals of clouds and sun. E winds at 8 km/h. High 2C (2C wind chill), low -1C (-2C wind chill).

### Thursday

Mostly sunny. SE winds at 4 km/h. High 2C (2C wind chill), low -1C (-2C wind chill).

### Friday

Mostly sunny. E winds at 6 km/h. High -1C (-1C wind chill), low -4C (-4C wind chill).

### Saturday

Chilly and sunny. ESE winds at 6 km/h. High -2C (-2C wind chill), low -6C (-9C wind chill).

**Extended forecast:** Sunday, cloudy and windy, 0C (-5C), -1C (-8C); Monday, rain and snow, 5C (5C), 2C (-1C); Tuesday, cloudy and a few flurries, 3C (-2C), 1C (-4C); Wednesday, cloudy, windy and overnight flurries, 2C (-2C), -1C (-8C).

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



Andrei Golovnev, above left, one of the leaders of the Northern Traveling Film Festival, films inside a house made of empty glass bottles during an Aug. 17 tour of Pyramiden as festival director Marina Yuzhaninova, right, watches. At right, Maxim Pavlov, vice director of the festival, unspools an old feature film amidst a pile of relics in the mining town's abandoned theater.

## Movies in some ways the least part of festival

### FILM, from page 1

the night. Or watching polar documentaries and action heroes fighting with clumsy bows and arrows, mostly in Russian without subtitles.

For those thinking this holds the enticement of rugged adventure rather than the ultimate real-life decent into miserabilism, this year's Northern Traveling Film Festival from Aug. 14-20 in Barentsburg and Pyramiden was the place to be.

"Here you have experimental adventure, science, culture," said Marina Yuzhaninova, the festival's director. "I think that is too avant-garde for the contemporary world."

The festival, founded in 2002, travels to numerous countries including Iceland, Canada, the United States and Finland. It debuted in the Russian settlements of Svalbard last year, with Yuzhaninova saying the stop remains "experimental."

Only about a dozen participants made the trip to Svalbard and they were advocates as much as spectators as discussions about reviving tourism, science and infrastructure in a uniquely restrictive political setting occupied much of the loosely scheduled agenda.

A day devoted to science, for example, saw local officials saying archeological efforts to establish Svalbard's first settlers are being stymied by the Norwegian government.

"Some areas are being destroyed by the sea," said Vadim F. Starkov, an archaeologist



who has been doing Svalbard excavations for more than 30 years, according to a translator during a group discussion. "In one or two years they will be destroyed and there will be no real proof they were here."

Tourism faces challenges because of limited facilities and a closed-money system where virtually all purchases beyond the Barentsburg Hotel require proprietary credit cards issued by the state-owned mining company Trust Arktikugol. A retail store in Barentsburg and refurbished hotel in Pyramiden are scheduled to opening during the next year.

The enormous challenge of rebuilding was clear at the movie theater in Pyramiden, where festival participants didn't watch historic movies so much as unravel them.

"The films are preserved better here than they are in a vault in Moscow," said Maxim Pavlov, vice director of the festival, holding strips up to the window overlooking the town and Nordenskiolden glacier across the bay.

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

## What's up

### Aug. 27

2 p.m.: Meeting of cultural and leisure enterprise board. Næringsbygget 1, "Tundra" room.

### Aug. 28

9 a.m.: Meeting of the board of enterprise growth. Næringsbygget 1, "Tundra" room.

### Aug. 29-30

Large-item and outdoor trash cleanup. Items should be set by roadside for pickup. Industrial waste should be disposed of normally at the waste plant. For information call 930 41 110.

### Aug. 30

7 p.m.: Movie: "Harry And The Half-Blood Prince," British adventure/family, ages 11 and up. Huset.

### Sept. 3

6 p.m.: Activity Fair. Information about activities offered for kids, students and adults by various organizations in Longyearbyen. Svalbardhallen.

### Sept. 6

6 p.m.: Movie: "Ice Age 3: Dawn of the Dinosaurs," U.S. family, ages 7 and up. Huset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "The Hauntings In Connecticut," U.S. thriller/horror, ages 15 and up. Huset.

### Sept. 7

10:15 a.m.: Meeting of the environment and industry committee, Næringsbygget 1, "Tundra" room.

### Sept. 8

10 a.m.: Meeting of the management committee, Næringsbygget 1, "Tundra" room.

### Sept. 13

8 p.m.: Movie: "Hangover," U.S. comedy, ages 15 and up. Huset.

### Sept. 22

7 p.m.: Local government board meeting. Mediateket.

## 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:

- *Store Noske seeks Svalbard gold rush*
- *Svalbard governor wants heavy oil ban*
- *AMASEing Arctic rove tests Mars gear*
- *Methane gas seeps from area's seabed*