



# Stable in the chaos

Global coverage predicting huge changes after Norway's election says nothing about Svalbard

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

Perhaps it's telling that in the mass of national and international post-election coverage, the words "Svalbard," "Spitsbergen" and "Longyearbyen" are nowhere to be found.

Possible changes to immigration policy? Not applicable here. Tax cuts? We're already on a different, lower-rate system. Privatizing Store Norske? Not likely anytime soon.

"It doesn't affect us locally," said Birger Amundsen, editor of *Svalbardposten*, which didn't run any election articles the week before or following the Nov. 9 vote that resulted in a new conservative-led Parliament.

Much of the reason, he said, is the current Labor-led government will submit the budget for the next year before Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg steps down next month. Also, while privatization is a large part of the incoming government's platform, entities like Statoil will dominate leaders' attention instead of relatively small companies such as Store Norske.

International headlines tended to focus on  
**See CHANGES page 3**



ELVAR ØRN KJARTANSSON / NORWEGIAN POLAR INSTITUTE

Scientists observe the ice change on Kronebreen this spring as part of a long-term study of its trend.

# 'Dummy!' 'Stinkyhead!'

Climate debate degrades to playground dialect with new ice report

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

At least this round of the climate debate isn't getting bogged down in scientific jargon.

"And now it's global COOLING!" screams a banner headline in the *Daily Mail* of London, gleefully exposing the global warming hoax by reporting the Arctic ice cap has grown 60 percent since last August. *Forbes* called the development "terrifying" for climate change alarmists desperate to push their junk science.

Um, yeah, except you idiots are exaggerating the figure and saying decades of shrinkage ought to be ignored because it was a bit chillier this year, is the retort of newspapers known for

**See TAUNTS, page 4**

## MEDIA MELTDOWN

Headlines from the latest climate fight:

- *Telegraph*: "Now it's global COOLING!"
- *Forbes*: "Terrifying Flat Global Temperature Crisis Threatens To Disrupt U.N. Climate Conference Agenda"
- *Guardian*: "Arctic sea ice delusions strike the *Mail* on Sunday and *Telegraph*"
- *Telegraph*: "Arctic ice melt IS a problem because Right-wing newspapers smell, explains *Guardian*"

## Inside

<b>Rainbow pride colors Barentsburg</b>	Page 2
<b>Headlines from <i>Svalbardposten</i></b>	
- Operafjellet mine proposal meets objections	
- Apartments get solar panels for test project	
- SAS to add flights on Tuesdays this winter	Page 3
<b>Weather forecast</b>	Page 3
<b>Events calendar</b>	Page 4

# Yet another tragedy shuts mine

Man's crushed leg comes after two deaths in Barentsburg due to 'unacceptable' safety conditions

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

Barentsburg's coal mine, already partially closed due to two deaths resulting from 'totally unacceptable' safety conditions, was fully shut down again by officials Tuesday after a man's leg was crushed in an accident.

The Ukrainian man in his 50s was working in a manufacturing area deep inside the mine  
**See BARENTSBURG, page 4**



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

A bulldozer collects coal from a pile processed at Barentsburg's mine in May. The mine is closed this week while officials investigate the third major accident involving injury or death this year.

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

### Editor

Mark Sabbatini

### Principal of principles

Kristan Hutchison

### Psychiatrist

Irene Gallion

### Accomplice

Jeff Newsom

### 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.

## It gets better for a day in Barentsburg



COURTESY OF QUEER.DE

A rainbow flag flies from the road entrance sign to Barentsburg, top left, after being attached there by a visitor identified only as "Martin" in August. The German student distributed other pro-gay memorabilia, plus calls for a boycott of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, throughout the Russian mining settlement as a "creative protest" to the country's new law making homosexual "propaganda" illegal, according to the website queer.de. "Some local people have looked at me funny and began to call," but nobody halted his efforts, he said. "As for the political impact, Barentsburg plays a very important geo-strategic role for Russia and the action could, if photos are circulating through the Internet, receive much attention (from people) in Russia."

## Icesheet

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

Our never-ending fetish for polar bear porn gets another stimulus this week as **one of Svalbard's most famous "circle of life" shots is featured in a new book "bringing together the work of 10 of the world's greatest wildlife photographers for the first time,"** according to *The Huffington Post*. "The Masters of Nature Photography," scheduled for release Sept. 19 by the Natural History Museum of London, features ten photos each from past winners of the Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition. Svalbard's chapter of glory comes from Pal Hermansen, whose panoramic "Ice Formation" photo of a polar bear dining on a seal brings artistic grace to everything from art galleries to book covers to computer wallpaper (ours, at least). Hermansen, in his narrative of the 2005 photo, writes "I have met many polar bears in the vast, icy Arctic landscapes. But this bear was in the most breathtaking setting I had ever seen. Our small expedition vessel got as close as 15 metres from its breakfast table. But rather than a closeup, I wanted to show the bear within the whole, magnificent scene ... It's a picture that can be interpreted in many ways. When it was made, the timing was perfect to highlight the latest news about the effects of climate change in the Arctic: less summer ice forces the bears to hunt where they find ice – along the edge of glaciers. But it also illustrates the interaction between landscape and animal, as well as the



PAL HERMANSEN

**Because this is a family newspaper, we're running this really, really small.** And you can tell young kids the bear is eating strawberry jam.

harshness of nature and the food chain." For hapless photogs like us, it even throws in the technical specs: a Canon EOS-1Ds Mk II with a 28-300mm lens, shot at 1/250 sec at f9 with an ISO of 320, with two frames stitched ... And here's a lesson about why we gratuitously use phrases like "polar bear porn." Put the headline "Annual Symposium of Vertebrate Palaeontology and Comparative Anatomy" on something and any readers not left comatose will likely revolt violently (not that we might not enjoy that). So *National Geographic*, in its ongoing breathless blog about Jørn Hurum's dino dig in Svalbard, is referring to the event as "the Paleontology Super Bowl." The three-day meeting in Edinburgh is "open to everyone interested in prehistoric, backboned life. Why only animals with backbones? Because these are all made out of the same blueprint, originating from fish." That, of course, ties into Hurum's giant sea reptiles. The play-by-play is at [tinyurl.com/nh6wn2h](http://tinyurl.com/nh6wn2h).

*This is just the 'warm-up'*



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Kayakers in 23 boats paddle out from the starting line of this year's Quadraton on a windy and chilly Saturday morning. The 23 entrants, either individuals or in teams of up to three people, competed in a 5K paddle, 6K run, 13K bicycle and 100-meter target shoot. Trond Espen Haug won the race with a total time of 1:40:48, followed by Kjetil Slettnes at 1:42:46.

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM  
**SVALBARDPOSTEN**  
VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

**Proposal for coal mining on Operafjellet meets objections**

A proposal by a rival company to begin coal mining on Operafjellet is encountering opposition from Store Norske which is declining to give up its mineral rights on the mountain. The mine, whose hires would include Store Norske workers who have been laid off, would boost Longyearbyen's economy as coal supplies at other sites continue to decline, according an attorney for Austre Adventfjord AS, who detailed the proposal in a July 3 letter to Store Norske. Henning Horn, whose family acquired about 215,000 acres of mountainous area near Longyearbyen in 1937, is looking to develop the property with investor Ole Einar Gjerde. A cooperative agreement to extract coal from Operafjellet was reached with Store Norske in 1976, but it expired in 2000. Store Norske Administrative Director Per Andersson said the company may now be interested in future mining from where it holds rights, but such a project from any entity will likely take years to plan and encounter opposition from officials with environmental concerns.

**Two apartments getting solar panels as part of test project**

Two new apartment buildings at Elvesletta are getting solar panels installed on their roofs as part of a pilot project initiated by LNS Spitsbergen. "The studies we have done show that the sun is fairly evenly spread out throughout the day when it is bright here," said Espen Johannesen, whose Narvik company Solbes is responsible for planning the project. Solar panels are also being installed on residential buildings in Svea. The 1.3 million kroner project, which supporters say they hope will result in lower electricity bills for residents, received a 400,000 kroner grant from the Svalbard Environmental Protection Fund.

**SAS adds flight on Tuesdays**

Scandinavian Airlines is expanding its flights between Longyearbyen and Tromsø to include Tuesdays this winter, leaving Saturday as the lone day when no airline flies to the mainland. SAS flies on Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays, while Norwegian Air flies to Oslo on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

**Election unlikely to affect Svalbard**

**CHANGES, from page 1**

"Norway's disturbing lurch to the right," as a headline in the *Guardian* of London put it, since the Progress Party is poised to become the second largest in the new four-party ruling coalition. The party, which is strongly anti-immigration, has seen its reputation tainted because convicted mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik is a former member.

But it's unknown to what extent the Progress Party, which received 16.3 percent of the vote this year compared to 22.9 percent in the last election in 2009, will influence new Prime Minister Erna Solberg of the Conservative Party. Even if the Progress Party is successful during what are expected to be tough coalition talks, any immigration changes will almost certainly not apply to the Svalbard Treaty, which allows citizens of participating nations to live and work here freely.

Similarly, the Progress Party the only one differing from a policy of annual government spending tapping less than four percent of the country's oil fund, in keeping with the fund's long-term investment returns. But the source of government funding and its possible implications on Norway's 28 percent tax rate wouldn't apply to Svalbard, which has a 16 percent tax rate and is exempt from the country's value-added tax.

An increase in Svalbard's tax rate was implemented the last time Conservatives were in power more than a decade ago, but it was repealed in 2007 and local political leaders have said a similar increase is unlikely this time.

The closest Svalbard gets to a mention in Norway's election coverage is a mention by Henrik Ramm, a petroleum strategic advisor. He notes carbon capture and storage "is important for the future of Norwegian gas to the European market ... (but) a test facility in Mongstad test center is too expensive compared with other countries and a similar project at The University Centre in Svalbard is meaningless for mainland comparisons.

"Liberals and Christian Democrats talked mostly about a new coal power plant in Svalbard and industrial projects in Greenland, but the drawback with these is that we do not get demonstrated CCS for gas, which is highly important for Norway, preferably for new gas power plants," he wrote. "Svalbard work is also too small to be counted as full-scale internationally."

Foreign policy, a potentially important issue for Svalbard, "is traditionally the topic that has strongest consensus among all parties in the Parliament," the *Barents Observer* noted.

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

**Weather forecast for Longyearbyen**

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Rain. NE winds to 42 km/h. High 4C (1C wind chill), low 1C (-3C wind chill).	Rain. SE winds to 35 km/h. High 6C (1C wind chill), low 0C (-4C wind chill).	Rain. SE winds to 52 km/h. High 7C (1C wind chill), low 5C (1C wind chill).	Rain/partly cloudy. NW winds to 45 km/h. High 7C (4C wind chill), low 5C (2C wind chill).
Sunrise: 5:07a, sunset: 8:36p	Sunrise: 5:15a, sunset: 8:27p	Sunrise: 5:23a, sunset: 8:19p	Sunrise: 5:30a, sunset: 8:11p
<b>Extended forecast:</b> Sunday, p. cloudy, 4C (-3C), 2C (-1C), light 14:25h; Monday, cloudy, 5C (-1C), 2C (-3C), light 14:09h; Tuesday, cloudy, 6C (0C), 5C (-2C), light 13:54h; Wednesday, rain, 7C (3C), 6C (1C), light 13:39h			

Data provided by storm.no



DAILY MAIL ONLINE FACSIMILE

A chart in the Sunday issue of the *Daily Mail* of London uses satellite photos from the U.S. National Snow and Ice Data Center to show the increase in the size of the Arctic ice sheet during the past year.

## More ice leads to media meltdown

**TAUNTS, from page 1**

quoting those climate scientists at length.

The meltdown stems from a report by the U.S. National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) stating the Arctic ice sheet grew 45 percent – not 65 percent – between August of 2012 and August of 2013. But, the report noted, it remained hundreds of thousands of square miles below the long-term average.

Articles in the Sunday editions of the *Daily Mail* and *The Telegraph* of London, both considered politically conservative, openly mocked predictions such as a BBC report six years ago stating "global warming would leave the Arctic ice-free in summer by 2013."

"Some eminent scientists now believe the world is heading for a period of cooling that will not end until the middle of this century – a process that would expose computer forecasts of imminent catastrophic warming as dangerously misleading," the *Daily Mail* reported.

The rejoicing of climate change skeptics worldwide was challenged by London's left-leaning *The Guardian* in a rebuttal headlined "Arctic sea ice delusions strike the *Mail* on Sunday and *Telegraph*."

"These two articles ... continue the unfor-

tunate trend of shoddy climate reporting in the two periodicals," wrote Dana Nuccitelli, an environmental scientist who regularly writes for the *Guardian*. "They suffer from cherry picking short-term data while ignoring the long-term human-caused trends, misrepresenting climate research, repeating long-debunked myths, and inventing IPCC meetings despite being told by climate scientists that these claims are pure fiction."

That, combined with supportive comments from readers, led to a rapid descent in the level of dialect.

"Arctic ice melt IS a problem because Right-wing newspapers smell, explains *Guardian* climate expert," the *Telegraph's* James Delingpole replied Monday.

"So there you have it: all this wicked denialist nonsense about Arctic sea ice may be trivially true but if you take this 'factoid' seriously then basically you're a lying greed-capitalist Nazi sympathiser who was tacitly responsible for a *Guardian* reader's uncle getting his legs blown off – and you're also a complete idiot because you're (probably) not a climate scientist."

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

## Five deaths, two major injuries since 2008

**BARENTSBURG, from page 1**

when the accident occurred, according to a statement by the Svalbard governor's office. Barentsburg officials notified the governor's office at about 5:30 a.m. that the man had been taken to the hospital in the Russian settlement. He was flown shortly afterward to Longyearbyen Hospital before being transferred to Tromsø later in the day.

"He has been caught between a machine and a belt," said Frede Lamo, a police lieutenant with the governor's office, in an interview with *Nordlys*. "Both of his legs were trapped, but only one of them has been injured."

The cause of the accident is being investigated by the governor's office and Norwegian Labor Inspectorate, with the mine remaining fully closed until the probe is completed.

The accident is the latest in a string of serious incidents since the mine reopened in late 2010, after being shut for more than two years

due to a fire that killed three men.

A Ukrainian man in his 30s was killed in April when he was hit by a boulder, while a 27-year-old Ukrainian man died in June after he was caught in an avalanche in a ventilation shaft. Another miner lost his arm in an accident in May of 2012.

A Labor Inspectorate audit following the fatality this June offered blistering criticism of Trust Arkikugol, the Russian state-owned company that operates the mine, declaring working conditions and the mentality of uncooperative management unacceptable.

"In summary, we have evidence that Trust Arkikugol so far has not been able to operate this mine in an adequate preventive systematic way with respect to health, safety, and security for workers, which the labor law requires," the audit states.

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

## What's up

### Sept. 11

6 p.m.: Movie: "Mormor og de Åtte Ungene," Norwegian family film, all ages. Kulturhuset.

### Sept. 12

8 a.m.: Ten-week yoga class begins. Sign up by contacting [kathrin@fjellpust.no](mailto:kathrin@fjellpust.no) or sending an SMS to 9301 2183. Kulturhuset.

10 a.m.: Bydrift board meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

### Sept. 13-14

10 p.m.: Blues concerts featuring Malvin Nøsen & The Company. Barentz Pub.

### Sept. 14

1 p.m.: Relay race to kick off local events for annual NRK auction, with proceeds this year benefiting dementia prevention. Five-stage, mixed-sex teams. Prizes in competitive, costume and other categories. Entry fee 2,000 kr. for businesses, 1,000 kr. for other teams. Begins at Svalbardbutikken. Registration and inquiries at [post@svalbardturn.no](mailto:post@svalbardturn.no).

### Sept. 15

11 a.m.: Mass with confirmations. Svalbard Church.

6 p.m.: Movie: "Mormor og de Åtte Ungene," Norwegian family film, all ages. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Pornopung," Norwegian drama/comedy, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Sept. 16

2 p.m.: Environmental and Industrial Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

8 p.m.: Trivia quiz. Barentz Pub.

### Sept. 17

1 p.m.: Administration Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

7 p.m.: Interview of *Svalbardposten* Editor Birger Amundsen by Priest Leif Magne Helgesen. Svalbard Church.

## 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:

- *Drones studying ice melt across Arctic*
- *Climate change's link to Syria's war*
- *U.N.: Sami hurt by mining's impact*
- *Meet 'the Austin Powers of the Arctic'*