



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Dignitaries including Svalbard Gov. Odd Olsen Ingerø, center right, shield themselves from glass fragments as Inger Aarvaag Stokke, a senior advisor for Norway's Minister of Justice and Public Security, christens the governor's new service vessel *Polarsysse* on Saturday in Longyearbyen.

Ship faced

Governor's new service vessel remarkably steady while getting plastered on voyage to Svalbard

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Getting caught in a severe storm at sea usually isn't much fun, but for Kjetil Enoksen the voyage offered an unprecedented thrill.

The captain of the *Polarsysse*, the new
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Bearly a cub, deer

Researchers wins spoof Nobel for Svalbard project showing reindeer fear costumed humans

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

A suggested question for a follow-up study: Were the reindeer spooked by what they thought was a polar bear or because they were being approached by a lunatic resembling the Slasher Movie Demon From Hell?

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M. KARDEL / UNIVERSITY OF OLSO

Sindre Eftestøl, right, wraps the final part of a supposed polar bear costume around Eigil Reimers during their award-winning experiment in Svalbard to determine if reindeer react differently to humans dressed normally compared to those vaguely resembling the fearsome predators.

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New dorms nicer, but better?

For some, modern rooms, huge kitchens and short walk to UNIS don't offer a sense of living large

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

The new kitchens are really big and nice. Maybe too much so.

Students moving into the new dormitory building at The University Centre in Svalbard are voicing mixed opinions about how it compares to the old housing buildings in Nybyen

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MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Students indulge in free food and drinks in one of the common kitchens during the official opening of the new dormitory at The University Centre in Svalbard on Monday.

Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

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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.

Getting the runs so others don't



Runners in firefighter, surgical and other outfits, above, begin the first leg of a relay race in the center of Longyearbyen on Saturday that also marks the start of a month of fundraising activities for the annual NRK charity telethon. At right, Bjørg Marie Vabø carries a hydration bag for "patient" Henriette Jensen during the race. Funds from this year's telethon are being donated to Norwegian Church Aid for its efforts to improve access to clean water and safe sanitation facilities in several African and Asian countries. More details about telethon activities and the sanitation project are available at www.nrk.no/traksjonen. Photos by Mark Sabbatini / Icepeople.



Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

The competition to be the Dumbest Svalbard Tourist Captured on Film that suddenly appeared this year has a new entrant as the trailer for the new documentary "Bjørnøya," about three brothers who spend two months on the island equipped only with essential survival gear like surfboards, is now available online for mocking (<http://vimeo.com/104900828>). Seeking to Surf Where No Man Has Surfed Before, the trio nonetheless manages to capture plenty of cheesy clichéd moments including an "I'm king of the world!" type howler on the boat voyage up. Ultimately, of course, the film scheduled for release Oct. 24 is all about X-Tremes, including hungrily eyeing the waves hitting the shore after they manage to navigate past all the huge rocks in the way. Of course, it's also possible our derisive remarks are simply an indicator we're what seems to be the film's target audience: "There are probably none other than these three that



TURBIN FILMS AS

We're guessing reindeer might flee from this guy, too: But at least there's the limitless punchlines one can get from "So a surfer and a guy in a polar bear costume walk into a ..."

are ever going to surf on Bjørnøya," said Even Benestad, a consultant for the documentary. "The life these three brothers live I think is a life many would want to live – not just here in Norway, but in many parts of the world." ... And since this week's theme is scary things at sea, *National Geographic* is at it again with their efforts to make science cool for the easily distracted crowd. In their latest "Sea Monsters of the North" series, this time with the subhed "Here be dragons!" (because, of course, they've been A Thing lately), writer David Braun interviews Svalbard's leading lizard man Jørn Hurum about his summer expedition to seek out fossils from the Triassic Era (tinyurl.com/k8eet5w). There's not much actual information Hurum and his students haven't already documented in the expedition's official blog. But it's a great chance to see more fearsome pictures depicting what everyday life in Svalbard was like in the good ol' days and for bitter middle-age types to be reminded he's not "among the bitter 40-year-olds (who) did not try."



TOR SPONGA / BERGEN TIDENDE

The decline of Svalbard's cruise tourism: We guarantee nobody saw anything nearly this cool during their voyages around the island this year.



Visitors try out the captain's chairs and inspect the navigation equipment, above, during an open house Monday aboard the *Polarsysssel*. At right, dozens of residents gather around the new ship, which stacks its living facilities at the bow, during its christening Friday. Photos by Mark Sabbatini / Icepeople.



New ship takes crew by storm

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service vessel for The Governor of Svalbard, said the crew encountered high seas and strong winds during the most of the voyage from Tromsø to Longyearbyen last week. But he said the ship held up remarkably well.

"A supply vessel of this type will normally roll heavily when hit by waves from the side, but the *Polarsysssel* behaved in an exemplary manner, was stable in its course, and made us feel comfortable with low noise and vibrations," he said. "Even when heading straight into the storm, she rose to the challenge and we hardly felt any slamming. I have never experienced anything like this ship and I look forward to operating this vessel in the time ahead."

Enoksen and other crew members joined dignitaries and dozens of local residents for a ceremony christening the ship Friday at the old pier in Longyearbyen.

"Today we have gotten a brand new ship with all the amenities," said Svalbard Gov. Odd Olsen Ingerø. "A ship that we can use to

monitor the rugged coast around Svalbard. A ship that will work in cooperation with helicopters and advanced rescue equipment when accidents happen."

The 3,700-ton vessel, 89 meters long and 18 meters wide, allocates the rear three-quarters of the vessel to a portable helicopter landing pad capable of accommodating the governor's new Super Puma helicopters, a towing winch and other equipment. The living facilities in the towering bow include cabins for nine crew members and 21 passengers, space for 35 day passengers, a large lounge with a separate theater, and a well-equipped sickbay.

The *Polarsysssel*, the first of its type from Norwegian shipbuilder Havyard Design & Solutions, also includes modifications making it an ice-class vessel, infrared and optical cameras to search for people and environmental discharges, advanced oil-removal equipment, and twin water cannons that can extinguish fires up to 120 meters away.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Delays in upgrading street safety for kids vexes parents

Frustration the city has still not made promised safety improvements on streets used by children walking and biking to school are being voiced by a parents' group. "We were promised signs with 30-km/h zones and crosswalks last year," said Kine Bakkeli, a member of Parents' Council Working Committee for Longyearbyen School. When students were at one of the busiest crossings at Vei 500 last week, there were no white stripes on the street, two crooked alert signs and a 50 km/h speed limit was still in effect. Marianne Aasen, head of the city's infrastructure agency, said that while the improvements were approved by the Longyearbyen Community Council last year, financial and practical considerations means the work cannot be done immediately. New signs, for example, cannot be put up until the ground has sufficiently frozen because "otherwise they just fall down," she said.

Seabed mappers discover hundreds of new shallows

Newly updated nautical charts for Isfjorden and Isfjordrenna show new shallows potentially hazardous for mariners exist between Adventfjorden and Barentsburg. The maps, released electronically in June and in print Sept. 8, are based on surveying conducted last summer by The Norwegian Mapping Authority. Measurements conducted this summer in Diksonfjorden and Ekmanfjorden revealed about 300 new shallows, but Kjetil Wirak, an official in the agency's map production section, said there is no guarantee new maps will be issued. "New shallows we find we report at that time in notices to mariners," he said. Mariners on commercial vessels are required to monitor updates and recreational users can access the data.

Nordstjernen returning in '15

The *Nordstjernen*, which supposedly docked for the last time in Svalbard in 2012, will return to Longyearbyen next summer with twice-weekly tour voyages. Hilde Fåln Strøm, cruise projects manager for Spitsbergen Travel, said the company decided it preferred the older vessel because of its history, and because it offers a simpler and more unique experience than typical modern ships with more amenities.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Cloudy. S winds to 29 km/h. High 5C (2C wind chill), low 1C (-3C wind chill).	Cloudy. Variable winds to 32 km/h. High 1C (-3C wind chill), low -3C (-8C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. NE winds to 32 km/h. High 1C (-3C wind chill), low -1C (-4C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. N winds to 29 km/h. High -1C (-5C wind chill), low -3C (-8C wind chill).
Sunrise 6:46a; sunset 6:53p	Sunrise 6:53a; sunset 6:44p	Sunrise 7a; sunset 6:36p	Sunrise 7:07a; sunset 6:28p
Extended forecast: Sunday, cloudy, -3C (-8C), -5C (-9C), light 11:05h; Monday, snow, -4C (-9C), -6C (-11C), light 10:50h; Tuesday, cloudy, -4C (9C), -8C (-15C), light 10:35h; Wednesday, cloudy, -4C (-12C), -7C (-14C), light 10:20h			

Data provided by storm.no



BRIAN SNYDER / SCANPIX

Egil Reimers, left at podium, and Sindre Eftestøl, accept the parodic Ig Nobel Prize for Arctic Science during the awards ceremony Thursday at Harvard University. Their Svalbard research project found reindeer react to seeing humans who are disguised as polar bears

Satirical Nobels also serious science

IGNOBLE, from page 1

That unanswered question wasn't enough to stop Egil Reimers and Sindre Eftestøl from being among this year's winners of an international science prize that cherishes projects like "stopping nosebleeds with pork" and "Seeing Jesus in Toast."

The University of Oslo researchers won the Ig Nobel Prize for Arctic Science for studying if Svalbard's reindeer react differently to humans when they're dressed in polar bear costumes. While the awards presented Sept. 19 by Harvard University are largely satirical, many of the projects produce practical results beyond the healing power of laughter.

In the case of the reindeer study, Reimers and Eftestøl found the distances where the animals showed fear, retreated and fled were, respectively, 1.6, 2.5 and 2.3 times greater when a person was wearing a polar bear costume in-

stead of normal hiking clothing.

In a larger context, the researchers said it appears the reindeer are becoming more alarmed by the presence of polar bears as the shrinking Arctic sea ice means interactions with the predators are becoming more common. They note deer are slower to flee from bears at Nordenskiöld, where the density of the predators is lower.

The researchers, in a prepared statement, said they are hoping to do several more expeditions to test the reindeer's reaction in a wider range of areas with bears.

"We also would like to have done the study with a more realistic polar bear disguise," Reimers said.

This year's Ig Nobel winners can be seen at <http://www.improbable.com/ig/2014>.

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

New UNIS dorms fancier, but not

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still in use. While the newer building has more modern furnishings and space – not to mention being across the street from UNIS instead of a three-kilometer walk – it also lacks communal areas other than the kitchens, so there's no place to lounge on couches to watch TV and participate in other leisure activities.

"It's not comfortable to sit here in the evening," said Jannik Martens, 22, a student from Germany, during a reception in one of the new communal kitchens Monday celebrating the official opening of the dorm. Instead, he said he usually gets together with friends at pubs and similar establishments in town.

The three-story building, which UNIS calls a hostel, has 88 single rooms, 64 of them with private bathrooms. The common kitchen on each floor, which has a large-screen TV at one end of the long room, are designed to be shared by up to 30 students.

Monthly rent for a dorm with a private bathroom is 4,600 kroner, including electricity, cable TV and internet, compared to 3,900 kroner for housing in Nybyen. But several stu-

dents students living in the older housing cited reasons other than costs – including the long daily commute – for wanting to remain there.

"It's nice to get up in the morning and walk down," said Chris van Diemen, 25, a student from Holland, although he acknowledged that might change during severe winter storms.

The decision not to put common living areas in the new dorm came after students in Tromsø overwhelmingly expressed a preference for better kitchens instead of leisure space, said Leif Tore Hanssen, property manager for The Arctic Student Welfare Organization of Norway, which owns and operates the building.

"Only one, two, three people out of 100 wanted it," he said. "We had limited money, so we spent it on a better kitchen."

In addition, the building's limited size would have meant scaling down the kitchen even if money wasn't a factor, Hanssen said.

The organization is hoping to build two more similar buildings near UNIS, allowing all students to be housed there.

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

What's up

Sept. 24

6 p.m.: Movie: "The Maze Runner," U.S. sci-fi/thriller, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

Sept. 25-27

Oktoberfest, featuring live music, beer tastings, a day cruise to Pyramiden and other activities. Full schedule available at tinyurl.com/m2lqpfb.

Sept. 26

6 p.m.-midnight: Conversion party. Juniors 6-8 p.m., Seniors (kl. 8-9) 8:30-11 p.m., Seniors (kl. 10 to age 18) 8:30 p.m.-midnight. Longyearbyen Youth Club.

Sept. 28

11 a.m.: Mass with presentation of candidates for Confirmation. Svalbard Church.

5 p.m.: Movie: "Torden & Magi," Belgian animated/family film dubbed in Norwegian, all ages. Kulturhuset.

7 p.m.: Movie: "Two Days, One Night," Belgian drama, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

Sept. 29

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

Sept. 30

7 p.m.: Evening Mass and fireplace social. Svalbard Church.

Oct. 1

Deadline for registration for Confirmation through the The Norwegian Humanist Association. Classes begin in January, with the ceremony on Aug. 4. More details at www.human.no.

6 p.m.: Movie: "Frank Miller's Sin City: A Dame to Kill For," U.S. action ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

Oct. 2

8 p.m.: Book debut: "Røde Robert Hermansen. Redningsmann og Syndebukk," profiling the controversial former Store Norske administrative director. Hermansen and author Otto Ulseth will be interviewed by Arne Holm. 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:

- *311K at record climate march in NYC*
- *Russian jets 'invade' N. American Arctic*
- *Antarctic sea ice's new high: bad news?*
- *Police arrest polar bear at climate march*