



Taking a shot at rabies

Vaccinations arrive for majority of Svalbard's population; traps for foxes deployed in Longyearbyen

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

Cathrin Aamodt Pedersen isn't worried her daughter, Sunna, 3, might be infected with rabies after going on a hunting trip. But like many residents there's no hesitation taking precautions from the potentially fatal disease.

"It's not really a concern, but when you know the outcome it's stupid not to do it," Pedersen said while holding her daughter for a vaccination today at Longyearbyen School.

About 270 shots were administered early this week and a total of 1,350 have been ordered for Svalbard's estimated 2,500 residents. The shots are being administered only to those considered at risk, but Aksel Bilicz, a doctor at Longyearbyen Hospital, said he expects demand to meet supply and "perhaps even a little bit more."

The first outbreak of rabies since 1980 in
See PREVENTION, page 4



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Sunna Aamodt Pedersen, 3, held by her mother, Cathrin, gets a rabies vaccination from Sigrun Aase Holen today at Longyearbyen School. A total of 1,350 vaccinations are being offered by officials to Svalbard residents who are hunters, dog owners or otherwise at risk of infection.



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Roy Albrigtsen discusses returning the local Progress Party to Longyearbyen's city council.

Seeking a return from exile

Progress Party tries to rejoin council by urging more local control and fewer regulations

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

Last time the Progress Party didn't even get a member on Longyearbyen's city council after receiving less than five percent of the

vote. This time the candidates are hoping a possible rise to the top of the national political scene helps them fare better locally.

Their rosy scenario also envisions more local control of policies, fewer restrictions on mining and other resource development, and significant upgrades to water as well as power facilities to ensure a reliable supply.

After being out of power, they won't be
See ELECTION, page 3

Living alone, but with the world

Foreigners dominate Svalbard's growing population; one-person homes higher than mainland

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

A haven of swinging singles with foreign accents. Now *that's* a marketing pitch.

Svalbard's constantly fluctuating population increased by 145 people during the first half of 2011, with two-thirds of them coming from other countries, according to Statistics Norway. The total population in the archipelago was 2,539 as of July 1.

"Thais (are) the largest group of foreigners, with 103 residents," a report from the agency states. "Swedes follow with 75 and Russians with 36 residents. Previously there were more Germans than Russians, but the number of Russians has risen slightly every year."

Women are the majority among residents from Thailand, Russia and the Philippines, with men higher among the rest of the foreigners.

There are 2,104 residents in Norwegian settlements, up from 2,017 at the beginning of the year. A total of 363 have come from abroad

See POPULATION, page 2

Inside

Utopia/dystopia art exhibit debuts	Page 3
Headlines from Svalbardposten	
- Prosecutors: 3 years in prison for Hermansen	
- Mork gets surprise Kings Medal of Merit	
- Speed-limit checks catch three motorists	Page 3
Weather forecast	Page 3
Events calendar	Page 4

Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

Editor

Mark Sabbatini

Staff writer/photographer

Karla Paz

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.



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Torunn Winsnes, far right, teaches a Norwegian class to foreign residents from more than 10 countries today at Longyearbyen School. The classes are offered free during the academic year.

Singles scene thrives in Svalbard

POPULATION, from page 1

and now make up 17 percent of the population, compared to 14 percent on Jan. 1, 2009.

The population in the Russian community of Barentsburg reversed its steep long-term decline, increasing to 425 residents from 370 at the beginning of the year. But that is still 24 fewer than as of July 1 a year ago.

Residents stay an average of about six years in Svalbard, lured temporarily by higher than average wages, university and scientific studies, and other Arctic-related factors. That also means they tend to be more independent.

"The biggest difference between Svalbard and mainland Norway is that it is common to live alone in the Norwegian settlements on Svalbard," Statistic Norway states. "Over 50 percent of households in Svalbard consist of one person, compared with 40 percent in mainland Norway."

A small elderly population means there are few widows and widowers in Svalbard, making singles "a significant proportion" of the total, the report notes.

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

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

We figured we'd see some new colors in logos and whatnot when AF Gruppen took over for LNSS at Svea, but pink wasn't one of them. But a huge metal platform (a *strossa*, whatever that is) will be adding a touch of blush to that harsh mining operation later this summer. It has nothing to do with the new subcontractor having effeminate tastes (not that there's anything wrong with that), but rather a clerical mishap. Two numbers specifying color were reversed on the order form, which went unnoticed until it was built. "This is probably the only pink *strossa* ever produced," Mine Manager Per Nilssen told *Svalbardposten*. "We can use it to signify that we miners also have soft sides." ... It was a big weekend in sports as the locals finished second in a national tournament in the all-encompassing game of kayak polo. The Svalbard Polarstars reached the finale in the nine-team Giro de Puddefjorden in Bergen, only to be defeated 5-2 by Larvik PK-1. Paddling.no notes the players "then changed their name to the Svalbard Silverstars." ... This week's "poll if we had one" question: Is any-



body digging the free Wake-Up Light they got from Philips out of the closet as the dark season approaches? The company is back in full PR mode, using the videos and other material from last year to promote a 21-day global trial on social media. So far all of the commenters are remarkably like-minded on the greatness of the device (rated "don't buy this" by *Smart*

Money) since, of course, there's no chance Philips would resort to shills ... Speaking of "remember this," the Boeing 787 Dreamliner that generated some excitement when our local airport was selected as a test landing site finally went into commercial service this week after years of embarrassing delays that made it known as the "Murphy's Law of airplanes" (early non-shill reviews seem to be positive) ... Finally, we might as well do a Prince Harry update since we're in retro mode. He's moved up – way up – from polar swims and his North Pole trek this spring, breaking the world record for the largest foreign currency trade this month at 18 billion euros between Barclays London and a European counterpart. His hefty commission went to charity.

'Dystopian slapstick'



COURTESY OF THOMAS RUMMELHOFF

Thomas Rummelhoff's oil-on-canvas painting "When You Took Mother For a Joyride" is part of the exhibit "Polarize" debuting Thursday at Galleri Svalbard. Rummelhoff's collection is inspired by a visit last year to Pyramiden, describing it as a utopia that after years of decay "has been transformed into a materialization of dystopia. Yet there is something appealing in the crumbling structures in the scenic landscape." The exhibit is on display until Oct. 28.

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Prosecutors seek nearly three years in jail for Hermansen

Prosecutors are seeking a prison sentence of two years and eight months for Robert Hermansen after his confession to corruption charges resulting from contracts he negotiated while administrative director of Store Norske. A fine of four million kroner is also being sought as he is expected to formally receive his sentence this week in Nord-Troms district court. The fine matches the amount of a loan he confessed to receiving from shipping sub-contractor Atle Jebesen. "It is in itself not illegal to be stupid, but the action was stupid and improper," Hermansen told TV2 in an interview, saying he is prepared to go to prison if necessary. He faces a maximum sentence of ten years.

Mork gets Kings Medal of Merit in surprise ceremony

Longyearbyen Mayor Kjell Mork got a surprise when he was awarded the King's Medal of Merit during the closing dinner for the current city council Sept. 20. That surprise came minutes after the unexpected appearance of his wife, Ingeborg Stangeland, who currently lives in London. "Mork has emerged as a unifying person for all Longyearbyen, and with his great knowledge and keen interest has been an important contributor in many arenas," said Svalbard Gov. Odd Olsen Ingerø, noting many people wanted Mork to get the medal before he retires after next month's election. Mork began teaching in Longyearbyen in 1977, has been a Svalbard Museum board member since 1984 and served for numerous other local organizations.

Speed-limit checks catch three motorists; more coming

Three drivers were ticketed during speed checks Thursday afternoon on Hilmar Rekstens road by the Svalbard governor's office. The motorists, driving up to 45 km/h in the 30-km/h zone, will be fined 2,900 kroner and lose two points from their driver's license (eight points results in a six-month suspension). Officials said the checks will continue on Hilmar Rekstens and other roads.

Progress Party gets aggressive

ELECTION, from page 1

apathetic during all those committee meetings, "When you're out four years you shut up a little bit," said Roy Albrigtsen, the local party's second-ranked candidate. "You don't follow it as a closely as if you were there. So there are a lot of cases to see about."

The Progress Party is the second largest in Parliament with 41 of the 169 seats, but flopped locally in 2007 due to what Albrigtsen said was a lack of effort.

Things aren't entirely smooth this year as top candidate Anita Kringlethaugen is out of the country on holiday and they've been remiss in getting statements to *Svalbardposten*. But they've been active in debates and national Deputy Leader Per Sandberg is scheduled to appear when parties campaign this weekend at Svalbardbutikken.

The local Progress Party platform is largely similar to the main goals of most other parties, such as a new power plant and continued coal mining, but more aggressive in promoting

industrial activity. The platform states, for instance, "there are no environmental issues that would warrant reduction" in mining.

"There has to be some protection, but we think there is too much of that," Albrigtsen said.

The party is also seeking a major upgrade by installing a backup water pipeline system which Albrigtsen, logistics leader for Spitsbergen VVS, said is urgent as the current pipeline nearly froze last winter.

The ruling Labor Party is tight with funding nationally and local members have been ineffective at pursuing large projects, he said. The local Progress Party will push to give to council more power and is hoping they can elect a new prime minister in two years.

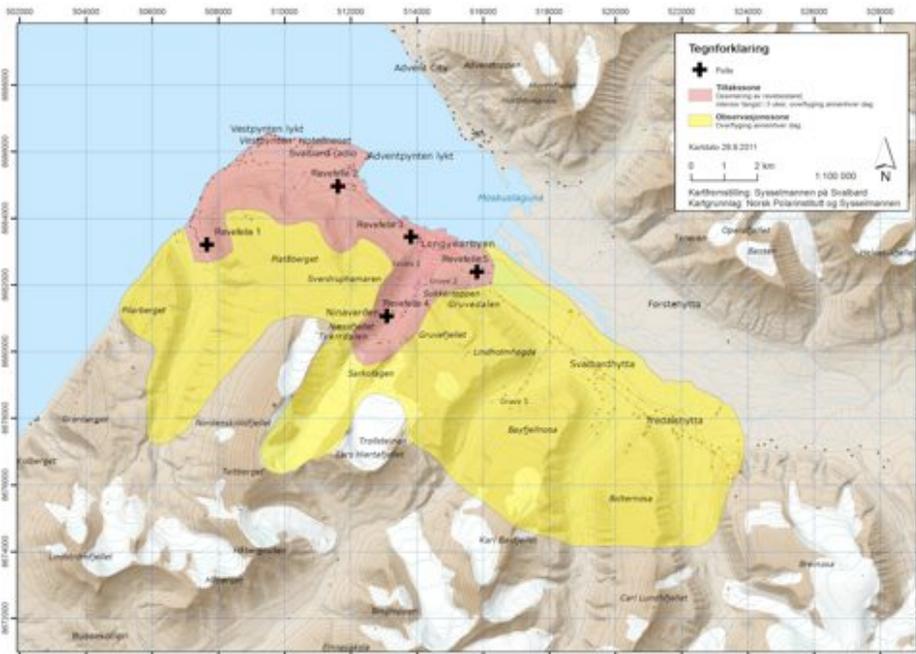
That goal may be overly optimistic as the Progress Party won 11.5 percent of the seats in municipal council elections on the mainland this month, a drop from 17.5 percent in 2007.

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

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Cloudy. E winds to 11 km/h. High 2C (0C wind chill), low 0C (-3C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. W winds to 7 km/h. High -1C (-4C wind chill), low -5C (-5C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. NW winds to 7 km/h. High -3C (-5C wind chill), low -5C (-8C wind chill).	Snow late. E winds to 18 km/h. High -4C (-8C wind chill), low -6C (-6C wind chill).
Sunrise 7:08a; sunset 6:25p	Sunrise 7:15a; sunset 6:17p	Sunrise 7:22a; sunset 6:09p	Sunrise 7:30a; sunset 6:01p
Extended forecast: Sunday, snow, -2C (-3C), -4C (-5C), light 10:17h; Monday, cloudy, -6C (-7C), -8C (-9C), light 10:01h; Tuesday, cloudy, -9C (-14C), -10C (-15C), light 9:46h; Wednesday, cloudy, -9C (-13C), -10C (-15C), light 9:30h			

Data provided by yr.no



SYSSELMANNEN

Five traps in the Longyearbyen area, marked by crosses, are being used by officials to catch and kill foxes due to an outbreak of rabies. The area shaded in red is also being patrolled daily to search for potentially infected animals, with the yellow-shaded area patrolled every other day.

Fox traps set in effort to limit rabies

PREVENTION, from page 1

Svalbard was declared by the governor's office last week after a fox and two reindeer were diagnosed with the illness. The disease, frequently spread by bites and other contact with infected animals, is generally fatal to humans if not treated after symptoms appear.

Medical officials are flying to Ny-Ålesund this week to administer vaccines to residents seeking them and are determining if anyone in Barentsburg should be treated, Bilicz said.

"They have four or five people hunting and they're trying to find them," he said.

Concern about the disease has also surfaced at the Polish research station at Hornsund, with occupants reporting during the weekend there were three dead reindeer, a dead fox and an aggressive fox in the area. Officials from the governor's office and Norwegian

Food Safety Authority sent samples of the dead animals to Oslo for analysis, but were unable to locate the live fox.

Drastic preventative measures are being taken by the governor's office to contain the outbreak. Dogs must be on leashes and under constant human supervision when outside. Traps are also being deployed in Longyearbyen with the intent of catching and killing as many foxes as possible.

Five traps were set up this week "in places where there usually is not general (human) traffic," according to a statement by the governor's office. The traps are clearly marked and "the governor asks the public keep a distance from the traps and particularly ensure that children do not come in contact with them."

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

CinemArctic schedule in Longyearbyen

(All films at Kulturhuset and require passes/tickets unless noted otherwise)

Friday

- Noon: Short films at Longyearbyen School.
- 3 p.m.: "Encounters at the End of the World," Lassegrotta, UNIS. Free.
- 6 p.m.: "Nanook of the North," w/ music by Matti Bye Ensemble.
- 9:30 p.m.: Concert: "Hipsters."

Saturday

- Noon: Children's movies "Eventyr og Virkelighet Mellom Hav og Is," "Det Siste Norske Trollet" and "Eg Heiter Domila. Er er Inuit."
- 1:30 p.m.: Short films "11 Dager Svalbard

Rundt med Båten Quest" and "Hvit Magi."

- 3:30 p.m.: Short films "Svalbard i Sort/Hvitt og Farger" and "Isbjørn i Magen, Ild i Hjertet."
- 5 p.m.: "Roald Amundsen - Lincoln Ellsworths flyveekspedisjon 1925," w/ music composed by Matti Bye and Kristian Holmgren.
- 10:30: "Space Invasion of Lappland."
- 11 p.m.: Concert: "Walrus." Kroa. Free.

Sunday

- Noon: Short films for children.
- 3 p.m.: "How I Ended This Summer."

Festival passes for 150 kr. (50 kr. for youths 16 and under) and individual tickets for 80 kr. available at Kulturhuset and www.lokalstyre.no. Seating is first-come, first-served. Full film descriptions and other festival information available at <http://svalbardcinemarctic.blogspot.com>.

What's up

Sept. 28

8 p.m.: Movie: "Jegerne - Falske Spor," Swedish thriller, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

Sept. 29

8 p.m.: Book launch: "Klimaboka - På Cruise Dit Verda Smelter," by Astrid Sylte, Simen Henriksen and Sigrí Sandberg. Svalbard Museum.

Sept. 30-Oct. 2

Svalbard CinemArctic 2011. Russian-Norwegian film festival in Longyearbyen and Barentsburg. See schedule at left.

Sept. 30

Power meter reading for Q3.

Oct. 1

Noon-3 p.m.: Car wash hosted by governor to raise money for telethon.

Oct. 2

6 p.m.: Movie: "Rise of the Planet of the Apes," U.S. action, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Pushwagner," Norwegian documentary, all ages. Kulturhuset.

Oct. 6

8 a.m.-5 p.m.: Activity day to raise funds for telethon. Polarflokkens barnehage

5 p.m.: Furniture auction to raise money for telethon. Statsbyggarsjen.

Oct. 13-15

Celebration of Huset's 60th anniversary.

Oct. 13

2 p.m.: Board of Culture and Leisure Authority meeting. Næringsbygget 1, Tundra room.

6 p.m.: Bydrift Board meeting. Næringsbygget 3. Newtontoppen room.

Oct. 14

9 a.m.: Board of Growing Enterprises Authority meeting. Næringsbygget 3. Newtontoppen room.

Oct. 16

6 p.m.: Local auction to raise funds for telethon. Radisson.

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:

- *China plans 8 polar expeditions in 2012*
- *U.K. accused of ignoring crisis in Arctic*
- *Antarctic sealife faces iceberg onslaught*
- *Yellow Arctic snow may help find aliens*