



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Christin Kristoffersen, third from left, talks about becoming the first female head of Longyearbyen's municipal council while sitting among members of the competing Konsekvenslista Party late Monday night at Kroa. Her Labor Party retained a seven-seat plurality on the 15-member council.

A bit of hard Labor

Council gets first female leader; Viljar wins seat from hospital

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

The same party may still be in charge, but gatherings of Longyearbyen's new local council might be anything other than usual.

New council leader Christin Kristoffersen will be joined by her son, Viljar Hansen, 18, who campaigned from his Sunnaas hospital bed after suffering life-threatening injuries in the July 22 Utøya shooting. Crashing the family gathering will be two members of a party who campaigned to es-

entially eliminate the council.

The Labor Party retained its seven-seat plurality on the 15-member council, about what was expected, Kristoffersen said moments after the totals were announced Monday night at Kroa. She will be the first female to lead the council when it meets for the first time Oct. 25.

In another first, 16- and 17-year-olds were allowed to vote in an election that had a record turnout of 57 percent with 907 votes.

See **ELECTION**, page 4

Doves v. pirates for loot

Battle for Arctic heats as arrests, accusations and huge budget plans come from Norway, Russia

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

On one hand there's Russian outlaws wanting guns to fight Norwegian pirates in our local waters. On the other there's historic meetings of military leaders to further a supposed longtime improvement in relations between the countries.

The classic advice when trying to solve a political riddle is follow the money, and both nations recently announced huge allocations for cooperative science and oil drilling efforts. Except they also are heavily boosting military spending to ensure they can claim and defend their fair share of a very lucrative area.

New and heightened contradictions in what might be called the ultimate Cold War surfaced during the past couple of weeks. Both countries released budget plans while also getting into a heated dispute about the numerous detentions of Russian fishing vessels for allegedly illegal activities in Svalbard waters.

Also, not to make things unnecessarily complicated, but China is getting into the skirmish with a major investment in High North activities while denouncing its "untenable" relationship with Norway since last year's award of

See **CONFLICT**, page 2

Inside

Busy week for telethon activities

Page 2

Headlines from Svalbardposten

- More detailed weather forecasts go online
- Big ascent in people hiking local mountains
- Polar bears reclaiming long-abandoned dens

Page 3

Weather forecast

Page 3

Events calendar

Page 4

Huset turns 60 with a fresh face

Weekend birthday party shows off new look and plans, but fans say it still retains historic feel

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Pushed off the stage to make way for the latest fashionable star, Huset is using its 60th birthday to show it has more vibe and classic beauty than ever.

The four-day celebration beginning Thursday, which will be attended by about 100 former staff from past decades, will be

See **BIRTHDAY**, page 3



COURTESY OF Huset

A landmark memorial service is among the numerous historic events since Huset's opening.

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.

Gambling is good



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Mariana Urrutia, left, explains the rules of a lottery raising funds for the annual NRK telethon to Felipe Maldonado this week at Svalbardbutikken. Numerous local events are scheduled leading up to the Oct. 23 telethon including a gathering with food sales from 2 to 5 p.m. Saturday at Svalbard Church, an auction at 6 p.m. Sunday at the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel and an international food feast from 2 to 7 p.m. Oct. 22 at The University Centre in Svalbard.

Norway boosts budget for Arctic

CONFLICT, from page 1

the Nobel Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo.

The most dramatic shot was fired by a Russian politician calling the Norwegian Coast Guard the "European Somali" and proposing trawlers be armed for armed resistance against future detentions. The proposal by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy is unlikely to be enacted, but Russia is formally protesting what it says are an increasing and illegitimate number of detentions.

Countering that is the first visit by a Norwegian chief of defense to Russia this week, which one newspaper states "comes after years with increasingly close military cooperation between the countries in the High North." Russian Gen. Harald Sunde said afterward "relations are now based on a very high level of trust."

Some of the disparity is reflected in the Norwegian government's proposed budget for 2012, which makes significant increases for seismic exploration, construction and infrastructure, and military activity. While cooperation on seismic and infrastructure improvements benefitting both countries is often hailed, all five nations with claims to Arctic areas are also boosting military spending as they fight for what may be a quarter of the world's remaining oil.

Fishing, while less lucrative, is also a major issue among the countries as global losses from illegal activity are estimated to be as high as \$23.5 billion annually.

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

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

They may not think much of government, but at least some Libertarians are apparently happy with how Longyearbyen picks its politicians. Bjørn Magne Solvik, writing for *Liberaleren*, notes the city's municipal council election occurred one month after those on the mainland and "all municipalities should try Svalbard models, that is their own election day during a specified period. Greater local freedom will give more focus on local issues in each municipality." Um, some unique factors about Longyearbyen necessitating the later date (i.e. residents also vote in their mainland hometown) aside, we have a couple of practical questions. With 96 official municipalities, that's a lot of time for government activity being advocated by people supposedly trying to

minimize it. Also, how much distraction is the same-day election in Bergen really causing the residents of Bodø? One other bit of snark – at us – comes from the lone article's commenter, who wonders "what responsibility can the local board of Svalbard have, really...snow shoveling?" ... The United Kingdom group attacked by a polar bear this summer continues to endure investigations and accusations about their readiness, but one positive gesture is being made for the teenager killed in the incident. A new garden at a hospital in Salisbury is being renamed "Horatio's Garden" in memory of Horatio Chapple, 17, who was killed in his tent. The teen had volunteered at the hospital's spinal treatment center, whose patients the garden will serve, as he pursued his hope of studying medicine.



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Workers put finishing touches on a staircase at Huset this week in preparation for the building's 60 birthday celebration Thursday through Sunday. Extensive renovations are being made as the landmark structure makes the transition from the main performing arts center to a multi-use facility.

New look, same old vibe at Huset

BIRTHDAY, from page 1

the first chance for many Longyearbyen residents to see the changes made by new owners of the building since it was replaced as the main performing arts center by Kulturhuset a year ago

Anne Lise Klungseth Sandvik, who led an intense effort to keep a renovated Huset as the center instead, said things worked out favorably for everyone in the end.

"Now the house is looking fresh and new, but the feeling is still like it used to be," she said. "They wanted a very different technical building (for performing arts). I'm now happy they have that building and they didn't do that to our house."

The renovated Huset features meeting and multipurpose rooms, in addition to continuing its cafe, fine-dining restaurant and main stage/cinema. Birthday party attendees will notice changes as soon as they walk in the door, with a new coat room immediately to the left and a lounge with furniture in the main space where the coat area used to be.

The celebration will be highlighted by two evening meals followed by performances Friday and Saturday. Friday's dinner is for former staff, about half of whom are coming from the mainland, and other invited guests. That will be followed by a public dance with music by Partykompaniet starting at 11 p.m.

60th birthday schedule

Thursday

- 4 p.m.: Birthday cake, history presentation.

Friday

- 7 p.m.: Reunion dinner for past staff and invited guests.
- 11 p.m.: Partykompaniet performs dance music in the movie theater. Free entrance before midnight, 100 kr. after.

Saturday

- 2 p.m.: Midday meat feast.
- 8 p.m.: "Old World" harvest party with traditional refreshments and Partykompaniet dance at 11 p.m. 400 kr., or 200 kr. for dance.
- 9 p.m.: Variety show in movie theater. Proceeds benefit annual NRK telethon.

Sunday

- Noon: Family Mass by Leif Magne Helgesen and songs by Polargospel.

A public "harvest party" starting at 8 p.m. and a variety show by local performers will precede a second night of dance Saturday.

The celebration will conclude with a return to Huset's earliest days, as it will serve as the gathering point for a Sunday Mass led by Svalbard Church Priest Leif Magne Helgesen.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

More detailed weather for central Spitsbergen online

More detailed weather forecasts and alerts for central Spitsbergen are being offered by the Norwegian Meteorological Institute. "The plan is to create two different alerts to Svalbard," said Helge Tangen, director for the northern Norwegian forecasting station in Tromsø. "We will keep the old alert and make a new one that is more detailed for Nordenskiöld Land." Data is provided by meteorological observations made at Bjørnøya, Hopen, Longyearbyen, Hornsund and Svea, plus automated weather stations around Svalbard and other sources. The forecasts can be viewed at yr.no and maps showing ice conditions are available at www.met.no/icechart.

Big ascent in people hiking Longyearbyen's mountains

There were 11,400 recorded entries by people scaling Longyearbyen's peaks, up from 8,762 a year ago. Helle M. Jakobsen, a coordinator for Svalbard Turn, said there has been a steady increase in visitors making ascents and it appears more are submitting forms for their hikes. A total of 121 adults stated they climbed at least 10 of Longyearbyen's 12 peaks, up from a year ago, with Ingrid Bakken, 28, selected among them for a free trip to Ny-Ålesund. Smaller prizes were awarded to two other adults, plus three of the 55 children scaling at least five peaks.

Polar bears reclaiming dens abandoned due to hunting

Polar bears have taken back several den areas in Svalbard that were abandoned when they became a protected species in 1973, according to the Norwegian Polar Institute and university researchers in Oslo and Alberta. "The large hunting pressure the stock experienced in the 100 years before the protection came into force most likely removed the breeding females in some areas of Svalbard and we now see that these areas in turn being used," said Jon Aars, an NPI researcher, in an article at the institute's Web site (www.npolar.no). The dens, mostly in east Svalbard, are important since bears are facing less access to land due to the vanishing ice sheet.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Partly cloudy. N winds to 11 km/h. High -9C (-14C wind chill), low -12C (-17C wind chill). Sunrise 8:55a; sunset 4:30p	Partly cloudy. NW winds to 22 km/h. High -7C (-12C wind chill), low -8C (-14C wind chill). Sunrise 9:04a; sunset 4:21p	Snow. NE winds to 25 km/h. High -11C (-20C wind chill), low -18C (-24C wind chill). Sunrise 9:12a; sunset 4:12p	Snow. Variable winds to 25 km/h. High -4C (-9C wind chill), low -6C (-14C wind chill). Sunrise 9:21a; sunset 4:02p
Extended forecast: Sunday, snow, -6C (-10C), -6C (-12C), light 6:22h; Monday, snow ending, -5C (-9C), -7C (-12C), light 6:02h; Tuesday, p cloudy, -5C (-10C), -10C (-15C), light 5:41h; Wednesday, snow, -4C (-9C), -5C (-11C), light 5:20h			
Data provided by yr.no			



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Frank Nilsen, left, casts his ballot in Longyearbyen's municipal council election Monday at Lompensenteret while Vigdis Jensen, right, watches and Grethe Svendsen helps another voter.

Konsekvenslista to be stronger dissent

ELECTON, from page 1

A better-than-expected showing by the Konsekvenslista candidates means there will be two voices of potentially fervent dissent.

"It's good to have a dissenting voice" if they take the process seriously, Kristoffersen said. Beyond that "it's almost the same power construction between the parties (and) I think the main goals are the same."

Jørn Dybdahl, one of the Konsekvenslista winners, said they are looking forward to being engaged in a council he has argued should be purely advisory since the state essentially governs Svalbard with its laws.

"We can support politicians who do wise things and if they do things we feel are unwise we will really tell them about it," he said.

Hanssen, one of Longyearbyen's most politically active youths before the shooting, received the third most Labor votes despite being ranked fourth on their candidate list. He told NRK he didn't think sympathy helped him get more votes.

"If I had not been shot I could have been

on Svalbard and done an election campaign on an equal footing with the other politicians," he said. "Then it is quite possible I could have had more votes than if I had not been shot."

Kristin Furu Grøtting, head of the Nonpartisan Party, suffered the biggest disappointment as her party won three seats, one fewer than four years ago. She said an attempt to form a post-election coalition with the Conservative Party, which also won three seats, failed as they joined a bloc with the Labor Party instead.

Other Labor candidates winning seats are Anita Johansen, Dag Hekne, Elise Strømseng, Sven-Erik Svendsen and Kari Schrøder Hansen. Conservative members are Geir Hekne, Trond Erik Johansen and Stig Onarheim. Nonpartisan members besides Grøtting include Håvar Fjerdingsøy and Stine Eidissen Bya. The other Konsekvenslista winners is Jon Sandmo.

The Progress Party, absent from the council the past four years, failed again to win a seat.

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



NRK

Viljar Hanssen, 18, recovering at a Sunnaas hospital from life-threatening injuries sustained in the July 22 Utøya shooting, talks to NRK today about becoming the youngest-ever member of Longyearbyen's council and a political advisor to Norwegian Justice Minister Knut Storberget.

What's up

Oct. 12

6 p.m.: Movie: "Johnny English Reborn," British comedy, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

Oct. 13-16

Celebration of Huset's 60th anniversary. See story on page 1.

Oct. 13

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

3 p.m.: Annual telethon fund-raising dinner for parents and siblings of Kullungen kindergarten.

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

Oct. 14

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

Oct. 15

2-5 p.m.: Open fireplace w/ sales of food to raise telethon funds. Svalbard Church.

Oct. 16

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

6 p.m.: Movie: "Friends With Benefits," U.S. comedy, all ages. Kulturhuset.

7 p.m.: "Fri Flyt Film Tour," featuring acclaimed skiing and snowboarding movies from the past year. Kroa.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Le Havre," French drama/comedy, all ages. Kulturhuset.

Oct. 17

11 a.m.: Environmental and Economic Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 3. Newntoppen room.

Oct. 20-23

Dark Season Blues festival. More details as available at www.svalbardblues.com.

Oct. 31

7:30 p.m.: Concert by tenThing brass ensemble. 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:

- *Cod makes strong Barents Sea rebound*
- *Mysterious virus killing seals in Arctic*
- *Siberian region 'confirms Yeti exists'*
- *Alaskans go postal over plan to cut mail*