



PHOTO COURTESY OF TORBJÖRN SOLBERG



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Torbjörn "T-Bear" Solberg, a Swedish vocalist/guitarist, performs with his band Friday and Saturday at this year's Dark Season Blues festival. Above, attendees bid on a work of Arctic-themed art during an auction last Sunday at the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel to raise funds for the annual NRK telethon. The festival and fundraising will converge with an international day Saturday at UNIS.

Slow world's blues

Global bands gather for biggest annual festival

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

If a festival could actually get the blues, this year's biggest music festival in Longyearbyen might be feeling a little down in the dumps.

The ninth annual Dark Season Blues festival, beginning Thursday and continuing through Sunday, might also be feeling jealousy toward sibling number 10 as organizers are planning the inevitable all-out jubilee fitting for next year's landmark anniversary. But looking at the international variety and acclaim of this year's lineup, there's nothing suggesting planners are economizing a bit on number nine.

Grammy nominee Eric "Slim" Zahl & the South West Swingers,

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Feast/concert boosts telethon for war-torn areas

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

Longyearbyen residents may be living about as far as one can from the world's trouble spots, but they're hardly distant from the dangers in those regions.

A significant percentage are from more than 30 countries other than Norway, many in or near places torn by war, natural and man-made disasters, and other troubles. Add a local element where everyday survival often requires extra alertness and the result is a population that is usually Norway's most generous during a national fundraiser to aid troubled regions.

See **TELETHON**, page 2

A diamond anniversary at Huset



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Anne Lise Klungseth Sandvik leads former Huset employees in song during a dinner Saturday celebrating the building's 60 birthday.

Past staff reunites as landmark turns 60 by hosting events from its days as a community center

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

Freia Hutzschenreuter knows Arctic communities, having practically worked her way around the Far North circumference, and her old Longyearbyen job site represents what she thinks should be this community's heart.

The retired longtime Svalbard resident was among about 100 Huset employees gathering

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Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

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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.



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Laurits Finjord, right, calls bingo numbers during a fundraiser today at Fruene. An annual bingo game is played in Longyearbyen during the Christmas holidays, but this is the first occurring as a benefit.

Local fundraising matches 2010

TELETHON, from page 1

The telethon raised more than 200 million kroner nationally in 2010, a goal organizers are targeting again this year. Funds will go toward work by Norwegian People's Aid to clear mines, cluster munitions and other remnants of war and conflict.

Longyearbyen generally donates the highest per-capita amount during a month-long series of events also well exceeding the average number by other cities.

"I think up here we are quite used to living isolated and surrounded by danger – not that our lives are in danger – but we are willing to take care of each other and we think others should have this also," said Oddny Kjerstad, leader of this year's local effort.

About 775,000 kroner has been raised locally so far in advance of the Oct. 23 telethon on NRK, she said. That's about the same as last year and "that's really good. I'm quite pleased

with that."

There are more local events this year, but not collecting more money as a result isn't a disappointment, Kjerstad said.

"The goal is not just to get money, but to get people thinking about the problems with land mines and cluster bombs," she said.

One of the new events is an international feast and blues concert from 2 to 7 p.m. Saturday at The University Centre in Svalbard. Residents from Thailand, Mexico, Chile, Russia and other countries will cook dishes from their homeland – and some will see funds benefit those areas, such as clearing soil contaminated by land mines in Thailand.

The hour-long concert at 3 p.m. by T-Bear & The Dukes of Rhythm is a donation from Dark Season Blues, another first since the telethon and festival usually don't overlap.

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

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

Residents looking to make a little extra money and don't mind waiting a bit ought to be able to cash in by renting out space in their homes – in 2015. NRK reminded us this week that all available hotel rooms in Longyearbyen were booked for the Vernal Equinox that year way back in 2007 by a U.S. tour company due to a total solar eclipse that will be fully visible only here and in Faroe Islands (and they typically have crummy weather that time of year). New hotels have been built in Longyearbyen since then, but local tour companies are reporting those now have waiting lists as well. It's possible more lodging will be built during the next four years, but NRK says people renting out beds is likely to be the best hope of many visitors. There's also the matter of getting here

on the limited number of commercial flights, but those thinking about really raking it in by piloting charters won't be able to make those arrangements until one year in advance. Our "outside the box" thought for anyone to the south reading this is to see how the Russians are faring with their often-vacant beds in Barentsburg and Pyramiden ... In another dark-themed move aimed at visitors, the brains at Avinor and the Northern Norway Tourist Board have decided to market northern Norway's nine largest airports, including Longyearbyen's, under the "generic" name Northern Lights Airports. Not that we'd editorialize by saying "meh" about a label demoting the exotic uniqueness of Svalbard down to mainland urban sprawl, but a name setting Norway apart from every other Arctic nation would be nice.



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Torunn Sørensen, above center left, and Priest Leif Magne Helgesen give communion to congregants Sunday during a Mass at Huset. The building has not been used as a regular church for more than 50 years, but services for special events have been performed on rare occasions. At right, a girl rests in a new piano lounge in Huset's entry hall where a coat check closet used to be.



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

New life for the old days at Huset

REUNION, from page 1

during the past weekend to celebrate the building's 60th birthday. The celebration came a year after it was replaced at the town's main performing arts center by Kulturhuset, which is more centrally located and offers more modern – if sterile – equipment and facilities.

"I didn't want a new Kulturhuset because the money should have been spent to make this place better," Hutzschenreuter said. "This is not only a culture house. This is a house of culture."

For a weekend the aging Huset relieved

some of its glory days, hosting two evenings of dining and dancing (plus a two-hour variety show one of the nights), and concluding with a Mass reliving the earliest years when it served as Longyearbyen's church.

New owners are refurbishing the building for multiple uses, but some reuniting workers said the feeling remains much the same.

"I had a chance to look at the kitchen," said Erik Elnan, who worked there in 1989 and from 1991-94. "It's the same as it ever was."

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Kindergartens full, funding proposed for more space

Kindergartens in Longyearbyen are full and more money is needed to provide space for those trying to enroll by the New Year, according to officials. Some children have been on a waiting list since August and parents are being told space cannot be guaranteed by the Nov. 15 deadline when applications for the New Year are supposed to be processed. Enrollment in the three kindergartens, with a total of 188 spaces, is unpredictable due to the constantly shifting population and "there has been enormous pressure on the kindergartens during the last year," said Anne Ellingsen, head of the city's education administration. The proposed 2012 budget includes an extra two million kroner to reopen and use Formannshuset as a temporary facility with room for 18 youths.

2.7M kroner in cultural grants to be announced Thursday

Cultural grants from the city for 2011 are scheduled to be announced Thursday, with 2.7 million kroner of a requested 5.6 million kroner to be distributed among 38 requested applicants. The largest amounts recommended by City Manager Ivar Undheim are 560,000 kroner for Svalbard Turn activities and 490,000 kroner for Camp Svalbard. There are ten new applicants, including Longyearbyen Golf Club requesting 112,000 kroner for upgrading its golf simulator and Trollsteinens venner requesting 302,500 for its mountain recreation activities. The meeting for the committee's official decision is at 10 a.m. in the Smutthullet room of Næringsbygget.

Snowmobiling gets fast start – and end – for two drinkers

Two men got an early start on snowmobile season early Saturday morning – but are likely to have it end just as early after being arrested for drunk driving. A thin layer of snow prompted the two men to set out, with the noise attracting the attention of Lt. Thomas Aga Ulvestad of the governor's office. Both men, Longyearbyen residents in their 20s, failed alcohol breath meter tests and have been temporarily stripped of their licenses.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Late snow. E winds to 32 km/h. High -7C (-16C wind chill), low -13C (-22C wind chill).	Snow. NE winds to 40 km/h. High -3C (-9C wind chill), low -4C (-14C wind chill).	Snow ending. NE winds to 15 km/h. High -6C (-12C wind chill), low -9C (-13C wind chill).	Cloudy. NE winds at 11 km/h. High -10C (-15C wind chill), low -11C (-17C wind chill).
Sunrise 9:51a; sunset 3:32p	Sunrise 10:01a; sunset 3:21p	Sunrise 10:12a; sunset 3:10p	Sunrise 10:24a; sunset 2:57p
Extended forecast: Sunday, cloudy, -11C (-17C), -14C (-20C), light 4:33h; Monday, snow, -6C (-11C), -14C (-21C), light 4:07h; Tuesday, snow, -4C (-9C), -8C (-12C), light 3:38h; Wednesday, snow, -5C (-10C), -8C (-12C), light 3:05h			
Data provided by yr.no			

Viljar's back



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Viljar Hanssen, at center with grey sweatshirt, reunites with friends at Fruene shortly after returning to Longyearbyen on Wednesday, Oct. 19, nearly three months after sustaining life-threatening injuries in the July 22 shooting at the Utøya youth camp. Hanssen, 18, has been heavily involved in political activities and will become the youngest member of the municipal council when it meets Oct. 25 after campaigning from his hospital bed in Sunnaas. He has also been named as a political advisor to Norwegian Justice Minister Knut Storbergets.

Don't cry for lineup at 'budget' festival

MUSIC, from page 1

blind New Orleans leadman Bryan Lee, and Mike Andersen, billed as Denmark's biggest blues artist, are among the 11 performers featured in this year's lineup. Also scheduled are emerging artists such as Houston guitarist/vocal Mike Zito ("Delta Groove Music's new major investment") and Bright Side Five, an acclaimed youth group from inner Østfold who musicians are as young as 15.

Part of their available is due to appearances at other events in the region.

"Normally we try to get bands that are already on the mainland this time of year," said Jon Sandmo, spokesman for this year's Dark Season Blues.

Most of this year's schedule is similar to previous years, with concerts at various pubs Thursday and Friday night, school performances Friday morning, a formal dinner and concert Friday evening, and a church concert and pub jam session Sunday night. The main event again is a two-floor party beginning at 8 p.m. Saturday at Huset, with ten bands performing concerts on two stages.

While Huset has been displaced as the main performing arts venue by Kulturhuset since last year's festival, Sandmo said there was no thought of moving the blues party there.

"It's too sterile for the blues," he said of Kulturhuset's main theater. "You don't sit like you do at a cinema listening to the blues. You move."

Most festival passes are gone, but individual tickets will be sold at all events. Full artist profiles, videos, photos of past festivals and other information are available at <http://www.svalbardblues.com>.

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

Dark Season Blues 2011 schedule

Thursday

- 9 p.m.: Micke & Lefty feat. Chef; Eric "Slim" Zahl & the South West Swingers. Barentz Pub.
- 9 p.m.: JW-Jones; Mike Zito. Kroa.

Friday

- 10:30 a.m.: Kindergarten concert by Iver Olav and Adam Douglas.
- 11:30 a.m.: Student concert by Bright Side Five. Longyearbyen School.
- Noon: Eric "Slim" Zahl & the South West Swingers. Barentz Pub.
- 5:30 p.m.: Blues dinner and concert by Mike Zito & Tina Lee. Festival passes not accepted, admission 990 kroner.
- 9 p.m.: Blåmyra; Bryan Lee. Barentz Pub.
- 9 p.m.: Bright Side Five; Tina Lie. Svalbar.
- 9 p.m.: T-Bear & the Dukes of Rhythm; The Douglas Group; Mike Andersen Band. Kroa.

Saturday

- 3 p.m.: T-Bear & The Dukes of Rhythm. Part of international day to benefit NRK telethon. UNIS.
- 3 p.m.: Micke & Lefty feat. Chef. Karlsberger Pub.
- 8 p.m.: Two-stage blues party with concerts by 10 bands. Huset.

Sunday

- 6 p.m.: Bryan Lee & The Douglas Group. Svalbard Church.
- 9 p.m.: Jam session led by Mike Andersen. Barentz Pub.

Tickets for individual concerts at the door, or festival passes 900 kr. Friday through Sunday and 1,000 kr. Thursday through Sunday.

What's up

Oct. 19

Movie: "Spy Kids: All the Time in the World in 4D" (3D), U.S. action/adventure, ages 7 and up. Kulturhuset.

Oct. 20-23

Dark Season Blues festival. See story and schedule, pages 1 and 4.

Oct. 20

10 a.m.: Management Committee meeting to determine allocation of cultural grants for 2011. Næringsbygget 2, Smuthullet room.

Oct. 22

2-7 p.m.: International feast to raise money for NRK telethon. Includes concert at 3 p.m. by T-Bear & The Dukes of Rhythm and a mini-auction at 4:30 p.m. 250 kr. adults, 100 kr. youths under 7 free. UNIS.

Oct. 23

3-8 p.m.: Annual NRK auction.

6 p.m.: Movie: "Winnie the Pooh," U.S. animated family film dubbed in Norwegian, all ages. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "The Help," U.S. drama, ages 7 and up. Kulturhuset.

Oct. 25

7 p.m.: First meeting of newly elected Longyearbyen council. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

Oct. 26

6 p.m.: Movie: "The Three Musketeers" (3D), U.S./French/German/British action/adventure, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

Oct. 30

6 p.m.: Movie: "The Adventures of Tintin: The Secret of the Unicorn" (3D), U.S. animated family film dubbed in Norwegian, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Abduction," U.S. action/thriller, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

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:

- *Animal shrinking blamed on warming*
- *Norwegian salmon banned from Russia*
- *Antarctica through lens of Robert Scott*
- *Your social media life, stored at Barents*