



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE



LONGYEARBYEN BLUESKLUBB



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J.T. Lauritsen, playing accordion at left, a performer at the first Dark Season Blues and seen here during the 2009 festival, returns this year for the 10th year of Longyearbyen's biggest annual music event. At top right, a painting by Tone Larsen is among an exhibition of her work at the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel during the four-day festival that begins Thursday. At bottom right, the local band Howlin' Huskies performs at Mine 3 during the 2006 festival, a venue they will return to this year after concerts were halted there in 2008 due to the mine's closure.

10 years on top

Dark Season Blues revisits past decade with biggest festival ever

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

Maybe it's the masochistic glee of locals celebrating the sun's departure for nearly four months. Maybe it's the all-generations genre. Maybe it's the intoxicating exhilaration of live music in three pubs at once.

Whatever the reason(s), Dark Season Blues rose rapidly from humble beginnings a

decade ago to the throne of music events in Svalbard and hasn't been challenged in the years since.

Espen Helgesen, leader of the Longyearbyen Bluesklubb that organizes the festival, said there doesn't seem to be any magic to why the event has thrived while others have stagnated and sometimes flopped.

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City b'day Monday

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

On this occasion, "let 'em eat cake" isn't necessarily cause to revolt.

A celebration of Longyearbyen's local government's 10th birthday is scheduled

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'Grand' and 'solid,' but with a 'void'

Memorial for Johannes Buø unveiled as friends and family remember him in speech, song

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

The words "Johannes Buø" and "tragedy" will always be linked. But Erlend Telstø is ready for more than the sorrow he has long felt at the loss of his friend.

"Now I smile and think of how hilarious you were," Telstø said Saturday, standing next to a just-uncovered memorial sculpture for Buø

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A memorial sculpture for Johannes Buø is unveiled outside Svalbard Church on Saturday.

Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

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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.

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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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Magnus Østermann, 14, left, serves reindeer soup in the kitchen at Longyearbyen School during an open day at the school to raise funds in connection with the annual NRK telethon. The reindeer was killed on a hunting trip students participated in during the first week of school.

Which city was the most generous?

Mainland town claims to be top per-person telethon giver, a title held by Longyearbyen for years

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Are the normally generous hearts of Longyearbyen residents growing cold?

The city giving the most per-person this year to NRK's annual telethon and related fundraisers is – gasp – Utsira, with a record 265 kroner per resident, the city's website announced this week.

"Of course, we choose to ignore (Longyearbyen), which gathered 447.78 per capita," the city added, grudgingly restoring the honor to the town that has held it has held for for years.

That amount will tick upward a bit more until early November, since some donations re-

main uncounted and tickets are still being sold to the Nov. 3 Loy Krathong celebration hosted by Longyearbyen's Thai community. The event is the final of numerous fundraisers occurring during the past several weeks that are tied in to the telethon.

Longyearbyen typically raises the most per resident by far due largely to a much higher than average number of tie-in events. About 900,000 kroner has been raised in Longyearbyen so far, despite Store Norske not making a usual donation of 100,000 kroner due to financial struggles at the mining company.

Nationally, this year's effort has raised 200.3 million kroner as of Monday. This year's funds are aiding Amnesty International's efforts to help prevent human rights violations abroad.

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

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

Time again for What's Normal For Us (i.e. teachers toting guns at recess, wearing seal fur boots) Freaks Out The World. **Norway, in its always sharing ways, has done the annual release of everyone's income and tax stats from last year so we can all see which neighbors make more than us.** Svalbard's richest resident, according to the 2011 stats, is Bård Gundersen with 51,261,764 kroner, but despite not earning any income he still had to pay 555,179 kroner in taxes. He's followed by Gunnar Blomhaug (21,394,109, 8,596,779 and 1,599,752 kroner, respectively) and Turid Telebond (10,314,600, 792,145, 227,791). The entire database is at <http://skattelister.no>. Imagine how such openness would make life so much easier for a certain potential U.S. president being harassed non-stop by people bothered he's the first in modern times not to offer any meaningful info about what he typically pays ... Speaking of political surreality in the U.S., a hot thing right now is a bipartisan effort to

not adequately feed needy kids while they're at school. Liberals worry the tykes will become obese, so they're demanding low-calorie meals be served. Conservatives don't want to see a penny of their money helping someone else's impoverished, abused and/or homeless demon-spawn that ought to be able to pull up their own Keds. Especially if public schools ("similar to Hitler Youth") are doing it. They'd all be proud of Longyearbyen, where for the most part students are on their own, unless you count hunting trips (see top of the page) as a school-provided meal. So **it'll be interesting to see how a campaign in Longyearbyen and elsewhere in Norway to mandate healthy and hearty breakfasts for students fare.** The folks at melk.no, after visiting schools throughout Norway ("including Longyearbyen" they emphasize), came to breakthrough conclusions such as eating helps students concentrate. There's no chance, of course, they're hoping some of that extra money the government would spend might boost the dairy industry.



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Dozens of family, friends and others paying tribute to Johannes Buø gather outside Svalbard Church on Saturday to hear speeches and songs in remembrance of the teen killed at Utøya.

Hoping to remember more than loss

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outside Svalbard Church. "Let us remember Johannes for his smile and his personality, rather than dwell on what we lost. That's what's important now, the good memories. It is the people who matter. Nothing else matters."

Buø, 14, was one of the youngest of 69 people killed by Anders Behring Breivik at a Utøya youth camp on July 22, 2011. The sculpture by Oslo artist Nico Widerberg is among 40 now in towns where victims killed during the shooting spree lived.

Saturday's unveiling featured family and friends remembering Buø in speech and songs, with a lingering sunset in the mountains provid-

ing a transcendent backdrop. His father, Einar, said family members often have to pinch themselves due to the emptiness.

"The memorial of the primeval Norwegian granite represents something grand, something totally and solid," the elder Buø said. "At the same time there is something missing in the void inside the memorial."

"I do not know if they have the AUF, snowmobiles or judo groups in heaven. But you'll find you the right to wherever you are. Continue to take care of your new friends from Utøya and the others around you until we meet again."

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

Local government celebrates 10th b'day

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Monday, featuring a gala of arts performances and presentations by notable dignitaries. The celebration is scheduled at 5 p.m. Monday at Kulturhuset.

The occasion is also being observed with presentations about democracy to local students and a weekend youth LAN party at Kulturhuset.

The bureaucracy could have been well past senior citizen status, as establishing a municipal government was proposed when Svalbard became part of Norway in 1925. But Parliament

rejected the idea, instead installing a unique arrangement where an appointed governor was the highest local authority.

That changed on Jan. 1, 2002, when Longyearbyen's municipal government was established. There is still some uniquenesses compared to mainland municipalities, however, as the election for the 15 council seats occurs separately and foreign nationals are allowed to vote after three years of residency.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Food grinder bill now five times higher due to errors

The lengthy and problematic process of installing sink food grinders in Longyearbyen homes is now expected to cost five times the original price. The municipal council mandated the grinders in 2009 at a projected cost of one million kroner, but the units supplied by the original vendor were faulty in multiple ways and resulted in a legal dispute as the company blamed users for operating the grinders improperly. The city recently abandoned its legal effort after two years, saying the company is suffering serious financial problems and has scant resources, and selected a different unit and vendor. The project's total cost is now about 4.9 million kroner, said Håkan Eriksson, Bydrift's technical leader. Installation is expected to be completed this fall.

Council hires budget cutter as new city administrator

Lars Ole Saugnes, 55, has been selected as the new city administrator for Longyearbyen, replacing Ivar Undheim, who is departing after three years. Saugnes, chief administrative officer in Fet, has been dealing with a municipality budget that's been ailing for several years, warning three years ago a 43-million-kroner cut was necessary by this year. He declined to comment on whether Longyearbyen Municipal Council officials discussed the city's financial status or corresponding cuts during the recruitment process. "I feel like I'm on thin ice and lack the necessary knowledge to be able to comment on the economic situation in Longyearbyen," he said.

Store Norske fined 4 million kroner for Isfjord Radio spill

Store Norske has been fined four million kroner for a diesel leak that resulted in a spill of more than 100,000 liters discovered at Isfjord Radio last year. The station was unmanned when the leak started in the fall of 2011 and was discovered during an inspection by Store Norske in January of this year. Per Andersson, the company's managing director, said a large amount was spent on cleanup and prevention efforts, and the company is acknowledging responsibility for the spill.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Snow possible. NW winds to 42 km/h. High -10C (-17C wind chill), low -13C (-21C wind chill). Sunrise 11:22a; sunset 1:59p	Partly cloudy. Variable winds to 29 km/h. High -8C (-13C wind chill), low -12C (-17C wind chill). Sunrise 11:46a; sunset 1:34p	Partly cloudy. NE winds to 35 km/h. High -5C (-11C wind chill), low -8C (-14C wind chill). 24-hour darkness	Cloudy. NE winds to 32 km/h. High -2C (-6C wind chill), low -5C (-11C wind chill). 24-hour darkness
Extended forecast: Sunday, p. cloudy, -3C (-6C), -4C (-9C), light 0:00h; Monday, p. cloudy, -3C (-8C), -4C (-9C), light 0:00h; Tuesday, p. cloudy, -3C (-8C), -9C (-15C), light 0:00h; Wednesday, cloudy, -9C (-16C), -11C (-16C), light 0:00h			
Data provided by storm.no			



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A blues marathon on two stages at Huset, pictured here during the 2011 Dark Season Blues festival, will again be the biggest bash for what will be the event's biggest year as it reaches its 10th birthday.

Blues fest a '10'

MUSIC, from page 1

"When this festival started it was very small, a tryout experience," he said. "It's just been a normal process of growing every year."

This year's festival is likely to be the peak of that rise, at least for a while, with a total of about 60 musicians participating, twice the usual number, Helgesen said. More listeners are also expected and organizers are issuing more all-days passes than before, with Helgesen saying he expects them to still be available when the festival begins.

The main gigs Thursday and Friday are multiple shows at Barentz Pub, Kroa and Svalbar, all a short walking distance from each other if large crowds fill a venue.

"Those three pubs at the same time can handle 600 people," Helgesen said. "We hope everyone can get into one of those."

Passes are not valid this year for a Saturday afternoon concert at Karlsberger Pub or a Sunday evening performance at Svalbard Church. Also separate, as usual, is a Friday evening formal dinner and blues concert at the Spitsbergen Hotel that frequently sells out well in advance.

But the most noteworthy individual concert celebrating the festival's 10th birthday is at 3 p.m. Saturday when Mine 3 is the stage for the first time since 2007 due to the mine's closure. The local band Howlin' Huskies, featured during that last gig, returns for an encore.

"Everyone is asking 'Can we get that one back?'" Helgesen said. "Store Norske has been one of the main sponsors for ten years. We asked and asked and asked if it was possible. They were really helpful and said 'Let's do this.'"

The festival's biggest bash, included in the pass price, is the blues marathon beginning at 7 p.m. at Huset. Stages on both floors of the historic former performing arts center will feature a wide range of new and returning artists.

Most lodging is booked to capacity and Scandinavian Airlines is scheduling extra flights due to a higher than normal number of outside listeners coming to the festival.

"We have heard a lot of people talking for the full year about it coming up," Helgesen said.

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

Festival schedule

Thursday

- 11 a.m.: Inception, concert for students at Longyearbyen School.
- 6 p.m.: Official opening with preview performances by several artists. Kulturhuset. Free.
- 9 p.m.: ORBO & The Longshots, Dave Fields at Barentz Pub; Inception, Grainne Duffy at Svarbar; J.T. Lauritsen & The Buckshot Hunters feat. Mitch Kashmar, Nick Moss & The Flip Tops at Kroa.

Friday

- 10:30 a.m.: Steinar Albrigtsen og Monika Nordli, concert for youths at Kullungen Kindergaten.
- Noon: Blues lunch feat. JT. Lauritsen with friends. Barentz Pub.
- 5:30 p.m.: Blues dinner feat. Steinar Albrigtsen og Monika Nordli. Spitsbergen Hotel. 990 kr., call 7902 6200 before noon Thursday.
- 9 p.m.: Paal Flaata, Jace Everett at Barentz Pub; Howlin' Huskies, Spoonful of Blues at Svarbar; Rita Engedalen & Backbone, Billy T. Band, Tad Robinson at Kroa.

Saturday

- Noon: Blues lunch feat. Billy T Band with friends, interview with Øyvind Rønning. Barentz Pub.
- 3 p.m.: Howlin' Huskies at Mine 3. 150 kr. Buses from Mix kiosk depart at 2:30 p.m. Warm shoes and clothing recommended.
- 3 p.m.: Jostein Forsberg & Morten Omlid. 100 kr. Karlsberger Pub.
- 7 p.m.: Two-stage blues marathon at Huset. Performing on first floor are Steinar Albrigtsen og Monika Nordli, Paal Flaata, Jace Everett, ORBO & The Longshots, Dave Fields, and JT. Lauritsen & The Buckshot Hunters feat. Mitch Kashmar; second-floor concerts by Grainne Duffy, Amund Maarud, Tad Robinson, Vidar Busk & His True Believers, Rita Engedalen & Backbone, and Nick Moss & The Flip Tops.

Sunday

- 6 p.m.: Tad Robinson, Dave Fields, Bill Troani and guest artist at Svalbard Church. 100/50 kr.
- 9 p.m.: Blues jams with Dave Fields.

All performances included in festival passes except where prices are listed. Full ticket and band information at svalbardblues.no.

What's up

Oct. 24

6 p.m.: Movie: "Paranormal Activity 4," U.S. thriller/horror, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

7 p.m.: Discussion by Anja Solvik of her art project "Venus on Ice" with author Anne Ragde. Galleri Svalbard.

Oct. 25-28

10th annual Dark Season Blues festival. See schedule at left.

Oct. 26

8 p.m.: Movie: "James Bond: Skyfall," U.S./U.K. action, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

Oct. 27

Noon-3 p.m.: Open at Longyearbyen Hundeklubb, with tours for kids, a lottery and refreshments.

4 p.m.: LAN data party for youths ages 13-20. Kulturhuset.

Oct. 29

5 p.m.: Celebration of 10th birthday of Longyearbyen's local government. Kulturhuset. Full details on page 1.

8 p.m.: Trivia quiz. Kulturhuset cafe.

Oct. 31

6 p.m.: Movie: "Hasta La Vista!" Belgian comedy, all ages. Kulturhuset.

Nov. 1

2 p.m.: Board of Culture and Leisure Authority meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newntoppen room.

6 p.m.: Bydrift board meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newntoppen room.

7:30 p.m.: Author Erika Fatland presents her book "Året Uten Sommer" about the tragedies of July 22, 2011. Longyearbyen Library.

Nov. 2

9 a.m.: Board of Youth Enterprises meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newntoppen room.

Nov. 3

Midnight: Movie: "James Bond: Skyfall," U.S./U.K. action, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset. Half-price encore screening.

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:

- *Svalbard whales imitate human sounds*
- *2X trash between Svalbard, Greenland*
- *Alaska: Polar bears not 'threatened'*
- *Ski gondola powered by cow manure*