



A healthy start

Viljar Hanssen joins new council three months after tragedy at Utøya with focus on policy goals

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

Viljar Hanssen is hoping to be known as more than "that kid" or "that guy who got shot." Considering his goals, he'll need to be.

Hanssen, 18, became the youngest member ever of Longyearbyen's municipal council today as the 15 newly elected representatives met for the first time. He was elected to a seat

while spending three months in a Sunnaas hospital recovering from near-fatal injuries as a victim of the July 22 Utøya shooting, returning to Longyearbyen last Wednesday.

"It's not just that 'I'm elected and that's cool,'" said Hanssen, one of Longyearbyen's most active youths politically in recent years. "I want to go into this with all my energy. I want to take it seriously."

He'll have no trouble getting the attention of the council's first female leader, Christin Kristoffersen, who is also Hanssen's mother. He said they're mostly in agreement

See **COUNCIL**, page 4



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Longyearbyen Council members Anita Johansen, Christin Kristoffersen and Viljar Hanssen confer during the council's first meeting today.



COURTESY OF HÅLOGALAND THEATER

Hålogaland Theater's "Gutten og Gullfuglen" will be performed when Kunstpause starts Nov. 2.

9 + 1 = 5? At Kunstpause it's kids' play

Extra day for 10th annual festival features special visit by theater

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

If you're obsessed with doing the math, you're in no state to be around this 10-year-old.

Kunstpause will celebrate a decade of offering Longyearbyen residents a break from everyday toils by adding a day to what's normally four days of art and performances. The early start on Nov. 2 features the Hålogaland Theater of Tromsø performing the children's show "Gutten og

See **KUNSTPAUSE**, page 3

Inside

Something bold, something blues

Page 2

Headlines from Svalbardposten

- Power, water rates may see huge leap in 2012
- Ten arrested in drug raid, more may occur
- Longyearbyen again leads telethon fundraising

Page 3

Breaking: SvalSat hacked

- Chinese military suspected in four incidents in 2007 and 2008, seen as potentially major threat.

Page 3

Ghastly tale nips Svalbard

Review: 'Dark Matter' dashes through Arctic nightmare on a familiar, but gripping, course

By **MARK SABBATINI**

Editor

Have no fear: Svalbard is a much less ghastly place nowadays. Honest.

Whatever haunted during that 1937 expedition to the remote realms of Spitsbergen only lives now in the journal of its longest-lasting member (unless, of course, it's among the spooks occupying the seed vault). Locals can

See **HAUNTING**, page 4



COURTESY OF MICHELLE PAVER

The bait awaits his grisly fate at a remote haunted cabin in this promotional video trailer for the Svalbard spook story "Dark Matter."

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

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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.



Bold & blues

The approach of the polar night fails to darken the spirit of Longyearbyen kindergarten students, above, as they dance to a performance Friday by Iver Olav and Adam Douglas as part of the Dark Season Blues festival. At top left, The Douglas Group performs during a 10-band, two-floor concert marathon Saturday at Huset. The ninth annual festival also featured a new event to raise money for NRK's annual telethon with T-Bear & The Dukes of Rhythm, bottom left, performing Saturday at The University Centre in Svalbard. All photos by Mark Sabbatini / Icepeople.

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

Full disclosure time here at corporate headquarters, as *Icepeople* will spend another year as government-nourished litter sucking off the public hooter. We've received a 40,000 kroner cultural grant from the city that basically covers our office supplies and photocopying fees. We, of course, continue to receive far higher-than-deserved salaries of nothing (our true market value probably includes scraping the ice off everyone's car windshields) and laugh harder than our readers at the idea of anyone paying for this rag ... In other things politics and the press, talk about a humbling departure as Longyearbyen's mayor for Kjell Mork. He started today's municipal council meeting in the seat of power he's occupied for the past four years, transferring that honor to Christin Kristoffersen ceremoniously after some opening niceties. He was then demoted to a corner in the back of the room at the press table (with-

out any actual room for him at the table) for the rest of the meeting ... Since we're officially government toadies, we might as well become corporate ones as well: Coke is getting a lot of headlines globally for its plan to introduce reverse (red letters and white) cans for the holidays with cute, cuddly cartoon polar bears on them (mamma and two cubs). The company will make 1.4 billion of the cans through February and donate \$3 million to the World Wildlife Fund, which is working with Coke on a public awareness campaign about how climate change is endangering the bears. There's so much snark among 'net chatters it's hard to pick one tidbit, but maybe the frequent comment best illustrating the disconnected thinking of many skeptics is "polar bears obviously aren't in danger since humans are encountering them more often." Um, yeah, that happens when your happy habitat away from that polluting cesspool known as humanity melts.



COURTESY OF FROST

Aggie Peterson performs with Per Martinsen as the Tromsø electronic indie-pop duo FROST on Nov. 5 at Kunstpause as part of an evening also featuring an art auction and three-course dinner.

Festival features art of exploring

KUNSTPASUE, from page 1

Gullfuglen" ("The Boy and the Golden Bird"), the first play performed by the company when it debuted 40 years ago.

"We've been in touch with them for a long time trying to establish cooperation with them," said Roger Ødegård, Longyearbyen's cultural advisor, noting funding from Store Norske made the theater's return possible. "We hope to make it a tradition with them."

Another featured visiting performance is the Tromsø electronic indie-pop duo FROST, featuring Aggie Peterson and Per Martinsen, performing at Kulturhuset at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 5. It is part of a TreGangerTre evening that also includes an art auction and three-course dinner.

Four events highlight the achievements of Fridtjof Nansen 150 years after his birth and

Roald Amundsen 100 years after he conquered the South Pole. Among them are a presentation of newly discovered diaries from Amundsen's expedition at 8 p.m. Nov. 3 at Kulturhuset and a presentation of Nansen's work as an artist at 7 p.m. Nov. 4 at the Svalbard Museum.

The full schedule and ticket information is available at www.kunstpause.no.

Despite the landmark anniversary, Kunstpause is a bit spurned by locals. Just six percent of 620 voters in a *Svalbardposten* online poll in January named it their favorite festival, with others scoring from 14 to 49 percent.

"It's an interesting figure, but as long as there are people in the audience it's not a problem for us," Ødegård said.

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

China is suspect in four SvalSat hacks

Svalbard station accessed for short periods, but potential for major harm a concern in report

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

The Svalbard Satellite Station (SvalSat) was hacked four times in 2007 and 2008, possibly by the Chinese military, according to a draft of a report for the U.S. Congress.

SvalSat is used by NASA for observation of Earth's climate and terrain, and hacks pose "numerous potential threats" such as the ability

to destroy the satellite, according to the report scheduled for submission Nov. 16.

"The attacker could also deny or degrade as well as forge or otherwise manipulate the satellite's transmission."

Hacks were from two to more than 12 minutes long, with the culprits achieving the steps necessary to control the satellite, but not issuing any commands.

China is suspected because "the techniques appear consistent with authoritative Chinese military writings," the report states.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Electricity, water prices may increase significantly in 2012

A 60 percent increase in water fees and a large hike in electricity prices is proposed in Longyearbyen's budget next year by Bydrift, which says state assessments show current fees don't factor in all of the agency's expenses. "We were asked to add a full cost basis for all fees," said Marianne Aasen, Bydrift's general manager. Nearly 13 million kroner in total additional fees is being requested, or about 6,200 kroner per resident. The water fee increase is due to a new master plan being implemented that includes costly measures to ensure Longyearbyen's future water quality. An electricity rate increase to 1.42 kroner per kilowatt hour from the current 1.17 kroner assumes Bydrift will continue receiving coal from Store Norske at current prices. A new agreement is still being negotiated with the company and Aasen said she does not know how rates may be affected if coal prices change. A 16 percent increase in vehicle registration fees is also proposed, with a 617 increase on trucks weighing more than seven-and-a-half tons due to their extra road wear.

Ten arrested in drug raid as part of ongoing investigation

Ten people in Longyearbyen have been arrested in a drug raid by police since last weekend, with the governor's office stating more arrests may occur. It is part of a lengthy investigation that also includes two arrests in May. The recent arrestees include six Norwegians, two Swedes and two British residents, all in their 20s or 30s. Their names are not being released, but *Svalbardposten* has learned some work in the entertainment industry.

Longyearbyen again leads per-capita telethon pledges

Longyearbyen and Ny-Ålesund again donated the highest per-capita amount to NRK's annual telethon, with the 1.024 million kroner as of Monday representing 485 kroner per person. The national average was 42.47 kroner, according to NRK, which states the total of 209 million kroner is the second-highest ever. Longyearbyen had five weeks of fundraising activities before Sunday's telethon.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

| Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|---|---|
| Partly cloudy. Variable winds to 18 km/h. High -5C (-9C wind chill), low -7C (-13C wind chill). | Snow possible. SE winds to 28 km/h. High 0C (-7C wind chill), low -5C (-11C wind chill). | Snow. SE winds at 11 km/h. High -1C (-5C wind chill), low -3C (-7C wind chill). | Snow. E winds at 7 km/h. High -1C (-4C wind chill), low -2C (-4C wind chill). |
| Sunrise 11:54a; sunset 1:27p | Sunrise 0:00; sunset 0:00 | Sunrise 0:00; sunset 0:00 | Sunrise 0:00; sunset 0:00 Set clocks back one hour |
| Extended forecast: Sunday, snow, -3C (-7C), -11C (-17C), light 0:00h; Monday, partly cloudy, -12C (-19C), -15C (-22C), light 0:00h; Tuesday, partly cloudy, -15C (-21C), -15C (-22C), light 0:00h; Wednesday, cloudy, -14C (-20C), -15C (-21C), light 0:00h | | | |
| Data provided by yr.no | | | |



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Kjell Mork, center left, hands the keys to the Longyearbyen mayor's office to Christin Kristoffersen during the first meeting of the newly elected municipal council. Kristoffersen, who will preside over a Labor Party-led majority coalition during the next four years, is the first woman to head the council.

School fixes top Hanssen's agenda

COUNCIL, from page 1

politically as Labor Party members, but "I am young and maybe more radical than her in some cases."

Today's meeting was simple and largely ceremonial as council members were officially seated and assigned committees. The most noteworthy move was Dag Hekne, also elected from the Labor Party, stepped aside because he is moving to the mainland and was replaced by Odd-Gunnar Brøto Braathen.

Hanssen will serve on the Administration and the Youth Services committees, the latter of which will allow him to focus on what he said are his two biggest priorities.

"I want to establish a canteen (at Longyearbyen School) so kids can get real food every day," he said. "I think it's important because a lot of kids don't bring food from home to school and so they don't eat much."

Also, Hanssen said he wants to expand the school's curriculum. The bare-bones offerings, due to limited funds because of the small number of students, have long has been a top concern of parents and students.

"Many 10th graders have to move to the mainland because they can't get the courses they want," he said.

The problem is such things cost money and there hasn't been enough lately to fund anything beyond current needs. The situation is likely to be worse starting next year if large proposed increases in utility rates are approved since the expenses of municipal agencies will rise accordingly. So what makes Hanssen think he can successfully persuade other policymakers when similar arguments have failed before?

"I think maybe I can put it in other words," he said, adding he can also make appeals through a number of political channels.

Hanssen expects to graduate during the next school year – the shooting set his timing back – and attend university courses in Tromsø or elsewhere on the mainland. He said he hopes it might be possible to continue serving on the council at the same time, but if not "we have other people on the (Labor Party) list who are good as me."

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

Chills beyond the cold in 'Dark Matter'

HAUNTING, from page 1

read it in a lone Halloween night and rest easy. Bwahaha.

The journal is packaged as the fiction novel "Dark Matter" by Michelle Paver, a British author who made a couple trips to Svalbard in recent years to research the tale.

It's entertaining for the short time it takes to read the 250 well-spaced paperback pages. But aside from gripping descriptions of life alone in the harsh Arctic there's little not seen before in the horror story formula. Adding to that shortcoming is it begins with a "letter" 10 years after the expedition that gives away much of what's to come.

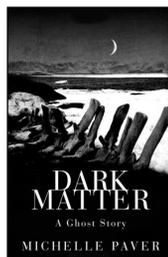
The protagonist is Jack Miller, who sees

two of his four companions drop out of the science expedition from London before it really gets going. Two more quickly vanish on Spitsbergen, leaving him alone – but, of course, not quite.

Miller's a bit of a bitter guy, finding his companions insufferable from the start, but his descriptions of hardship will likely be amusing for locals.

"God, what a dump," he observes in Longyearbyen. "A ramshackle settlement of some five hundred souls ... Ugly miners' barracks cowering at the feet of stark grey mountains. A cable runway strung along their flanks like a grimy necklace."

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



What's up

Oct. 26

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

Oct. 29

6 p.m.–midnight: Loy Krathong festival, with Thai food and dance. UNIS.

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.

Nov. 2-6

Kunstpause. See story on page 1.

Nov. 6

4 p.m.: Movie: "Kidnapped," Danish family/action, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

6 p.m.: Movie: "What's Your Number?" U.S. comedy, all ages. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Tropa de Elite: O Inimigo Agora É Outro," Brazilians action/drama, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

Nov. 8

7 p.m.: Municipal Council meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

Nov. 13

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

8 p.m.: Movie: "Das Lied in Mir," Thai drama, all ages. Kulturhuset.

Nov. 16

6 p.m.: Movie: "Footloose," U.S. drama/comedy, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

Nov. 17

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

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:

- Polar bear encounters up in N. America
- 50 km. visa-free Russia/Norway zone
- Life on Earth began in ... Greenland?
- Activists knitting sweaters for penguins