



J.T. Lauritsen, above far left, Billy Gibson, mid left, and Dave Fields play acoustic blues as children shake up the floor at the Kullungen day care center Friday during the Dark Season Blues festival. At right, the Longyearbyen bluegrass band Blåmyra performs a concert Friday night at Barentz Pub. The four-day festival celebrating the oncoming polar night is Svalbard's biggest annual music event.



## Seeing the light of night

*Musicians bring the burn for the prelude of polar winter during Dark Season Blues*

"Remember this: He makes the sun rise in the morning," proclaimed longtime Chicago bluesman Bobby Jones, rousing a crowd already fervent after an hour-long gospel concert at a packed Svalbard Church.

Except...not here He doesn't. At least not on this particular spot until sometime next March.

That wasn't dimming locals' mood – indeed it was cause for celebration during the seventh annual Dark Season Blues festival ending Sunday.

Organizers touting variety as one of the festival's strengths lived up to their billing as concerts ranged from morning nursery rhymes at a dark care center to mid-afternoon blue-

**Web exclusive:** Download the MP3 "78 North" by J.T. Lauritsen, Billy Gibson and Dave Fields free at [www.icepeople.net](http://www.icepeople.net).

grass at a free pub gig to an ear-shaking dual-stage evening marathon for those able to afford the 500 kroner admission.

Musicians also ranged from festival regulars to newcomers, residing locally, on the mainland and abroad. Even veterans mixed it up beyond the usual jams with other bands' members, including acclaimed Norwegian guitar/dobro player Knut Hem who brought a one-time collection of regular and guest players to perform as his Hemisfair group.

"It all depends on who is available," he said.

The group's opening gig on the first-floor  
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## Flu shots in short supply

*Initial 500 doses go quick, largely to residents most at risk; more vaccine expected in three weeks*

Andreas Eriksson had no intention of getting a flu shot, but it wasn't due to conspiracy fears about the government attempting mass genocide or mind control. He just figured others like his 18-month-old daughter Joanna need the limited number of vaccinations available more.

Eriksson was among those standing in long lines at Longyearbyen Hospital as 500 doses of the H1N1 vaccine were offered Saturday and Tuesday. Priority was given to those most vulnerable and at risk, including children and health care workers, with more vaccine expected to be available in about three weeks.

Jenny Jonsson, waiting with Eriksson for Joanna to her get shot, said her first inclination was not to get a flu shot because she's concerned overmedicating may cause problems by weakening the immune system. But seeing the impact of the H1N1 strain, which has killed nearly 5,000 people worldwide this year, changed her mind.

"With the deaths and the way the flu is spreading it makes sense to get it," she said. There are no known cases in Svalbard, but "sooner or later some of it will come here."

About 2,000 people in Norway have been infected with the virus and ten people have died from it as of Friday, according to government

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## 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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## 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.



Alex Hartley, left, stands atop a hill on Nowhere Island, a football field-size landmass long hidden by glaciers until he discovered it in 2004. The British artist plans to break up and tow the island on a barge to his homeland as part of a cultural exhibit for the 2012 Olympics before returning the land to its original location. Photos courtesy of nowhereisland.org.

## Svalbard island taking tour?

*British artist seeks to tow land long hidden by glaciers to 2012 Olympics for cultural exhibit*

It's not like anybody knew about the island until the ice camouflaging it melted, so surely borrowing it to spread the word about climate change isn't a problem.

Or so hopes Alex Hartley, a British artist planning to tow the tiny Svalbard landmass he discovered in 2004 to his homeland as part of a cultural exhibit during the 2012 Olympics. He would break up the terrain and transport it by barge to various ports en route to Southwest

England, bringing it back after the Games.

Hartley, who plans to be the only dweller on the island, will allow others to sign up as citizens and hopes to spark debate about "how owned the whole world is...issues of climate change, land grabs and the legal status of nationhood."

The British government has award Hartley £500,000 for the project, one of 12 in the exhibition. But it isn't a done deal since his application still needs to be approved by the Svalbard governor's office.

**There's more! Visit [www.icepeople.net](http://www.icepeople.net) for the complete story.**

## 'Tax porn' site reveals the riches

*Online database now includes Svalbard; questions of privacy vs. openness arise worldwide*

If your name is Terje or Marit, there's a good chance you're well off.

Such details about Norway's citizens are available using an online database showing their annual income, taxes paid and overall wealth. Residents living in Svalbard, who initially showed up as zeroes in each category, are now part of the list.

The database has generated headlines worldwide and is controversial among Norwegians as well, with a 2007 survey by the research group Synovate indicating 32 percent wanted the tax list published and 46 percent were opposed.

Advocates in Norway and abroad say it enhances transparency, an essential quality for an open democracy.

The tax list exemplifies a time-tested, distinctly Scandinavian custom of egalitarianism, said Christine Ingebritsen, a professor at the University of Washington, in an interview with *The Associated Press*.

"This is how you make sure that you're being legitimate in the eyes of the community -- you show that the wealth of a CEO isn't off the charts," she said, adding that unlike the U.S., Norway "places the wealth and health of all as a priority above the individual success stories."

Some opponents argue the list is "tax porn"

for people checking on neighbors and co-workers. Other detractors argue it's dangerous because it allows criminals to target the wealthy and causes social stigmas for low earners.

The information was available to the media until a more conservative government banned the practice in 2004. Three years later, a new, more liberal government reversed the legislation and allowed such information to be published online, allowing lists to be generated about practicalities and oddities such as what names have the highest income.

The database – in Norwegian but readable in other languages using Google Translate – is at <http://tjenester.skatteetaten.no>.

Longyearbyen residents can also see a print-out of Svalbard residents on the first floor of the post office/bank building.

Most other Europeans, including residents of Britain, Italy and the Netherlands, "would be horrified at such a setup," according to an AP analysis. The Spanish government recently released information on how much each Cabinet member is worth, but data on ordinary citizens is still private.

In Sweden the public can access the Taxation Calendar, listing the earnings of people in mid- to upper-income brackets, although Swedes whose financial information has been searched are notified by mail about who checked their details.

**Links to in-depth coverage of this story are available at [www.icepeople.net](http://www.icepeople.net).**



Aksel Bilicz, right, gives a vaccination for H1N1 flu to Tara Jakobsen, 3, as she's comforted by her father, Frank, at Longyearbyen Hospital on Saturday. Some locals waited more than an hour as an initial shipment of 500 doses was administered mostly to high-risk patients.

## Concerns about flu shots not deterring locals

### VACCINATIONS, from page 1

health officials. Up to 50 percent of students in some schools and kindergartens are absent and authorities are recommending vaccinations for everyone living in Norway.

Pregnant women and people with diabetes are among those considered most at risk. They and other Longyearbyen residents similarly classified were allowed first access to vaccinations Saturday and again when about 100 remaining doses were administered Tuesday.

Many others, including those lining up before Saturday's general public offering at 1 p.m., waited more than an hour as patients were brought in small groups to a room where shots were provided. Aksel Bilicz, a doctor at the hospital, said at 2 p.m. he planned to ask those not in high-risk groups to return Tuesday to ensure those most in need were cared for.

But on Tuesday the doctor told arriving locals the remaining doses would be limited to at-risk patients due to high demand. While a worldwide shortage of vaccine has resulted in frustration in many other places, there didn't

appear to be overt grumbling at the news.

Some countries are facing a "no-win" situation with vaccinations, as anger about the shortage is counterbalanced by those incensed at officials' high-profile campaigns urging the shots. Accusations of everything from drug companies profiteering by overhyping the disease to governments using the shots as "biological weapons of mass destruction for targeted populations" are rampant even beyond the fringe corners of the internet. Polls in countries such as France, Canada and the United States show large majorities don't intend to get vaccinations, although up to 70 percent in Sweden say they intend to do so.

Frank Jakobsen, a lifelong Svalbard resident at the hospital Saturday with his daughter Tara, 3, said he's heard the various concerns, but isn't too worried about them.

"I don't think they would give something to people that is doing harm," he said. "It's not a bigger risk than getting the flu."

**There's more! Visit [www.icepeople.net](http://www.icepeople.net) for the complete story.**

## HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

### Store Norske to trim using retirement, education plans

Store Norske will offer early retirement to workers ages 55 to 60 and offer educational support to others in an effort to eliminate 90 positions from its 400-person workforce by the end of next year. The mining company plans to scale back to 360 positions this year and 250 by 2015, said CEO Bjørn Arnestad. He said this year's reduction should be possible through attrition instead of layoffs, but future cuts will be more challenging. The company was hit by plummeting coal prices due to the global recession, but Arnestad said record prices in earlier years allowed the company to avoid more drastic cost-cutting measures.

### 600 locals to be interviewed about living conditions

Statistics Norway will be contacting about 600 Longyearbyen residents at random during the next three weeks to conduct interviews about living conditions. Topics will include housing, personal finance, living habits, alcohol consumption, smoking, physical activities and other subjects. In-person interviews are scheduled for November, with officials hoping to reach a range of locals, including foreigners, in Svalbard's population registry. A similar survey was conducted in 2000 and officials hope to continue conducting them about once every eight years.

### Mammal tracks from Mine 7 to be preserved for museum

Jørn Hurum, an official with Oslo's natural history museum, said an excavation of mammal tracks from Mine 7 will be attempted in November to preserve them before the section of the mine they are in is closed. The footprints were discovered in 2006 by Håvard Dyrkolbotn and Kent Solberg. Hurum's research determined they made by large mammals about 60 million years ago. He will work with local youths removing the footprints and giving them to the Svalbard Museum.

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Partly cloudy and cold. WNW winds at 14 km/h. High -11C (-18C wind chill), low -14C (-17C wind chill).	Partly cloudy and cold. N winds at 4 km/h. High -11C (-11C wind chill), low -14C (-16C wind chill).	Cold, a little snow. SSE winds at 19 km/h. High -10C (-17C wind chill), low -12C (-24C wind chill).	Snow changing to sleet. SSE winds at 35 km/h. High -2C (-13C wind chill), low -13C (-13C wind chill).

**Extended forecast:** Sunday, morning sleet, 1C (-1C), -4C (-6C); Monday, snow and sleet, -1C (-5C), -5C (-11C); Tuesday, snow and wind, -3C (-12C), -7C (-17C); Wednesday, snow and wind, -5C (-13C), -11C (-14C).

Data provided by [AccuWeather.com](http://AccuWeather.com)



Musicians including, from left, Håkon Høye, Bill Troiani, Joakim Tinderholt and Steve Edmondson play a midday jam session Friday at Barentz Pub as part of the Dark Season Blues festival.

## Future of blues festival uncertain

### FESTIVAL, from page 1

stage at Huset on Saturday night may have been higher profile, but the more rewarding effort – for musicians and audience – was an informal gathering earlier that day at Karls-Berger Pub, with listeners overflowing into the hallway to hear the free concert.

"It just sounds good, without microphones or anything, you know?" Hem said. "Something like that is what you play in your living room."

Hem's bassist, Bjørn Holm, also joined the Longyearbyen bluegrass band Blåmyra for its Friday night show at Barentz Pub.

"He is actually our mentor," said Elise Strømseng, the group's fiddle player. "He comes up here several times a year to help us."

Two other festival veterans, J.T. Lauritsen and Billy Gibson joined with regular co-player Dave Fields for his first trip to Svalbard. They played loud R&B at Kroa late into the night as the festival opened Thursday, then got up early to perform for a much more compact audience Friday morning at Kullungen day care center.

They introduced themselves to the youths with simple straightforward tunes like "Itsy Bitsy Spider" which, while the children sang in Norwegian, gave heft to the cliché about music being the universal language.

"We all know the same songs," Gibson told the kids. "When I was little these were the songs we learned to play, so that's really cool."

Once the trio switched to an acoustic rendition of the blues the kids, like most festival audiences, didn't stay seated long as they got into the groove with dances of their age like "The Somersault" and "The Floor Drag."

Money was tight this year due to the global recessions. Gry Sneltuedt, who booked the lineup and oversaw ticket sales, said attendance figures aren't available, but has a good feeling about the turnout and especially the response to this year's range of offerings.

But lingering concerns means next year's festival – like this year's – isn't certain. Officials will meet in November to assess the situation.

**There's more! Visit [www.icepeople.net](http://www.icepeople.net) for the complete story.**



Bobby Jones and Jackie Payne, above left, lead a gospel concert Sunday at Svalbard church. At right, Knut Hem and other members of Hemisfair play a bluegrass gig Saturday at Karls-Berger Pub

## What's up

### Oct. 30-Nov. 1

Firearms safety and beginner's course. Each class lasts all day. 750 kroner. For registration information call 4166 8362 after 5 p.m.

### Oct. 31

Sports exchange in Barentsburg.

Noon-4 p.m.: Open day at the science research center. UNIS.

9 p.m.: Concert by Liv Mari Scei with cellist Bernt Simen Lund. Brasseri Nansen. Admission 150 kroner adults, 80 kroner youths.

9 p.m. Halloween party with DJ at 10 p.m. and costume contest at midnight, Barentz Pub. No cover.

### Nov. 1-8

Operation DUPPEDITT: A nationwide campaign to gather environmentally harmful small electronics and dispose of them properly. More information is available at [www.operasjonduppedit.no](http://www.operasjonduppedit.no).

### Nov. 1

11 a.m.: NRK broadcast of All Saints' Day service from Svalbard Church.

6 p.m.: Movie: "Gubben & Katten - Glemlygheter," Swedish children's film with Norwegian subtitles, all ages. Huset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Vegas," Norwegian drama, ages 11 and up. Huset.

### Nov. 2

10:15 a.m.: Meeting of the environmental and food board. Næringsbygget 1, Tundra room.

### Nov. 3

10 a.m.: Meeting of the management committee. Næringsbygget 1, Tundra room.

### Nov. 5

2 p.m.: Meeting of the culture and leisure committee. 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:

- *Businesses face £370B in climate costs*
- *Fish allocation pact reached with Russia*
- *Seed vault inspires coral 'cryobank'*
- *Pamela Anderson's new anti-seal ads*