



Your taxes at play

Dog club expansion, larger climbing wall among biggest winners of annual cultural grants

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

A splurging of booze money by politicians may well raise a howl or have locals climbing the walls, but in this case that's a good thing.

A major expansion allowing the Longyearbyen Hundeklubb to offer programs for species other than huskies and a larger climbing wall at Svalbardhallen are among the bigger winners of this year's Korkpenger cultural grants from the city.

Forty-six projects will receive 2.47 million kroner out of 6.98 million requested for projects such as music festivals, youth camps, and recreational clubs with activities ranging from golfing to diving. The funds come from alcohol taxes collected by the city.

Svalbard Turn, which operates the climbing wall and numerous other recreational programs, is the single largest recipient. Grants include 100,000 kroner for the climbing wall and 700,000 kroner for other activities.

The organization requested a total of 1.67 million kroner but, as with most requests, a

See MONEY, page 4



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Yngve & his Boogie Legs, top, perform a short set during the official opening of this year's Dark Season Blues festival Thursday at Kulturhuset. At bottom left, a youth approaches Daniel Eriksen and Stig Sjøstrømtret with a box of improvised instruments during a kids' concert Friday at Kullungen Kindergarten. At bottom right, a full crowd packs into Mine 3 for a concert Saturday.

Authorities of noise

11th Dark Season Blues attracts one of the biggest crowds ever

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

It was the shortest of days, it was the longest of days.

Daniel Eriksen and Stig Sjøstrøm performed gigs spanning 18 hours the day before the sun made its last appearance for nearly four months near the beginning of this year's Dark

Season Blues festival. Beginning with a morning kids' concert involving plastic spoons and ending by bailing on a still-active jam session at 4 a.m., they still had ample time for the favored artists' perk of exploring the area.

If there was any "winter of despair," it came from listeners unable to get into venues

See FESTIVAL, page 3

Inside

Sun goes buh-bye and we're happy
Page 2

Headlines from Svalbardposten
- Surgeon leaves, blaming poor hospital leaders
- Barentsburg considering fish processing plant
- Tourism leaders want more Oct., Feb. visitors
Page 3

Weather forecast
Page 3

Events calendar
Page 4

Riches you can't earn with an MBA

UNIS photo contest winners put different perspective on college rituals from 'classrooms' to beer

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Filip Bielicki might be the only college student whose photo of classmates drinking enough beer to make a formidable stack of cans actually impresses prospective employers.

His image of five can pillars forming a "very confidential geological cross section" won second prize in the social life category of

See IMAGES, page 4



VALENTIN BICKEL / UNIS

A walrus basking in the sun won second place in the nature category of the UNIS photo contest.

Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

Editor

Mark Sabbatini

Principal of principles

Kristan Hutchison

Psychiatrist

Irene Gallion

Accomplice

Jeff Newsom

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.

A most-justified practice of police force



Svalbard police officers, right, prepare to enter a room in the marine laboratory at Ny-Ålesund where a man has barricaded himself with weapons, at least in the scenario of a training exercise involving police and other emergency officials last week. Such exercises are being required more often in Norway following the attacks of July 22, 2011. Above, police gather near an Airlift helicopter also involved in the rescue. A 2013 risk assessment by the Svalbard governor's office of "serious international events" calls the risk of lethal violence small, but "it is important to practice these situations," said Police Chief Superintendent Jon Starheimsæter, who took the photos of the drill.



Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

Time again to say **goodbye and good riddance to the sun, which set for the last time in Longyearbyen at 1:04 p.m. Oct. 26 until next Feb. 16** (although most locals won't see it actually peek out from the mountains until March 8). The timing of the final sunset coincided nicely with the Dark Season Blues concert a short time later at Mine 3, which offers some great panoramic views, but the gassy giant didn't see fit to send as much as a hint of its presence through a dense cover of low clouds. Fine by us, since science and scuttlebutt has established Longyearbyen as maybe the only small Arctic community that's happier in constant dark rather than constant light, thanks to close-knit locals active in a nearly non-stop range of celebratory and recreational events ... Then there's **the town of Rjukan, which decided it was so desperate to see the sun it placed three 17-square-meter mirrors on a mountain to reflect rays into the market square**. The town is normally shrouded in shadow for nearly half the year, but news reports noted "cheering families, some on sun loungers, drinking cocktails and waving Nor-



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Behold, a glorious Arctic sunset: Yeah, it's hard to see behind the near-zero visibility cloud cover, but appreciate it anyhow because it's the last one most Longyearbyen residents will see until next March.

wegian flags, donned shades" for the debut of the mirrors. Then again they've waited a long time, since the idea apparently was first envisioned a century ago by a Norwegian industrialist named Sam Eyde who essentially built the town to provide workers for a hydroelectric plant ... Taking some of the locals back a few years further was **Svalbard's Most Famous Monster Man, as paleontologist Jørn Hurum returned to Longyearbyen for a week of fossil lectures at UNIS and a pair of kids events focusing on dinosaurs of the Arctic**. He read to the youths his 2012 book "Monsterøglene på Svalbard" ("Monster Lizards on Svalbard") on Thursday at the Longyearbyen Library, then expanded his tales to include his dino research in other northern areas such as Alaska at workshop Saturday at the Svalbard Museum. Hurum, who gained notoriety during nearly a decade of dinosaur excavations in Svalbard for discovering numerous new species including the "Predator X" marine reptile, continues to be prominently featured by *National Geographic* in a "Sea Monsters" blog available at <http://tinyurl.com/pcwr6r3>.



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Funny, they don't like the monsters under the bed: But somehow they can't get enough of the ones that roamed Svalbard's Jurassic Park.



Knut Reiersrud and Hallvard T. Bjørgum, above, play an acoustic instrumental blues duet during a concert at Svalbard Church on Sunday, the final day of the four-day Dark Season Blues Festival. At left, a couple dances to a song by the Billy T Band during a blues lunch Saturday at Barentz Pub. The lunch was one of several free events, which often were the easiest to get into as capacity crowds packed venues at paid events. Photos by Mark Sabbatini / Icepeople.

Easiest ways to get the blues often free

FESTIVAL, from page 1

packed with capacity crowds at or near record levels. Organizers, who have increased the number of bands performing during the past two years, said they may try to remedy the overcrowding problem by expanding the number of daytime events next year.

Space wasn't a problem when Eriksen and Sjøstrøm, both among the Norwegians comprising the majority of performers, played their Friday morning concert at Kullungen Kindergarten. Instruments were since Sjøstrøm was only able to bring a limited number of drums, but his request to the kids for help resulted in a liberal offering of items consisting mostly of kitchen utensils.

That wasn't entirely spontaneous, as many

of the gadgets – decorated with ribbons – were in the possession of the youths who became temporary members of the band.

"The first song we'll just sort of introduce ourselves," Eriksen suggested when they arrived at 10 a.m. to prepare for the show. After that "it should be about getting them to play."

Among the public events, some of the easiest to get into turned out to be the free ones. An official opening ceremony at Kulturhuset on Thursday night featuring short sets from several bands drew a large, but not capacity, crowd. Two midday blues lunches on Friday and Saturday at Barentz Pub also had room for more listeners.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Longtime surgeon leaves, calls hospital leaders poor

Kari Schröder Hansen, a surgeon at Longyearbyen Hospital for the past five years, is sharply criticizing the facility's management as she departs for an executive position at the Norwegian Medical Association in Oslo. "(There is) a substantial gap between what I think should be a requirement for competence and quality assurance in Longyearbyen hospital, and what management at the hospital thinks is good enough," she wrote in a letter to *Svalbardposten*. She said doctors risk becoming outdated in their field because they don't get enough practice Longyearbyen and offering better training is essential so they retain their motivation. John Shaft Bilicz, the hospital's department leader, said ample time is provided for studies and work experience elsewhere, and Hansen is "a single doctor who has a different opinion than the other colleagues."

Barentsburg may turn to fish processing as mining drops

Russian officials are considering building a fish-processing plant in Barentsburg to boost the settlement's economy due to severe setbacks in mining in recent years. The plant, which could cost up to 60 million euro and process 80,000 tons of fish a year, is in the consulting stages, said Alexander Anatolievich Sagaidak, chief executive officer of Arctic Resource Norge, who is discussing the proposal with Moscow investors. The plant would process pelagic species such as herring, since Russia is Norway's largest export for the fish. There are numerous practical questions, including few harbors in the Barents Sea and a migration of other invasive species due to climate change.

Tourism leaders seeking to boost business in Oct., Feb.

Increasing the number of visitors to Svalbard during October and February was the focus of a meeting Friday involving officials from about 20 tourism companies. There were 23 percent more guest nights during the first nine months compared to 2012, but a concern is about 75 percent of the increase is from Norwegians, and a better balance is needed for when the country's economy isn't as strong.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Snow. S winds to 32 km/h. High -5C (-10C wind chill), low -8C (-14C wind chill).	Cloudy. E winds to 45 km/h. High -5C (-9C wind chill), low -10C (-17C wind chill).	Cloudy. E winds to 72 km/h. High -7C (-16C wind chill), low -9C (-20C wind chill).	Snow. E winds to 79 km/h. High -6C (-16C wind chill), low -8C (-19C wind chill).
24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness
Extended forecast: Sunday, p. cloudy, -7C (-14C), -9C (-18C), light 0:00h; Monday, clear, -8C (-13C), -10C (-16C), light 0:00h; Tuesday, p. cloudy, -8C (-17C), -11C (-18C), light 0:00h; Wednesday, cloudy, -7C (-15C), -8C (-17C), light 0:00h			

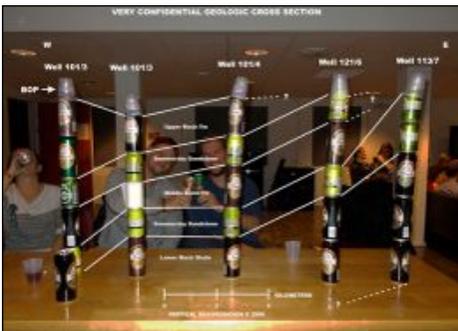
Data provided by storm.no



PIETER-JAN D'HONDT / UNIS



ROBERT PFAU / UNIS



FILIP BIELICKI / UNIS



VEGARD BRÅTHEN / UNIS



ROBERT PFAU / UNIS

A yawning Arctic fox, top left, earned Pieter-Jan D'Hondt first place in a photo competition at The University Centre in Svalbard. Other winners, clockwise with photographers' names beneath, captured ice core drilling, a seismic explosion at Svea, a "geological core" made of beer cans and a skier.

Putting a different focus on college life

IMAGES, from page 1

a photography competition at The University Centre in Svalbard. More than 100 photos were entered in fieldwork, nature and social life categories, with many such as Bielicki's offering a different perspective of college traditions.

"It's just fun," said Eva Therese Jensen, UNIS' information manager and head of the jury judging the photos, of Bielicki's entry. She said the picture stood out because "most of the social life pictures were in the nature."

Some familiar names were among the winners, sometimes more than once. Robert Pfau, whose northern lights photo is featured in UNIS promotional publications, won second place in the fieldwork category for an image of a seismic explosion at Svea and first place in the social life category for a skiing photo.

Other first-place winners include Vegard

Bråthen for an ice core drilling photo and Pieter-Jan D'Hondt for a yawning Arctic fox. The other second-place winner was Valentin Bickel's picture of a walrus basking in the sun.

Third-place winners were Carl Ballantine's profile of an underwater diver, Larissa Beumer's image of a polar bear jumping off an ice floe toward a cub in the water and D'Hondt's picture of two swimming diving into glacier-chilled waters.

UNIS hosted the competition for students attending during the spring or fall of 2013 as part of the university's 20th anniversary celebration. First-prize winners in each category will receive a travel voucher worth 3,000 kroner, while second- and third-place winners will receive 1,000 kroner of UNIS gear.

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

Last-minute funds boost cultural projects

MONEY, from page 1

lower amount was recommended by City Administrator Svein Olav Ween. His recommendation of 700,000 kroner was increased by the city's Administration Committee when they met to determine the final awards Monday, one of the few instances where a higher amount was awarded.

The biggest increase recommended by the committee went to the Longyearbyen Hundeklub, which is hoping to expand its offerings with a 645,000-kroner upgrade that doubles its

kennel space. Ween's recommendation of 30,000 kroner was increased to 200,000 by the committee, which Mayor Christin Kristoffersen telling *Svalbardposten* more funding may be provided depending on how the initial stage of expansion goes.

Icepeople, which requested 70,000 kroner to help cover publishing expenses, received 50,000 kroner, 10,000 kroner more than Svein's recommendation.

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

What's up

Oct. 31

7 p.m.: Documentary: "The Living Longyearbyen," featuring the lives of five local residents. Free. Kulturhuset.

Nov. 2

Midnight-10:30 p.m.: Movie marathon w/ discount prices. Screenings include "Thor: The Dark World" (midnight, 30 kr.), "Fly" (3D) (11 a.m., 50 kr.), Solan og Ludvig: Jul i Flåklypa (1 p.m., 30 kr.), "Detektiv Downs" (3 p.m., 30 kr.), "The Green Bicycle" (5 p.m., 50 kr.), "2 Guns" (7 p.m., 50 kr.) and "Metallica – Through The Never" (3D) (9 p.m., 50 kr.). Kulturhuset.

6-10 p.m.: Loi Krathong celebration, featuring traditional Thai food and entertainment. UNIS.

Nov. 3

6 p.m.: Movie: "Fly," U.S. family/animated film dubbed in Norwegian, all ages. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Thor: The Dark World" (3D), U.S. action/fantasy, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

Nov. 4

7 p.m.: Lecture: "My Life As A Man," by former Svalbard Gov. Ann Kristin Olsen. Svalbard Museum.

8 p.m.: Trivia quiz. Barentz Pub.

Nov. 6-10

Kunstpause Svalbard. Full schedule of events at www.kunstpause.no and in the Nov. 5 issue of *Icepeople*.

Nov. 11

8 p.m.: Trivia Quiz. Barentz Pub.

Nov. 12

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

Nov. 13

6 p.m.: Movie: "The Family," U.S./French gangster/crime, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

Nov. 14

6 p.m.: Dance performance: "Dances With Polar Bears" by 55 students from various arts groups. 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:

- Nations reject Antarctic marine reserve
- Greenland ends ban on uranium mining
- Inside the Greenpeace 30's Russian jail
- Reindeer changing eye color for winter