



A novel and frenetic 'rest'



Workers bring a sawhorse through the front entrance of Longyearbyen's new culture center this week in preparation for a theater performance Friday that will be the first at the multipurpose facility.

Annual KunstPause festival features first performance at new culture center, abundance of arts

Not to say anything else will be conformist, but one event in particular assures this year's KunstPause will be a landmark event.

An experimental theater performance Friday will be the first in Longyearbyen's new culture center. Beyond that the four-day festival, promoted as a relaxing break from everyday life and routines, offers live entertainment ranging from Dylan interpretations to painting, lectures from academics and a "professional transient," and participation in events from sing-along hymns to a march through the cold to a communal fire.

"Eksperimentet," performed at 7:30 p.m. Friday by the Jo Strømgren Kompani, is anything but a safe all-audiences pick for the debut of the

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Losing on court, but winning the prize

Barentsburg struggles in sports exchange, but Russians part with loot and a news of a reopen mine

They didn't fare as well without the home-court advantage, but visitors from Barentsburg returned home with plenty of prizes – and the news they're back in the mining business.

The visiting Russians lost four of the six competitions in various events Saturday during one of four annual sports exchanges with Longyearbyen. The games at Svalbardhallen happened to be on the same day as an annual flea market, so afterward the Norwegian hosts let their guests pillage the remainders for free.

"Most of the clothes were taken," wrote Kjersti Elverum Kvile, a volunteer at the sale, in an **See RUSSIANS, page 2**



A Longyearbyen football player approaches the Barentsburg goal during a sports exchange between the two towns at Svalbardhallen on Saturday. Longyearbyen won, avenging an earlier loss at Barentsburg.

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Thais bring heat to a chilly night

Loi Krathong celebration offers food and music, but no indoor river

It's a festival of light where little boats are sent floating down rivers. No problem, except for the constant dark of polar night and there isn't much water flowing when it's 50 degrees Celsius colder than your homeland.

But about 25 natives of one of the hottest regions on Earth brought the flavor of one of their national holidays to one of the coldest Saturday. They hosted a Loi Krathong celebration Saturday night at The University Centre in Svalbard with food, music and Thai trinkets, although they had to skip an indoor pond from past years used to float the hallmark boats.

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Norwegians fill up on hot-climate cuisine during a Loi Krathong celebration Saturday at The University Centre in Svalbard.

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.



Vilde Storø, 10, examines toys Saturday at the annual flea market at The University Centre in Svalbard. The market raised 31,000 kroner as part of a nationwide fundraiser for refugees in war-torn countries and many of the leftovers were claimed free by visiting Russians from Barentsburg.

Barentsburg scores big in defeat

RUSSIANS, from page 1

e-mail interview. "It was the same with glasses, cups, children's games and three televisions."

Barentsburg won the chess and table tennis matches, while Longyearbyen prevailed in hockey, badminton, volleyball and football. The latter avenged a loss when the Norwegians visited the smaller town and "pitch" (the hardwood gymnasium floor) of their Russian neighbors, which Håvard Øverli said is in "very poor" condition.

"We have a better team (this time), the Longyearbyen captain said, although he was exhorting his teammates to hustle up and down the field after a 1-1 first half in which "we didn't play so well."

But returning home to work – even in defeat – was a big deal for the visitors as NRK reported Saturday the Russian state company Trust Arktikugol has restarted coal mining after a two-and-a-half-year interruption.

Production came to a halt after a fire in the mine in 2008. Sea water was pumped into the mine to extinguish the fire, which subsequently destroyed equipment and required a major overhaul of production. Restarting production was further hampered by a collapse in coal prices.

Officials estimate there are at least 10 years of production remaining in the mine.

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

Briefly

Seed vault gets another 42,627 samples of rice

Another 42,627 seed samples from various types of rice are now inside the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, courtesy of the facility's largest single-crop depositor.

The International Rice Research Institute sent the samples last week, supplementing an initial deposit of 70,180 samples when the seed vault opened in February 2008. The initial deposit was the largest of the inaugural contributors.

"After this second deposit, IRRI now has the largest number of samples of a single crop and its wild relatives, coming from the largest number of countries, stored in Svalbard," said Ruaraidh Sackville Hamilton, head of IRRI's International Rice Genebank (IRG).

The samples sent to Norway are duplicates of rice conserved at IRRI's IRG in Los Baños, in the Philippines, which houses the world's largest collection of rice genetic diversity, the organization said in a statement. About 110,000 different types of rice are kept in long-term storage, the "base" collection, and in

medium-term storage for distribution, the "active" collection.

Ice skating rink opens, snow clearers wanted

Longyearbyen's ice skating rink, located next to Polarflokken kindergarten, is open for the winter season. The outdoor rink is lighted and has a small open shelter for changing into skates. The rink is kept clear of snow by any volunteers interested in doing so.

New red list status for Svalbard vascular plants

An update to the "red list" for vascular plants in Svalbard, the first since 2006, indicates more are descending than rising the at-risk categorization.

Four species were removed, 15 categorized lower and eight listed as higher, according to a statement issued this week by The University Center in Svalbard. Full details of the study are available at www.unis.no.



Thai residents of Longyearbyen perform a traditional dance during a Loi Krathong celebration Saturday at The University Centre In Svalbard.

Fire in food and dance, but no water

THAIS, from page 1

Thailand natives are by far the largest non-Norwegian group of residents among the more than 30 nationalities living here, with 96 as of July 1 compared to second-place Sweden with 57, according to Statistics Norway. Their Loi Krathong celebration in Longyearbyen was about more than meshing cultures, as the evening raised about 20,000 kroner for a nationwide fundraiser to aid refugees in war-torn countries.

Loi Krathong, observed during the full moon of the 12th month in the traditional Thai lunar calendar, is a "festival of lights" celebrated in Thailand and Laos, with hundreds of thousands of decorated krathong (traditional banana leaf floats) set adrift in rivers and waterways.

Guests in Longyearbyen were greeted by lavishly dressed Thai hosts at the entrance to the dining room, where a small Christmas tree was also being decorated and small Thai toys being offered to children.

The Thai volunteers spent three days preparing the buffet meal and three weeks rehearsing dances for the four-hour celebration, said Khanittha Sinpru, 21, who moved to Longyearbyen with her family eight years ago from the northeast Thai city of Nakhonphanom. Even so, the preparation time wasn't enough for everything they wanted this year, including the

indoor pond.

"We had a really short time this year," she said. "We'll do better next year."

The menu was "what the Norwegian people can eat and what is popular with them," although there's always an effort to throw in something novel, Sinpru said. Popular items included spring rolls and satay, while the new entry was fish in red curry (none of the ubiquitous pad thai, but the spice in the peanut sauce definitely exceeded the average fast-food pallet). Opinions from diners, predictably for a buffet, tended to favor whatever was freshly made when they went through the line.

The presence of Thais in Svalbard is evident in everyday aspects such as a healthy presence of native foods at the supermarket and on restaurant menus (whale stir-fry, anyone?). Sinpru, who works as a server at the Radisson BLU Polar Hotel, said she isn't making plans to leave anytime soon.

The one thing she misses most that's commonly available in her homeland?

"Wicker tables," she said. "It's very difficult to buy them here. You have to go to the mainland."

As for the best difference, it's the same thing that brings many mainland Norwegian here – economic opportunity.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Man abandons year outdoors because clothes won't dry

A Dutch man hoping to spend the winter at Petuniabukta as part of a one-year project living in tents and snow caves had to abandon the effort Saturday as he was evacuated by helicopter because he was unable to dry his clothes. The man in his late 40s was skiing to his main camp when he got caught in a storm, according to Trond Aagesen of the Svalbard governor's office. "He got wet on the trip and could not dry his clothes in the emergency snow shelter he made," Aagesen said. "Since he could not get dry clothes, he found it advisable not to proceed." The man notified the governor's office about his situation at 2 a.m. Saturday and at 8:30 a.m. told them he was abandoning his trip that started in September.

Better snowmobiling season expected with deeper freeze

This winter may prove more favorable for snowmobilers than the past few years as more ice cover is expected in the fjords this winter, according to Jørgen Berge, a professor of marine biology at The University Centre In Svalbard. He said the waters off the west coast of Spitsbergen are colder, reversing a warm period that began in 2006 when warm Atlantic currents entered the fjords. Salt water freezes at minus 1.8 degrees Celsius and temperatures in Kongsfjorden dropped below zero in September.

Nordsyssel ends sailing season without sendoff

The *Nordsyssel*, used by the Svalbard's governor's office for multiple purposes, ended its sailing season and departed Longyearbyen today without the usual goodbye ceremony. In recent years the ship departed the first Sunday of Advent, with a speech by the governor and singing from residents sending it on its way. Last year the *Nordsyssel* had to depart the first week in November due to budgetary reasons, but the governor is seeking to extend the season since it is an important part of the area's emergency preparedness services. This year's sailing season was 210 days, and the ship will likely return in late April or May of next year.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Fair. S winds at 7 km/h. High -22C (-28C wind chill), low -27C (-34C wind chill).	Cloudy. SE winds at 15 km/h. High -12C (-19C wind chill), low -23C (-33C wind chill).	Cloudy. ESE winds at 15 km/h. High -18C (-27C wind chill), low -20C (-29C wind chill).	Cloudy. E winds at 15 km/h. High -14C (-22C wind chill), low -16C (-24C wind chill).
Sunrise: 0:00 Sunset 0:00	Sunrise: 0:00 Sunset 0:00	Sunrise: 0:00 Sunset 0:00	Sunrise: 0:00 Sunset 0:00

Extended forecast: Sunday, cloudy, -14C (-22C), -15C (-23C), light 0:00h; Monday, cloudy, -12C (-18C), -14C (-20C), light 0:00h; Tuesday, cloudy, -12C (-18C), -14C (-20C), light 0:00h; Wednesday, cloudy, -14C (-20C), -16C (-22C), light 0:00h.

Data provided by yr.no



TreGangerTre, seen above during a 2009 KunstPause concert, returns to this year's festival to perform a Norwegian interpretation of Bob Dylan's landmark album "Blood on the Tracks." The Saturday performance at the Radisson BLU Polar Hotel includes a formal three-course dinner. At right, the Jo Strømgren Kompani performs "Eksperimentet" in Barentsburg on Wednesday before taking the stage Friday in Longyearbyen.



Taking dares at a festival of rest

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new center. The description states it involves "four patriotic women who participate as volunteers in a secret experiment" where gibberish is the language and things don't seem quite right.

"We will also show 'traditional/safe' theater, but find it exciting to be able to present something special at this debut in the culture center," wrote Roger Zahl Ødegård, the city's cultural advisor, in an e-mail interview. "We wanted something completely new (it opened in Estonia in spring and was at the Bergen International Festival in the spring). We became acquainted with the Jo Strømgren Kompani with the show 'Departementet' during the Porsgrunn Internasjonale Teaterfestival in 2008 and it was fun."

The center is not quite finished, with some furniture and technical equipment remaining to be installed, but the performance is among a few that will allow the facility to be tested before the official opening Dec. 3, Ødegård wrote.

A more divergent offering is the opening reception at 6 p.m. Thursday, when four art exhibitions and a crafts market will be offered at Galleri Svalbard. The featured artist is abstract painter Kari Nordheim, who will paint live during the reception and from 2-3 p.m. the other days other the festival.

A procession starting at Titankrana at 11 a.m. Saturday will arrive to a larger outdoor market in the central square at noon this year, where games, merchandise, food and other diversions will await.

Saturday night's featured event is a concert of Bob Dylan's "Blood on the Tracks" interpreted in Norwegian. It will be performed by the Norwegian folk group TreGangerTre at the Radisson BLU Polar Hotel.

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

KunstPause schedule

Thursday

- 6 p.m.: Opening reception, debut of four photo and painting exhibits, and arts and crafts fair. Galleri Svalbard.

- 8 p.m.: Lecture by Frode Skarstein, author of an unauthorized biography of Helge Ingstad, the first Norwegian explorer to reach North America. Longyearbyen Library.

Friday

- Noon: Northern Lights lecture. 50 kroner. UNIS.
- 7:30 p.m.: "Eksperimentet" theater performance by the Jo Strømgren Kompani. Debut show in Longyearbyen's new culture center. 200 kroner adults/150 kroner youths.

Saturday

- 11 a.m.: Longyearbyen March. Starts at Titankrana and ends at central square. Transportation from UNIS at 10:30 a.m. Soup station at Bykaia and discount food at Huset.
- 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.: Freshly pressed lithographs by Ofal Storø. Also available 1-4 p.m. Sunday.
- Noon - 2 p.m.: Outdoor market in central square. Fire pit, children's games, sled dogs, craft sales and other events.

- 2 p.m.: Paul Olai-Olssen, a "professional vagabond," presents a storytelling/photo/video exhibit of his travels. In Sami tent at market parking lot entrance.

- 4 p.m.: Lecture about Arctic glaciers. UNIS.
- 7:30 p.m.: Concert: TreGangerTre presents Tom Roger Aadland's Norwegian interpretation of Bob Dylan's "Blood On The Tracks" album. Includes three-course dinner and art auction. Radisson BLU Polar Hotel.

Sunday

- Noon: Lecture about Arctic mammals. UNIS.
- 5 p.m.: Photography exhibit by Bryndis Snæbjörnsdóttir and Mark Wilson of all stuffed polar bears in the United Kingdom with narratives about the animals. Will remain on display until April 2011. Svalbard Museum.
- 7 p.m.: "Hymns in the Polar Night" by local musicians. Svalbard Church.

What's up

Nov. 11-14

KunstPause Svalbard, featuring concerts, art exhibitions and other activities throughout Longyearbyen. Full schedule at left.

Nov. 14

11 a.m.: Baptism Liturgy. Svalbard Church.

Nov. 16

7 p.m.: Evening gathering and open fireplace. Svalbard Church.

Nov. 22

10:15 a.m.: Environmental and Economic Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 1, Tundra room.

Nov. 23

10 a.m.: Administration Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 1, Tundra room.

7 p.m.: Leif Magne Helgesen hosts a talk with Svalbard Gov. Odd Olsen Ingerø. Svalbard Church.

Nov. 26

7:30 p.m.: Concert by Kor:Z, a choir of about 45 members who will perform Joni Mitchell compositions. Debut performance on the main stage Longyearbyen's new culture center. Admission 100 kroner.

Nov. 27

6 p.m.: "Spitsbergen Up and Down" prologue hosted by Trollsteinen's Venner. Information available by contacting spitsbergenupanddown@gmail.com.

Nov. 28

11 a.m.: First Sunday of Advent liturgy with Kor:Z choir. Svalbard Church.

Nov. 30

7 p.m.: Evening gathering and open fireplace. Svalbard Church.

Dec. 2

7 p.m.: Official opening of Longyearbyen Culture Center with concerts and presentations. Admission 200 kroner adults, 150 kroner students/seniors.

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:

- *Scandinavia, Iceland probe U.S. spying*
- *New icebreakers key to Arctic presence*
- *Fire grounds Boeing jet tested in Svalbard*
- *Whale sunburn linked to thinning ozone*