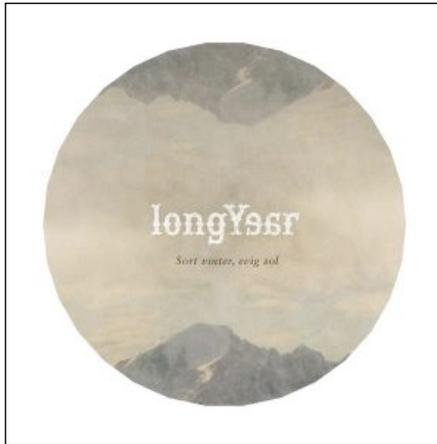
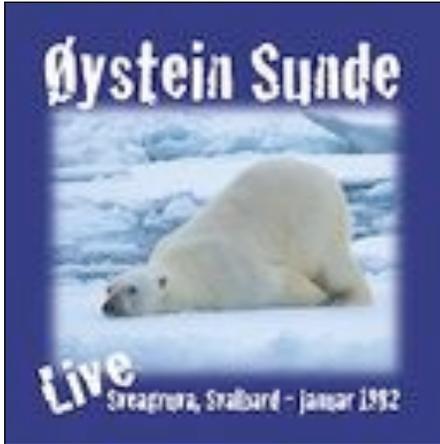




**REVIEWS: An old legend vs. a new prospect**



Øystein Sunde's "Live: Sveagruva, Svalbard – Januar 1982" and Longyear's "Sort Vinter, Evig Sol" are two Svalbard-centric albums that, at the moment, are a bit hard to find in Svalbard.

## Two albums, two crowds

*Øystein Sunde sets the bar for local live albums with a concert at Svea from 30 years ago*

**By MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

It's a bit worrisome going into an album thinking you damn well *better* like it or there's something seriously wrong with you.

A legendary performer, the historic legacy of concert 30 years ago at the Svea coal mine, and a stack of five-star and 9/10 reviews (unread before writing this, so as not to prejudice) sets the expectations bar sky high.

Also, not being inclined to give rave reviews (my first in Svalbard infamously criticized kids in a talent show) meant again potentially looking like a cranky outsider.

So to kill the suspense immediately: This thing is damned near a masterpiece.

See **CONCERT**, page 4

*Debut by new band Longyear maintains steady mainstream pace on acoustic pop/folk trail*

**By MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

For those looking for a solid Svalbard musical portrait that doesn't convey an image of drunken miscreants, this is the pick.

Sveinung Lystrup Thesen, a member of the Longyearbyen bluegrass band Blåmyra, has joined up with two mainlanders to form the band Longyear. The group's debut album, "Sort Vinter, Evig Sol" (translation: Black Winter, Eternal Sunshine"), is a pleasingly acoustic pop/folk compilation that, while not blazing new trails, doesn't wander off them into a wasteland.

The 12-song, 40-minute album, easily found in CD and digital formats at numerous

See **NEWCOMER**, page 4

# 'Mayor' Kjell Mork dies

*Longtime leader active in nearly every aspect of Longyearbyen falls ill after short retirement*

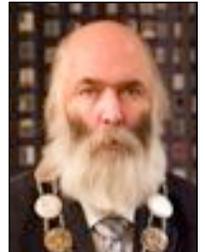
**By MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

Barely more than a year ago Kjell Mork handed over the key to the city's highest office, saying he hoped to relax between his still numerous community activities catching up on his enormous collection of unread books at his new seaside home.

His "retirement," after serving more than 30 years in virtually every possible organization and activity in Longyearbyen, proved all too short.

Mork, 64, died Wednesday (Nov. 21) in Kristiansand after a brief illness. Flags in Longyearbyen were flown at half-mast to honor a

See **MAYOR**, page 3



**KJELL MORK**

## Inside

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## An SOS cry during SAS crisis

*Only airline to Svalbard avoids bankruptcy, but revives isolation risks as labor issues increase*

**By MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

Considering Norway is one of the world's happiest and wealthiest countries, with an unemployment rate of three percent, it seems like a lot of fellow citizens are threatening to isolate Svalbard from the world these days.

Scandinavian Airlines avoided bankruptcy this week by getting workers to accept lower

See **GROUNDLED**, page 2



**MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE**

Passengers go through security at Svalbard Airport this week after Scandinavian Airlines reaches a labor agreement to avoid bankruptcy.

## Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

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## Copyright stuff

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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.

## No, this isn't Svalbard's 'other white meat'



DAN FISHER

A white humpback whale, only the second known to exist, swims off the coast of Spitsbergen in August. Dan Fisher, a maritime engineer from the United Kingdom who took the photograph, nicknamed the mammal Willow the White Whale. Scientists speculate the whale may be leucistic, which affects pigments in a way that doesn't result in the pink-eye characteristic of albinism (which the other known white whale has), according to Life's Little Mysteries.

## Gov't: Help for Svalbard if SAS failed

### GROUNDING, from page 1

pay and more work. It's the second time during the past few months a labor crisis has sparked fears of flights being halted between Svalbard and the mainland, despite reassurances from government and business leaders the link is vital and emergency services would be provided in any event.

"Transport of perishable goods and mail, as well as air ambulance services are not affected," the Svalbard governor's office announced last week in a statement, adding the Norway's transportation ministry would help limit the consequences for travelers and other if necessary.

SAS also stated the 10 employees at Svalbard Airport would not lose their jobs if a bankruptcy or other reorganization occurred.

Another disruption was mostly avoided earlier this year when labor unions throughout Norway went on strike, although some interruption of shipments occurred.

And while some local travelers said the announced resumption of flights by Norwegian Air to Svalbard next spring will ease concerns about depending on a single airline, pilots for that airline threatened their first-ever strike this year.

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

## Icesheet

### Random bits of the week's weirdness:

We had a bit of fun last week writing how Mars may have once been similar enough to Svalbard to support life, presumably the microscopic kind water would make possible. But **scientists pulled a Ray Bradbury this week by suggesting humans might find living on Mars not all that different than here.** "Not only is there more water than had been thought, some areas of Mars may be more like Svalbard than they seem from space," an article declared at The Register, a London science and tech website. "As opposed to red sand, they actually be rocky – and, like Svalbard, they may have rock caves formed by snow and ice in the past, suitable for human habitation" ... **Norway sends a warship to Svalbard "to show presence on Svalbard and in the surrounding waters," three military branches are engaging in a 10-day joint Arctic exercise, and Russia steps up its war of northern aggression against the area's salmon fishing rules.** That's just the stuff at the top of the *Bar-*

*ents Observer's* most read/commented list in this week's "What Arctic Cold War?" news. On the other hand, Republicans pols in the U.S., still pissed they lost to "BarackOFraudo," **axed the CIA's climate program, so the folks at SvalSat will have one less alleged illegal military action on their hands ... Africa, however, is very concerned about our misery in the winter climate as a "Radi-Aid" music video is promoting a campaign to send radiators to frostbitten Norwegians.** As the chorus explains: "In Norway kids are freezing / It's time for us to care / There's heat enough for Norway / If Africans would share." The hot details are at [www.africafornorway.no](http://www.africafornorway.no) ... Finally, here's one of those staggering stats about just how far climate change has progressed. The U.S. National Climatic Data Center reports **October was the 332nd month in a row of above-average global temperatures. That means nobody younger than 27 has lived for a single month with colder-than-average global temperatures.**



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE



LONGYEARBYEN LOKALSTYRE

Kjell Mork, top, unloads fliers from his car as one of his last political duties shortly before the October 2011 municipal election in Longyearbyen. At bottom left, a memorial book at the municipal building awaits signatures following Mork's death Wednesday. At bottom right, Mork helps Jakob Kernitz, 2, preside over the opening of Polarflokken kindergarten during a ceremony in 2007.

## Mork 'the incarnation of Spitsbergen'

### MAYOR, from page 1

man who gained the nickname of "mayor" for his seeming ubiquitous presence and influence.

"He was the incarnation of Spitsbergen I think," said Christin Kristoffersen, who succeeded Mork as leader of the Longyearbyen Community Council last October.

While Mork was a driving force behind many large projects, Kristoffersen said her strongest memories of him are more personal efforts such as getting youths involved in politics.

A memorial service for Mork is scheduled at 2 p.m. Nov. 28 at Svalbard Church. A book for people to write tributes will be at the municipal building until it is brought to the church for the service. He will be interred Nov. 30 at Oddernes Church in Kristiansand.

Mork moved to Svalbard as a faculty member at Longyearbyen School in 1977. He was a champion ski slalom racer before relocating and among his community activities here was estab-

lishing a ski lift now on the hill across from the school.

He became a board member of the Svalbard Museum in 1984 and served as its chairman since 1988. He also was a board member of the Svalbard Environmental Protection Fund and deputy director of The University Centre in Svalbard.

He became chairman of the Longyearbyen council when Bjørn Fjukstad resigned in 2006, and was elected to the position in 2007. He retained the position until last year's election.

Mork received the King's Medal of Merit in silver in September of 2011.

He and his wife, Ingeborg, divided his short retirement time between a home in Kristiansand and seaside house in Longyearbyen, the location of which prompted *Svalbardposten* to call him the world's northernmost permanent resident.

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

## HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

### NPRA: Traffic school violates safety, other rules with kids

A traffic school in Longyearbyen is violating numerous instructional, administrative and safety requirements, according to the Norwegian Public Roads Administration "It is a serious matter, and the most serious discrepancy is that it is using personnel who are not qualified," said Thomas Teigstad, a consultant for NPRA's northern Norway office. The investigation of the school operated by Ingeniør G. Paulsen was prompted by multiple complains from youths and their parents. Most are related to snowmobile instruction for youths, including a lack of hands-on maintenance and driving experience, too many pupils per class, and unsafe driving in the field. Kai Fegri, the school's academic supervisor, said "I think I deliver an alright product in spite of the deviations" and steps to address to the NPRA's concerns are being addressed.

### Library inherits large polar collection from longtime local

Hundreds of books, including polar literature dating back nearly a century, has been donated to Longyearbyen's library by the family of Geir Aasebøstøl, who died in October. "Some of the books we have already, but there are also many exciting and unknown to us," said Elisabeth Bergström, the library's manager. "Several of the books are difficult to obtain." Aasebøstøl, who died at 51, lived much of his adult life in Svalbard, and his family said he was a lover of books, polar history and touring the west coast of Spitsbergen to monitor the ongoing decrease in ice levels.

### Local leaders join effort to get ministry to OK brewery

Robert Johansen, who for three years has been trying to start a brewery in Svalbard, said he is trying to increase political pressure on Norway's government to approve the project as Longyearbyen's political and businesses leaders are voicing their support. The Ministry of Health and Care Services would need to approve a change in the law to make it legal to brew beer in Svalbard, but officials there say there is no timetable for considering the request.

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Cloudy. E winds to 39 km/h. High -5C (-12C wind chill), low -7C (-13C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. N winds to 39 km/h. High -5C (-12C wind chill), low -13C (-19C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. Variable winds to 25 km/h. High -12C (-17C wind chill), low -15C (-20C wind chill).	Cloudy. W winds to 55 km/h. High -3C (-11C wind chill), low -14C (-20C wind chill).
24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness
<b>Extended forecast:</b> Sunday, snow, 0C (-6C), -3C (-11C), light 0:00h; Monday, snow/rain, 2C (-3C), 0C (-4C), light 0:00h; Tuesday, cloudy, 0C (-5C), -2C (-8C), light 0:00h; Wednesday, cloudy, 0C (-3C), -2C (-6C), light 0:00h			
<b>Data provided by storm.no</b>			



COURTESY OF LONGYEAR

Bernhard Mohr, Henning Hansen and Sveinung Lystrup Thesen practice compositions as the newly formed band Longyear, which released its first album this month and is currently performing on tour.

## A sound debut album by Longyear

### NEWCOMER, from page 1

online retailers, possesses the aura of an acoustic relative of a-ha, admittedly not a unique concept in Norway. Longyearbyen residents familiar with Thesen's bluegrass work will get to know him in an entirely different vein with this album.

Thesen – a guitarist, banjo player and vocalist – formed Longyear in the summer of 2010 by joining up with Bernhard Mohr, also a singer and guitarist, according to the band's website ([www.longyearmusic.no](http://www.longyearmusic.no)). They had known each other for a decade, but took differing musical paths, with Mohr's resume including four albums and numerous radio singles.

The pair has spent the past two years

recording "Sort Vinter, Evig Sol" at Kulturhuset and a studio in Oslo, with bassist Henning Hansen – a mutual acquaintance – becoming a member of the band around the end of 2010.

"Sort Vinter, Evig Sol" would be a more noteworthy acquisition, especially during this gift-giving time of year, had it not been released at roughly the same time as Øystein Sunde's album of a 1982 concert at Svea, which is pretty much an instant classic. As it is, Longyear's debut ranks as another in a large mass of decent albums deserving some speaker time, but not necessarily a permanent place in your stereo/iPod.

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

## Sunde's only live album a lifetime feat

### CONCERT, from page 1

Øystein Sunde's "Live – Sveagruva, Svalbard – Januar 1982" is the first live album from a musician who's recorded dozens in solo and collaborate projects. Coming early in his full-time career as an entertainer (which began in the late 1970s, although his first album was released in 1970), it captures a still-hungry artist at the peak of his creative ascent into a folk legend.

Myth has it he's been called the world's greatest guitarist by Eric Clapton. Skepticism aside, Sunde indeed plays a nice guitar and banjo inside the coal mine (joined at times by guitarist Jonas Fjeld and bassist Johnny Sareussen), but what makes this a classic is his vampings as a humorist nonpareil.

There's 32 tracks, but they're compressed into a 45-minute sprint. Sunde frequently spends a minute, or maybe seconds, drawling about some nonsense before abruptly shifting to the next thing, rather befitting an audience of about 50 boisterous and apparently drunk miners.

For those reading this, the lone worry should be knowing Norwegian well enough to grok what's going on. It's possible to find and translate most of song lyrics online, but you'll miss the improv and between-song chatter that

are the album's soul (as Miles Davis said, studio work is the menu, a concert is the meal).

There's a couple of songs not on his other albums, including a predictably and deliberately awful cover of the Beatles' "Ticket to Ride."

The album's sound quality far exceeds expectations, especially after learning two tapes of the concert were destroyed and this is a third Sunde discovered in a stack of recordings.

The album is a bit of a bear to find since Sunde and his record label (at [www.spinner.no](http://www.spinner.no)) aren't exactly marketing the hell out of it. It's available in CD and MP3 formats from one major Norwegian retailer that doesn't accept international orders, and has yet to make an appearance at Svalbardbutikken. If you're patient enough to wait for the CD, it's by far the best choice since the insert features photos and some extra written wit by Sunde.

It's also part of the 15-disc boxed set "Puslespill" released earlier this year, when it was featured as an "exclusive" unreleased recording. It was later released separately, and anyone with the slightest interest in Svalbard music is far for the better as a result.

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

## What's up

### Nov. 21

6 p.m.: Movie: "The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn - Part 2," U.S. drama/fantasy/romance, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Nov. 23

9 p.m.: Board of Youth Enterprises meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

### Nov. 24

6 p.m.: Film concert, "Polar Eufori," featuring live music by Liv Mari Schei. Kulturhuset.

### Nov. 25

6 p.m.: Movie: "Møte på Valmueåsen," Japanese animation/drama w/Norwegian subtitles, all ages. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Mer Eller Mindre Mann," Norwegian drama/comedy, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Nov. 26

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

### Nov. 28

6 p.m.: Movie: "Mesterkokken," French comedy, all ages. Kulturhuset.

### Nov. 29

Friskliv program to improve health behavior begins. More information at [www.lokalstyre.no/friskliv](http://www.lokalstyre.no/friskliv).

7:30 p.m.: Christmas concert featuring soloist Torstein Sødal and band leader Kjetil Bjerkestrand. Kulturhuset.

### Nov. 30

6 p.m.: Movie premier and presentation, "Wannabe Freeride and Ruff Riders 8." Participants in the snowmobiling movie will conduct an audience discussion afterward. Free admission for youths 18 and under. Kulturhuset.

### Dec. 2

11 a.m.: Family Mass for First Sunday of Advent. Svalbard Church.

6 p.m.: Movie: "Rise of the Guardians" (3D), U.S. animated/fantasy, ages 7 and up. 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:

- *U.N.: Worst of warming can't be avoided*
- *World Bank warns of 4C jump by 2100*
- *Russia plans massive Arctic wind farm*
- *Svalbard sleddog photo haunts U.K. PM*