



It pays to be green

Animated film for cruisers, more 'waste amnesty' among latest winners of environmental grants

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

If you don't read the book, maybe you'll appreciate the movie.

That's the hope of the Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO), which is planning to develop an animated film of "Guidelines for Visitors to the Arctic" using a 650,000-kroner grant from the Svalbard Environmental Protection Fund.

The film is the largest single allocation from the 5.3 million kroner awarded to 17 projects in the most recent round of grants, which are approved twice a year by the Svalbard governor's office. It will offer "airline-like" information featured in AECO's printed guide, 70,000 copies of which have been printed since 2007.

"We are seeking ways to reduce the number of prints in the future," said Frigg Jørgensen, AECO's executive director, in a prepared statement. "We will not completely stop printing, but we are picturing a much smaller stock, which in itself is good for the environment."

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MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Elin Blindheim squeezes chocolate into white chocolate shells this week at Fruene. She is adding custom flavors such as gingerbread to her selection of confections for the holidays.

Sweet season

Chocolate, Russian items among this year's best holiday gifts

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

During this season of blessings, among the biggest for those living in Longyearbyen is it's one of the easiest places in the world for Christmas shopping.

The most stressful time of the year in places with megamalls is no sweat in the world's northernmost town since there's few lines and the limited choices will almost certainly be a novelty to outsiders otherwise obsessed with cheap big-screen TVs.

The following are some of the best bets – in our purely subjective opinion – among newly available gift options this year. The

guidelines are items must be easy to ship, affordable and unlikely to be seized by customs (so no sealskin slippers or original art by Olaf Storø, much as we might like to recommend them).

- **Handmade chocolates:** Probably the biggest no-brainer, especially since Elin Blindheim's confections have been a runaway success since she started selling them at Fruene in March. In addition to her classic and eccentric flavors, some shaped like icebergs and polar bears, she's making special holiday flavors like gingerbread and spiced tea – and in great quantity.

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BIRGIT HANSEID BENDIKSEN



TINA ROSENBERG

Longyearbyen life: A rock "face," left, gazes out from the pages of "Sjarmerende Bakkekontakt," a nature book by Birgit Hanseid Bendiksen. At right, a painting of Longyearbyen by Tina Rosenberg is featured on mousepads, notebooks and other items.

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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

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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.

A circus of horrors for helicopter parents



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Longyearbyen youths perform, clockwise from top, a choreographed dance with streaming flags, a trapeze and scarf acrobatics routine, and a grand finale of various acts during the annual Sirkus Svalnardo on Saturday at Kulturhuset. More than 50 students of all ages participated in the performance, most after only one week of practice. New to the show this year were the trapeze, unicycling, and custom costumes and decorations the organizers hope to use in future years.

Icesheet

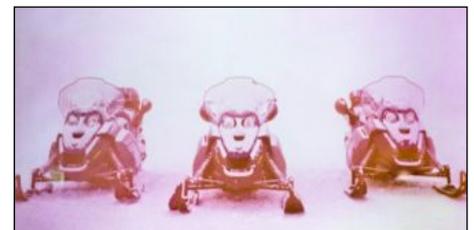
Random bits of the week's weirdness:

Everyone knows by the age of six that *National Geographic* is a socially acceptable way of looking at naked people, but we're thinking maybe they should add a "letters to" section after reading **Paul Nicklen's voyeuristic soft-porn account of a polar bear mating ritual.** He might not have had any feelings in his hands or feet after waiting on the sea ice in Svalbard for more than 24 hours in minus 22°F temperatures, but his core sensations were well engorged. "As we waited in silence, hour after hour, for the couple to consummate their courtship, the idea of capturing this moment that I had dreamed about for so many years became a lump in my throat, and I had to control my hands shaking in anticipation," he wrote. In the spirit of foreplay, he blabs for several hundred words about the history of polar bears and climate change until he has "waited as long as I



PAUL NICKLEN

She's naked underneath that fur: But in this case you really do have to read the article if you're interested in the actual porn content.



REUBEN WU

These aren't the droids you're looking for: Even C3PO would know Imperial Speeder Bikes aren't the transport of choice on Hoth.

could. Just when I thought I could not take the cold any longer, the female finally got up, calmly walked over to the sleepy male, and nudged him to mate. I wiped my frosty breath away from the viewfinder, ready to capture whatever happened next." But, horror, *coitus interruptus* as "at that exact moment, another large male appeared out of the corner of my eye. He ran at the other male, roaring. The female ran away into the sea ice with the males in hot pursuit. I was left sitting on the frozen ground, in complete disbelief. The moment was over" ... After that it's barely stimulating reporting yet **another alien planet experience right here at home, captured on film (yes, actual Polaroid film) by Reuben Wu.** He came to Svalbard hoping to see the northern lights, but they "ended up almost like a secondary thing" compared to otherworldly things like snowmobiling. "Probably the closest I'll ever get to riding an Imperial Speeder Bike on Hoth," he told *Wired* magazine.



ROY MANGERSNES / AECO

A polar bear shakes water off its fur on an ice flow while tourists in a dinghy watch near Longyearbyen. A new short animated film by a cruise ship organization, made possible by a grant from the Svalbard Environmental Protection Fund, will remind visitors intentional encounters with bears is illegal.

Grant allows free snowmobile disposals

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The printed guide is available in English, German and Norwegian. The animated film is expected to featured between four and eight soundtrack languages.

An emphasis on climate change awareness and information gathering was placed on projects receiving grants this fall, according to a statement by the board of directors that determines the recipients.

"In this application round the board ascertained that there were few cultural heritage applications and we will encourage prospective applicants to take the opportunity that represents the fund for safeguarding cultural heritage in Svalbard," the statement notes. The next application deadline is Feb. 1.

Among the other tourism grants approved by fund officials was 350,000 kroner to Svalbard Tourism for a "sustainable travel labeling system." "This can contribute to a qualitative development of tourism where there is an equal emphasis on environmental, social and economic sustainability," the board's statement notes.

Another major recipient was the Norwegian Polar Institute, which received a total of 898,000 kroner for two wildlife projects, titled "Svalbard Reindeer - Into the Sky or On Thin Ice?" and "Plastics in Fulmars."

Also getting funds for reindeer research is Leif Egil Loe of the University of Life Sciences, who will use 283,000 kroner to complete GPS monitoring of reindeer in the two remaining hunting areas in Nordenskiöldland.

Among the other projects receiving funds:

- Continuation of a "waste amnesty" program for Longyearbyen residents, with the city receiving 250,000 kroner that will be used primarily to allow for the free disposal of old snowmobiles.

- A documentary assessing the impacts of climate change in Svalbard as part of a series by Snöball Film, which received 400,000 kroner. "It is especially gratifying to have projects aimed at children and young people," fund officials noted. "This film will be available to all schools and related educational programs."

- Monitoring of air pollution in Ny-Ålesund by the Norwegian Institute for Air Research, which received 500,000 kroner.

- A study of the societal and environmental impacts of increased winter rainfall in Svalbard by the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, which received 430,100 kroner.

- Updates and further development of svalbardflora.net, which received 480,000 kroner.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Large increase in sewer fees coming to pay for repairs

Sewer fees will increase significantly in Longyearbyen during the next two years due to the need to replace damaged pipes. The city's Administration Committee approved a 15 percent increase for next year, resulting in fee of 379.46 kroner plus 8.48 kroner per square meter for residences. A larger increase is expected the following year to pay for the repairs, which officials said is due to damage caused by shifting permafrost. That results in fluid accumulations in the pipe that can freeze and have caused numerous clogs.

Agency: Barentsburg's mine may have a future after all

Optimism about the eventual reopening of the coal mine in Barentsburg is being voiced by Norway's Labor Inspectorate after reviewing an assessment of safety conditions by a German company. "We have not come so far that we would consider opening it for coal production again," said Otto-Bjarte Johnsen, a senior advisor for the agency. "But I think it sounded very positive. When an interim conclusion comes, we will consider the issue of opening it again." The mine was closed when a worker was seriously injured in September, the latest of numerous accidents during the past few years, two of which resulted in fatalities. Inspectorate officials have previously sharply criticized a "lack of safety culture" at the mine and stated they were unsure if the mine could be reopened due to rock stresses in the deep mine. But Aleksander P. Veselov, director of Trust Arktikugol, which oversees the mine, said he hopes it can be reopened by the end of the year.

Longyearbyen to be first with all broadband via fiber optics

Longyearbyen will soon be the first town in Norway where all residents have broadband service via fiber optic cable, according to Harald Fagermoen, administrative director of Telenor Svalbard. All private homes have been part of the fiber network since 2010, but some companies are still using a copper cable hookup that as a limit of 450 clients. Fagermoen said he hopes the copper hookups are replaced by the end of the year.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Partly cloudy. E winds to 29 km/h. High -12C (-17C wind chill), low -14C (-20C wind chill).	Cloudy. E winds to 18 km/h. High -13C (-18C wind chill), low -15C (-20C wind chill).	Cloudy. NE winds to 29 km/h. High -15C (-20C wind chill), low -17C (-23C wind chill).	Cloudy. NE winds to 29 km/h. High -14C (-20C wind chill), low -17C (-23C wind chill).
24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness
Extended forecast: Sunday, cloudy, -15C (-21C), -18C (-25C), light 0:00h; Monday, cloudy, -16C (-23C), -18C (-25C), light 0:00h; Tuesday, p. cloudy, -12C (-19C), -16C (-22C), light 0:00h; Wednesday, snow, -8C (-15C), -12C (-18C), light 0:00h			
Data provided by storm.no			



STUART THOMSON / LONGYEARBYEN FOTOKLUBB

Frozen in time: A moonrise over Adventfjorden is featured in the Longyearbyen Fotoklubb's 2014 calendar. Stuart Thomson, this image's photographer, is also selling his own calendar for the first time.

Russia's big this holiday season

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"We're making more than double for Christmas," she said.

- **Music encores from Pyramiden:** Last year's two biggest albums were inspired by the Russian ghost town and both are back in fancy forms. "Radio Magnetic" Special Edition CD by the electro-pop duo Frost features a deluxe booklet with photos from their concert here. The Danish group Efterklang goes live with "The Piramida Concert," expanding their studio album which uses more than 1,000 sampled sounds from Pyramiden as "instruments."

- **Longyearbyen Fotoklubb calendar:** Svalbard's lines and curves are as safe as monthly pinups get, and this annual favorite showcases a broad diversity of talent while being perhaps the least expensive of many.

- "Sjarmerende Bakkekontakt" by Bir-

git **Hanseid Bendiksen**": This book, which translates to "Charming Sense of Reality," literally puts a new face (many of them actually) on the proliferation of nature books about Svalbard. The text is in three languages, including English.

- **Lost Planet 3:** This third-person shooter won't erase a look of disappointed from a kid obsessed with Call of Duty: Ghosts (let alone a PS4 or Xbox). But for players who already have all the top titles, this sci-fi blaster using the landscapes of Pyramiden is worth a romp, even if it's got a tepid Metacritic score of 60.

- **Bruktikken:** Anything goes at this free-for-all – clothing with Svalbard emblems, crafts, plush polar bears or whatever you think says "world's northernmost."

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



PHOTO COURTESY OF FROST



PHOTO COURTESY OF EFTERKLANG



CAPCOM



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

From Russia with love: Among the gift possibilities inspired by the ghost town of Pyramiden are the "Radio Magnetic" Special Edition CD by Frost (top left), "The Piramida Concert" album by Efterklang (top right) and the video game Lost Planet 3 (bottom left). At bottom right, a collection of small purses is one of the artistic craft offerings from Barentsburg by Frøken Jacobsen.

What's up

Nov. 27

6 p.m.: Movie: "Tusen Gamger God Natt," Norwegian drama, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

Nov. 28

12:30 p.m.: Supervisory Board meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Galileo room.

7:30 p.m.: Holiday concert featuring multiple performers. Kulturhuset.

Nov. 29

9 p.m.: Concert by Gluten Free Mama, a rock covers band. Barentz Pub.

Nov. 30

7:30 p.m.: Gala performance featuring "polar heroines." A music/story presentation of noteworthy women in polar areas during the past 100 years. Kulturhuset.

9 p.m.: Concert by Gluten Free Mama. Barentz Pub.

11 p.m. Concert by the Bjørn Tyldum Trio, a rock originals/covers band. Svalbar.

Dec. 1

2 p.m.: Traditional Advent celebration, featuring holiday feast at Huset, followed by a torchlight march to Santa's mailbox in Nybyen and the Longyearbyen town square. Tree lighting and signing outside will be followed by children's stories at Longyearbyen Library.

6 p.m.: Movie: "Da Nissen Falt Ned Fra Himmelen," German children's film dubbed in Norwegian, ages 7 and up. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Gravity" (3D), British/U.S. drama/sci-fi, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

Dec. 2

2 p.m.: Environmental and Industrial Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

7 p.m.: Presentation of booklet "Longyearbyen Fra Company Town Til Moderne By" by Per Kyrre Reymert. Svalbard Museum.

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

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:

- *Warsaw: Worst climate summit ever?*
- *Russia preps for nuclear waste in Arctic*
- *U.S. Pentagon unveils its first Arctic plan*
- *Olympic torch takes nuclear trip to N. Pole*