



75 percent glacial meltdown?

Study: Most European alpine ice cover may vanish by 2100, but loss in Svalbard uncertain

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

Three-quarters of Europe's alpine glaciers may be wiped out by climate change by the year 2100 and Svalbard is continuing to warm faster than most of the planet, according to two separate studies published this month.

But that doesn't mean Svalbard will necessarily resemble Spain by the end of the

century, as the meltdown is expected to be widely variable and the impact on the Norwegian Arctic is not specified.

Europe's Alps could lose 75 percent of its glaciers and New Zealand 72 percent, according to the results published in the journal *Nature Geoscience*. At the other end of the scale, Greenland has a predicted loss of eight percent and the high mountains of Asia 10 percent.

Still, drastic changes such as a vanishing ice sheet and altered wilderness are facing Svalbard, according to another study focusing

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'Significant error' in climate study

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

A climate change study projecting a 2.4 degree Celsius increase in temperature and massive worldwide food shortages during the next decade was retracted a day after being

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MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

'Grease' is the nord

Stolen hubcaps take a backseat to snowmobiles in performances by local students on Saturday

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

Convertibles and drive-in movies are noticeably scarce, but raging hormones and the joys of not being in class are still things today's teens in polar fleece share in common with their miniskirt-wearing peers from the '50s.

High school's classic tribulations will rock the stage Saturday as Longyearbyen School students perform the musical "Grease" at 2 and 5 p.m. at Kulturhuset. The fundamentals of the original script remain intact, but there's a few adjustments for the Arctic.

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Longyearbyen School students rehearse the song "Greased Lightning" at Kulturhuset for Saturday's performances of "Grease." Localized tweaks to the script include a snowmobile replacing the car, but leather jackets and short skirts remain the preferred attire.

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Lacking drive? Race to the bottom

'Just do it' the rule, not the dare, for Spitsbergen Up and Down

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

When a mid-winter polar dip replaces carbo loading as the pre-race adrenaline stoker, it's anyone's guess what a winning strategy on Saturday's course is.

That's literally true in the second Spitsbergen Up and Down race, where the many prizes includes one for coming closest to a "secret ideal time." Also, while the roughly eight-kilometer course follows a well-defined path from Nybyen to Trollsteinen and back, it doesn't seem to matter how racers complete it.

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ELISABETH AASE / TROLLSTEINENS VENNER

A participant captures the return journey from Trollsteinen to Nybyen during the inaugural Spitsbergen Up and Down race last year.

Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

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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.

In time, a stitch



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Visitors at Galleri Svalbard inspect embroidered handkerchiefs that are part of "Presents" during the opening reception for the textile exhibit Saturday. The works by Bente Lise Jakobsen, a Svalbard resident who calls experiencing the emergence of "stitch by stitch" repetition "as important as the finished result," will remain on display until Feb. 28.

Major flaws found in climate study

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published and widely reported, with scientists saying it contains significant flaws.

The study was posted this week at EurekAlert, a independent service for reporters set up by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. But AAAS retracted the study when numerous people cited errors.

Scientist Osvaldo Canziani, part of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, is listed as the report's scientific advisor. The IPCC, whose figures are cited as the basis for the study's projections, and Al Gore jointly won the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2007 "for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater

knowledge about man-made climate change," the prize committee said at the time.

Scientist Scott Mandia told the AFP news agency he sent an e-mail to Hisas ahead of the the study's publication explaining why the figures did not add up, and noting that it would take "quite a few decades" to reach a warming level of 2.4 degrees Celsius.

"Even if we assume the higher end of the current warming rate, we should only be 0.2C warmer by 2020 than today," Mandia wrote. He said Hisas "said it was too late to change it."

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

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

Those left in a dark mood by the polar night might want to keep an early eye on the horizon, as experts say the sun rose two days early in the Arctic town of Ilulissat in Greenland. A faster-than-expected melting of the polar ice caps, thus lowering the horizon, is the suspected cause. Sunrise in Longyearbyen is officially scheduled at 11:23 a.m. Feb. 16, with sunset at 1:02 p.m. (those times will be 9:30 a.m. and 2:54 p.m. a mere week later, well before residents celebrate actually seeing the sun return during Solfestuka in early March) ... Speaking of Earth-moving events, Longyearbyen was the center of the world – for all of 24 minutes – earlier this month. The city's Wikipedia entry opening line read "Longyearbyen is the largest settlement and the administrative centre of Svalbard and the world," a claim certainly justified by its alleged population of 28 million and area of 3,492.16 square

kilometers. But the edit by the anonymous person – who has made no other Wiki edits – was reverted by frequent Svalbard editor Orange Suede Sofa, with the boilerplate challenge "if you believe the information that you added was correct, please cite the references or sources." For those believing in Longyearbyen Exceptionalism, consider that a challenge ... Since Wikipedia is celebrating its 10th anniversary, we'll note another "oddity" (a.k.a. xenophobic cheap shot) in Wikitravel's Svalbard entry, which declares "in Barentsburg, Russian is spoken instead (of Norwegian and English). However, never should the English-speaker worry as just about everyone except uneducated Russian miners speaks English." The entry until recently also noted a stuffed polar bear at the Svalbard Museum museum "killed 30 people then the wizard of oz came and killed it for us. thank you wizard of oz." (Capitalization and punctuation for the entries is as written.)



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Students stash a snowmobile backstage during a rehearsal for "Grease" this week at Kulturhuset. Preparations for the play began last October, but full rehearsals with a director from Bremnes didn't begin until Monday. The estimated 60 participants are making time by skipping classes all week.

'Grease' gets slick at lightning pace

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"Of course there are changes," Hans-Gunnar Skreslett, a music teacher at the school helping lead the play. "We don't have a car. We have a snowscooter."

But the youths – apparently extremely tough and/or stupid in their stage personas – will still wear leather jackets and miniskirts while cavorting outdoors. Their outfitter is Hilde Hoff Andersen, a Svortland School teacher directing the play who has the wardrobe from previous stagings elsewhere.

The script is the Broadway original, not the G-rated "school" version, but trimmed for length, she said. (Also, since there's no hubcaps to steal, don't expect that bit of mischief.)

Students began learning the script and music last October at school and on their own, but only got together on stage as a group for rehearsals when Andersen arrived in town Monday afternoon. She described their readiness as "so-so" at that point, but isn't worried about the short time to prepare although she's directed out-of-town productions only a handful of times during her lengthy career.

"First we do the staging, then the choreography and then the music," she said. "Now we are just trying to put the whole thing together."

The biggest challenge is just figuring out

who to contact in order to get the students to Kulturhuset during rehearsals, Andersen said. She said she also brought a DVD of the Norwegian stage version, adopted by producer and director Tom Sterri, because many students are familiar with the movie and therefore "the stage version is very odd."

About 60 students are involved on and behind the stage. They're rehearsing daily from 10 a.m. until 7 or 8 p.m., making the rushed schedule – not known for productions with an out-of-town director – easier to deal with.

"It's really fun. I think the singers are more like 'We have to learn the songs,'" said Aslak Brattset, 15, playing the part of Johnny Casino. But he's confident "we are going to be there. We are going to be really ready."

Also, while the Longyearbyen youths may have a higher opinion of their real-world teachers than their '50s counterparts (not to mention no worries about dreadful cafeteria food), that doesn't mean they don't share the joy of getting away from that scene for a while.

"I think it's more relaxing because we don't have any homework," said Inge Skadberg, 14, who categorizes his role as an unnamed "singer and dancer."

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Too-high cabin at Adolfbukta may need to be torn down

A cabin built too high in Adolfbukta may need to be torn down, according to the Norwegian Ministry of the Environment, which disagrees with the decision by Svalbard's governor that such a step is unnecessary. Spitsbergen Experience built the tourist structure 80 centimeters higher than permitted, which an inspection by the governor's office revealed in October of 2009. The extra height allowed a loft to be converted into four bedrooms, which was not disclosed to officials. The governor's office recently fined the company 15,000 kroner for the violation. The company, which estimates the cost of rebuilding the cabin at 600,000 kroner, is allowed to appeal the ministry's ruling and use the cabin in the meantime.

Fate of dogs attacked by fox at Hopen remains uncertain

The crew at the Hopen weather station say they are not worried that four dogs attacked by a fox with rabies have the disease after fighting the animal earlier this month. The dogs remain isolated at the station while their fate is determined by Norwegian Veterinary Institute officials who are analyzing blood samples. "We do not want to kill dogs for no reason," said Arne Mjøs, an official with the agency. Two of the dogs were bitten by the fox before killing it. There have been 20 animals diagnosed with rabies in Svalbard since 1980, but the last case was in 1999.

History, politics, science and more at Svalbard Seminars

A chance to learn about Amundsen, Nansen, seabirds and Svalbard policy is being offered during the next three weeks for this year's Svalbard Seminars. The lectures at The University Centre in Svalbard, which are free to the public, begin today with Hallvard Strøm discussing why there are fewer seabirds in the area. Other seminars – all starting at 8 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays – focus on Russian politics, emergency preparedness in the field and historical events. All are in Norwegian except a presentation about avalanches Jan. 25.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Occasional snow. SSE winds to 15 km/h. High -8C (-14C wind chill), low -10C (-10C wind chill). Sunrise: 0:00 Sunset 0:00	Occasional snow. SSE winds to 30 km/h. High -1C (-7C wind chill), low -10C (-10C wind chill). Sunrise: 0:00 Sunset 0:00	Occasional snow. Variable winds to 15 km/h. High -3C (-8C wind chill), low -7C (-13C wind chill). Sunrise: 0:00 Sunset 0:00	Snow clearing later. N winds at 11 km/h. High -10C (-18C wind chill), low -17C (-26C wind chill). Sunrise: 0:00 Sunset 0:00
Extended forecast: Sunday, cloudy, -18C (-23C), -19C (-24C), light 0:00h; Monday, snow -17C (-22C), -19C (-24C), light 0:00h; Tuesday, snow late, -17C (-25C), -19C (-24C), light 0:00h; Wednesday, snow, -12C (-19C), -14C (-22C), light 0:00h.			
Data provided by yr.no			

A Nordaustlandet glacier appearing to show the face of Mother Nature crying as she melts in 2009 is still used widely to illustrate the effects of climate change. A marine photographer and environmental lecturer captured the image during an annual voyage to observe the glacier and surrounding wildlife in July of that year. Other passengers said they were "stunned" by the formation, where the 'tears' were created by a waterfall of glacial water falling from one of the face's "eyes." The image was captured shortly before a visit by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and other officials also focused the world's attention on climate change in the area.



MICHAEL NOLAN / SPECIALIST STOCK

Heat may rob Svalbard of 'unique nature'

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on climate change in the region.

"Warming in our region is in progress no doubt, and the results from (Svalbard and Jan Mayen monitoring) reveal significant changes in climate on Svalbard," wrote co-authors John Richard Hansen and Kim Holmén of the Norwegian Polar Institute. "If these changes con-

tinue we share a great responsibility that we are about to lose the prerequisites for a distinctive and unique nature of Svalbard."

Longyearbyen's temperatures between 1912 to 2007 rose at nearly three times the long-term global mean, they wrote.

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

Getting up and down by (nearly) any means

RACE, from page 1

As long as a motor isn't involved, that is.

"With and without skis," wrote Stein Pedersen, one of the organizers, in a message providing race details at the event's Facebook page. "On foot. Backwards, forwards, the fat. Our goal is to get as many people as possible out in the vicinity of the trip."

The race, requiring an 800-meter ascent to the turning point, is meant to be a social gathering by those who love Svalbard's outdoors as much as a competition, Pedersen added.

"We are sworn Trollstein friends who want to see as much as possible that there are opportunities nearby for great experiences, non-motorized and very easy," he wrote. "We have chosen to branch out very broadly, not only to embrace the small extreme-running group, which certainly exists on the island, but all as one."

The race starts at 5 p.m. for walkers, and 6 p.m. for competitive and business divisions. Registration begins at 4 p.m. Participants must be at least 18, but events for youths will be held in Nybyen starting at noon.

Racers must carry a shovel, avalanche transceiver, wind bag, first-aid kit, hot drink and keep a headlamp turned on while on the course.

While prizes will be awarded to winners and other notables such as last place, participants may not know if they've won some of the other categories until the presentations at 10 p.m. (allowing everyone to shower and warm up first).

"The walking division has a secret ideal time, which means that all can win prizes, regardless of the time used up and down," Pedersen noted.

About 250 people were in the race tent at some point last year, "but I'm not sure how many actually raced," said Eivind Aksnes, another organizer. He said he expects a larger crowd this year because numerous people are planning to come from the mainland.

New this year is a three-person team category in addition to individuals. The teams must be co-ed.

"People tend to walk together anyhow so it's fun to register as a team," Aksnes said.

Also new this year is the Spitsbergen Hot and Cold pre-race beach party at 6 p.m. Friday at the Svalbard Sailing Club. A bonfire, barbecue and heated tent will be at the site, with certificates awarded to those brave enough to take a polar dip.

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

What's up

Jan 20

8 p.m.: Svalbard Seminar, presented by the Norwegian Polar Institute. Møysalen, UNIS.

Jan. 21

9 a.m.: Board of Growing Enterprises Authority meeting. Næringsbygget 1, Tundra room.

6 p.m.: Spitsbergen Hot and Cold. Bonfire, barbecue, heated tent and certificates for those taking a polar dip. Svalbard Sailing Club.

7 p.m.: Annual WIFAL ("Lutefisk Women") gathering. Attendees should be current or former Svalbard residents. Radisson. For more information contact gretehaldorsen@me.com.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Get Low," Polish/German/U.S. comedy/drama. Norwegian premier. Kulturhuset.

Jan. 22

2 p.m.: Per Kyrre Reymert discusses his novel "I Polarnattens Favn," a Svalbard action/thriller about Øvre Richter Frich in 1912. Longyearbyen Library.

2 and 5 p.m.: "Grease," performed by students at Longyearbyen School. Kulturhuset.

5 p.m.: Spitsbergen Up and Down, 7-8K race from Nybyen to Trollsteinen. Open to all on foot and skis. Registration begins at 4 p.m. For more details see story on page 1.

Jan. 23

6 p.m.: Movie: "The Tourist," U.S. drama/thriller, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Gazas tårer" ("Gaza's Tears"), Norwegian documentary, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

Jan 25 and 27

8 p.m.: Svalbard Seminar. UNIS.

Jan. 26

6 p.m.: Movie: "Trolljegeren," Norwegian mockumentary, ages 11 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:

- *Norway offers 50 oil production licenses*
- *U.N. seeks more Sami education funds*
- *Rosetta Stone to release Inupiaq tutor*
- *100-year-old scotch from Antarctica*