



# Stuff costs more

*Svalbard's CPI rises 1.4 percent in 2013; housing, fuel, power up sharply, transportation declines*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

For fans of "market forces" it was a great year: tighter control of housing pushed rents up and more competition at the airport brought transportation prices down.

Svalbard's consumer price index increased 1.4 percent between September of 2012 and 2013, according to Statistics Norway. The rise was considerably less than the 4.4 percent jump the previous year, the largest since 2008.

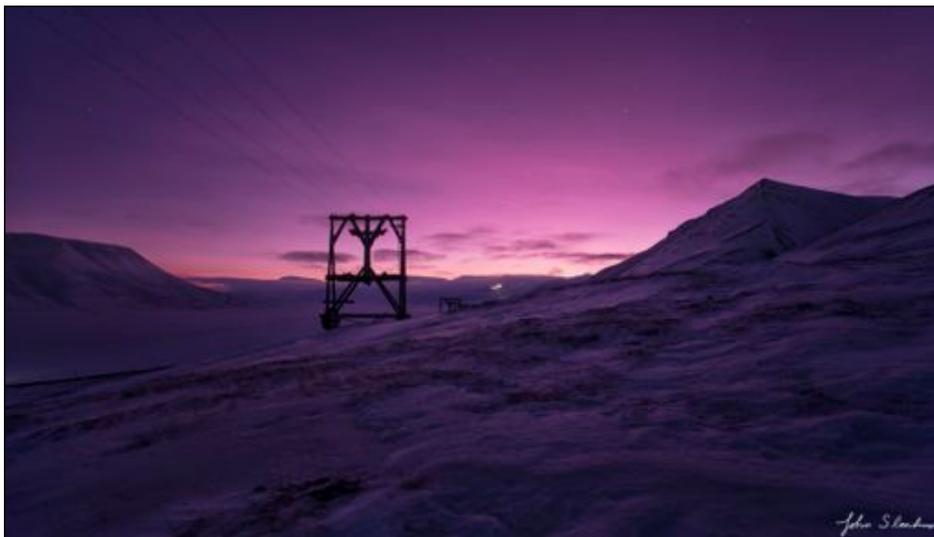
Housing rents, electricity and fuel, which saw double-digit percentage increases between 2011 and 2012, once again were primarily responsible for last year's increase. The 4.7 percent increase was "mainly due to 'paid rent,'

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STATISTICS NORWAY

## Say buh-bye to the darkness



JOHN B. SLAATMO / PRIVATE

A rare purple twilight above Adventdalen at about 9 a.m. Jan. 19 signals the approaching end of the polar night in Longyearbyen. Dag Lorentzen, a physics professor at the Kjell Henriksen Observatory, told NRK it's been more than ten years since the observation of similar colors, which are caused by unusually high clouds between Svalbard and the mainland reflecting the hues. More twilight shots and other work by the photographer, John B. Slaatmo, can be seen at [www.flickr.com/photos/trikker2009](http://www.flickr.com/photos/trikker2009).

# OK for mine to reopen

*Barentsburg agrees to safety changes after accidents; facing new problem with air pollution*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

Barentsburg's coal mine, in danger of closing permanently last year after a string of serious accidents, is open again after agreeing to

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# A racy weekend; bully for you

*Spitsbergen Up And Down bonanza, student musical, Mine 3 concert lead packed schedule*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

They're all seeking to relieve tensions, but that's kinda hard if you're hoping to be at all of them at once.

A packed weekend of overlapping special events gets off to a hot start with a beach sauna/swim party Friday night, then chills out with an anti-bullying musical by local students

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**LINDA BAKKEN / TROLLSTEINENS VENNER**  
A racer approaches the summit of Trollsteinen during the 2013 Spitsbergen Up and Down race.

## 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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## 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.

## That's one slick, sick sled



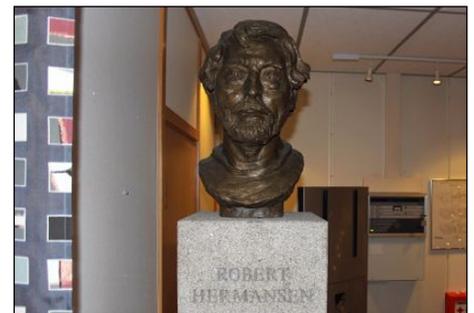
CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART

A dogsled made of petroleum trash from the seabed and shorelines of Svalbard is part of "An Unkindness," an art exhibition by Mia Feuer at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, across the street from The White House in Washington, D.C. The gallery describes the exhibit, featuring sculptures made of oil-related debris from Svalbard, the Canadian tar sands and the Suez Canal, as a "haunting vision of nature consumed, transformed and twisted by human need." Feuer states she built the sled "on the deck of a three-masted tall ship while sailing the Arctic ocean" last year. More images from the exhibit can be seen at [www.miafeuer.com](http://www.miafeuer.com).

## Icesheet

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

Robert Hermansen's time in Svalbard may have been "a highlight of my life," but the disgraced former Store Norske leader now seems to be an unperson to just about everyone here who hailed him as an industry legend not too long ago. City officials have been trying to get his now-infamous bust out of their lobby for a couple of years, but **the mining company – after expressing reluctance about giving His Bustiness a home – is now telling the city to go pound rocks.** The city suggested placing it in a museum planned for the abandoned Mine 3, but the company says it doesn't know if the museum will actually be built, doesn't know who will operate it, doesn't know if the severed head would fit in with the theme and doesn't want any kind of commitment or responsibility that would come with stuffing Mr. Bust into a closet until some unknown future date. Not even the real-life Hermansen seems inclined to push the matter, telling The Local Paper of Recidivism "I do not have an opinion publicly about the bust...but if those who were close to me in Svalbard currently have an opinion



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

**He doesn't exist. He never existed:** We have no memory of running this same photo and basically the same rant a few times already.

about how the bust will stand I will respect it." That said, he does still have locals willing to support his pre-corruption achievements. "Say what you will about Robert: pettiness was not his style and it should not be anyone else's either," wrote frequent "top commenter" Anne Lise Sandvik. Then there's the other end of the spectrum that doesn't care about his good/bad deeds. "Probably an example of why assigning people awards, busts and other nonsense is absolutely disgusting," wrote Signe Marie Antonson. "Almost all are doing things in life that are good and good for others, and it is wrong and only priggish" just to honor those "known" ... We're not that impressed by it, but **the city seems pretty excited about its new smaller, but portable replacement bridge for Muse-umsveien**, the parts for which are now being shipped from France. But we'll assume the picture at the city's website is a model and not the result of engineers who were responsible for the Stonehenge prop used by Spinal Tap.



LONGYEARBYEN LOKALSTYRE

**Yup, definitely smaller than the old bridge:** But at least there's no question it will indeed be easy to move to different streets.

You've got to ask yourself one question:

**Why are we here anyway?**



THOR ARLOV / UNIS

A slide asks the ultimate question at the beginning of "The History of Svalbard," a two-week class beginning Jan. 27 at The University Centre in Svalbard. The lectures are open to all, although only UNIS students can take the exam for credit. The course offers an overview of Svalbard's history from its discovery in 1596 until the present, covering main aspects of the archipelago's economic and scientific activity, politics, and social and cultural development. Full details, including slide presentations for all lectures and materials from past years, are available at [tinyurl.com/occupyv](http://tinyurl.com/occupyv).

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM  
**SVALBARDPOSTEN**  
VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

**2,400 vehicles a day on city's busiest road a safety concern**

Vei 232 is Longyearbyen's busiest residential street with a volume of about 2,400 vehicle trips a day, according to the engineering consultant company Sweco. The street is the primary route for transporting children from Gruvedalen to school, and its safety is a concern to city and Store Norske officials. Store Norske said the nine percent grade of the road is one degree more than the Norwegian Public Roads Administration recommends, and the street is too narrow for the 15-meter-long school bus currently in use. City officials, in their traffic safety plan for 2012-15, are planning improvements including a speed bump, a bus stop on the north side of Hilmar Rekstens Vei and pedestrian crossings at Blåmyrkrystet.

**Cruise line departs AECO, says it will still follow rules**

Hapag-Lloyd Cruises has withdrawn from the Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators, meaning the company won't have to follow the environmental and cultural preservation guidelines established by the organization. It also means the company won't participate in the coordinating scheduling of other cruise lines visiting Svalbard. Moritz Krause, a spokesman for Hapag-Lloyd, declined to specify the reason for withdrawing, but said the company helped develop AECO's rules and "we will continue to comply with those standards." The cruise line has two ships that operate in the Arctic and Antarctica.

**Cars brought to mainland must now pass EU inspection**

Svalbard residents planning to take their vehicles on a road trip on the mainland now need to meet European Union inspection standards, a change from previous years when it was possible to seek a postponement of the inspection and return to the archipelago before it was conducted. "Svalbard has been spoiled for many years," said Martin Svendsen, section leader for the Norwegian Public Roads Administration. He said the change is being made because previously there were only a few exemptions, with five vehicles brought to the mainland in 2005, but 80 were transported in 2013.

**Prices up in '13, but by less than '12**

**INFLATION, from page 1**

which rose 5.4 per cent," the agency reported. "The increase can be seen in the context of both general price adjustment (in the previous year's CPI), as well as the changing market structure towards more market-based players than in previous years," the agency noted.

New ownership of some apartment building was cited as the primary cause for higher rents between 2011 and 2012. Longyearbyen's three primary property owners attributed the continuing increases last year to several factors, primarily the need for increased repairs and other work necessitated by climate change.

Among the other leading risers were operation and maintenance of transportation equipment, which increased 6.1 percent.

"Within this group, it was especially the prices of workshop services that contributed most," Statistics Norway noted.

The most drastic shift was transportation itself, which saw a double-digit increase the

previous year. Prices declined 0.2 percent, with the agency noting "it was particularly lower prices on flights that pulled (the category) down" after discount airline Norwegian Air resumed service to Longyearbyen last March, competing with Scandinavian Airlines.

Another notable shift was food prices, which rose 0.8 percent last year compared to nearly four percent the previous year.

"Mostly higher were prices of meat, bread and other cereals, and some dairy products," the agency reported. "Fruits and berries pulled in the opposite direction."

The largest increase was education at 7.5 percent, although it is not cited as a major household cost. The largest decline was postal and telecommunication costs, which dropped 1.1 percent, continuing a trend in recent years.

Svalbard's prices overall were 13.9 percent lower than the mainland's, the report noted.

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

**Weather forecast for Longyearbyen**

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Snow. SE winds to 32 km/h. High 0C (-4C wind chill), low -5C (-9C wind chill).	Cloudy. S winds to 25 km/h. High 1C (-3C wind chill), low -1C (-5C wind chill).	Snow. SE winds to 22 km/h. High 0C (-4C wind chill), low -1C (-5C wind chill).	Cloudy. SE winds to 32 km/h. High 0C (-4C wind chill), low -2C (-7C wind chill).
24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness

**Extended forecast:** Sunday, cloudy, 0C (-6C), -4C (-10C), light 0:00h; Monday, p. cloudy, -5C (-10C), -6C (-11C), light 0:00h; Tuesday, cloudy, -6C (-11C), -9C (-15C), light 0:00h; Wednesday, cloudy, -3C (-8C), -6C (-12C), light 0:00h

Data provided by [storm.no](http://storm.no)



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Longyearbyen School students rehearse for the musical "Stopp! Ikke Mobb!" this week at Kulturhuset. While some students said they have encountered bullying at schools on the mainland, they experience few if any such problems in Longyearbyen due to the school's small size and diverse range of families.

## Packed weekend runs hot and cold

### WARRIOR, from page 1

Saturday afternoon. But weekend warriors will work up a sweat again at a bonanza of events celebrating the fifth annual Spitsbergen Up and Down Race Saturday beginning at noon Saturday and lasting until the wee hours of Sunday morning. Those with sore muscles, if perhaps not hangovers, can indulge in a final cooling off with a rare concert in Mine 3 featuring Liv Mari Schei and Arne O. Holmon on Sunday evening.

Oh, by the way, the Longyearbyen Hunting and Fishing Club is having its annual party at UNIS where it welcomes new members on Saturday night.

The beach party at the Svalbard Sailing Club is part of an expanded lineup of pre-race events for the Spitsbergen Up and Down, where participants make the eight-kilometer trek from Nybyen to Trollsteinen by any non-motorized means.

Among the new events on Saturday this year is a family day from noon to 4 p.m. at the race's starting point in Nybyen with snow cave digging, games, dog sledding for children and

other activities. Also scheduled is a four-hour trip for adults to the ice cave on Larsbreen departing Nybyen at 11:30 a.m.

The race starts at 5 p.m. for recreational participants and 6 p.m. for the competitive division. The awards ceremony is scheduled at 10 p.m.

Students at Longyearbyen School will perform the musical "Stopp! Ikke Mobb!" ("Stopp! Do Not Bully!") at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Saturday at Kulturhuset. The play, written by Sola teachers Frode Skålevik and Helle-Ingunn Aaneland, has been performed at nearly 200 schools since it debuted a few years ago.

"We never thought that the musical would become so popular," Skålevik said in an interview with *Norwegian American Weekly*. "The reasons could be many: there aren't other musicals like this related to bullying, the songs are catchy, the message is simple," she said.

"Moreover, it is not a 'poor me' musical, but the attitude is 'I do not want to be involved in this!'"

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

## Barentsburg mine reopens; faces new concern

### COAL, from page 1

make significant training and safety assessment improvements, according to Norway's Labor Inspectorate.

The mine was closed in September after a man lost his leg when it was trapped in machinery. It was the seventh accident since May of 2012, two of which resulted in deaths.

Labor officials called the lax attitude of mine managers about safety "totally unacceptable" and stated the mine's infrastructure was so unstable it might remain closed. But an agency official said this week Trust Arkikugol, a Russian state-owned company that operates the mine, appears to finally be getting the message.

"They are trying to adjust course to make it a safer workplace," said Johan Furebotten, a supervisor manager for the Labor Inspectorate,

in an interview with NRK. "That is certainly the impression we get."

The company has agreed to train miners on a more advanced type of drilling that will release rock stresses, Furebotten told *Svalbard-posten*. Workers will also measure horizontal rock stresses instead of just vertical ones as previously.

But Barentsburg is facing a new coal-related problem as its power plant is accounting for 20 percent of Norway's emissions of sulfur dioxide, according to NRK. The plant is allowed emit 800 tons a year, but had 2,500 tons in the most recent measurements. Officials with Norway's environmental ministry are now in discussions with Trust Arkikugol to address the problem.

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

## What's up

### Jan. 22

6 p.m.: Movie: "Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs 2" (3D), U.S. animated/family film dubbed in Norwegian, all ages. Kulturhuset.

### Jan. 23

8 p.m.: Svalbard Seminar. UNIS.

### Jan. 24

7 p.m.: Après-ski in Nybyen, with food and drinks, hosted by Spitsbergen Up and Down.

### Jan. 25

Noon-2 a.m.: Spitsbergen Up and Down race and events in Nybyen. Family activities until 4 p.m., followed by race from Nybyen to Trollsteinen and back at 6 p.m. Full schedule and details at [www.spitsbergenupanddown.no](http://www.spitsbergenupanddown.no).

1 and 3 p.m.: Musical: "Stopp! Ikke Mobb!" performed by Longyearbyen School students. Kulturhuset.

7 p.m.: Annual party for the Longyearbyen Hunting and Fishing Club. Old and new members welcome. UNIS.

### Jan. 26

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

5 p.m.: Movie: "Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs 2," U.S. animated/family film dubbed in Norwegian, all ages. Kulturhuset.

5:30 p.m.: Concert featuring Liv Mari Schei and Arne O. Holm. Mine 3. Free bus departs Svalbardbutikken at 5 p.m.

7 p.m.: Movie: "Kvinnen i Buret," Danish thriller, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Jan. 27

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

### Jan. 28

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

8 p.m.: Svalbard Seminar. UNIS.

### Jan. 30

7 p.m.: Concert: "Songs to the Moon," by Julia Novikova og Sergey Osadchuck. Galleri Svalbard.

8 p.m.: Svalbard Seminar.

## 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:

- 2013 ties for fourth-warmest year ever
- Greenland's PM loves climate change
- Seven countries cause 63% of warming
- It's really hard removing a beached whale