



LONGYEARBYEN LOKALSTYRE



HANNE EIK PILSKOG / UNIS



DEN NORSKE OPERA & BALLETT

Political, mining and educational leaders, left, gather in Mine 3 this week to sign an agreement launching an engineering studies program in Longyearbyen. At center, moss balls known as "glacier mice" rest on Rieperbreen. At right, members of the national ballet rehearse for a show in Svalbard.

WAY TOO MUCH #\$&+!@ NEWS

Return of darkness also brings return of avalanche of activities: here's the essentials of just a few

Political plays:

East Svalbard plan under fire; CO2 capture plant takes big step; engineering course OK'd

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

There's good government and then there's government just thinking it's doing good.

Approval of new projects such as an engineering studies program and a feasibility study for a CO2-capture plant in Longyearbyen are being hailed as significant steps for the town's economic future. But other actions are receiving withering comments, including

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Science sights:

Some species adapting to loss of sea ice; 'mice' on glaciers; new findings about permafrost

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

While the latest headlines continue bemoaning the record loss of Arctic sea ice, there's good news on the science front – even on that topic.

A new study unveiled this week suggests some species are adapting to minimal summer ice cover. The findings are based on a rare winter sea expedition last year that suggests

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Cultural coups:

National ballet part of packed calendar of activities to get local through the dark season

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Visitors asking if the locals get bored when it gets dark obviously aren't on their toes.

A rather distinguished group of explorers most certainly will be, however, as three new works by Norway's national ballet company will light up the stage Saturday at Kulturhuset. The show comes near the start of the annual avalanche of performances, music festivals,

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Portrait of an artist 'too old'

Anne Mæland, 80, faces unwanted exit from Svalbard in new film



He was in good health, but got so sick that he wanted to move home.

COURTESY OF CECILIE DENKINGER

Anne Mæland, 80, shows a photo of her family in the documentary "As Long As You Want."

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Anne Mæland's life is a story of Svalbard's community at its most vibrant and most cruel.

She helped pioneer major educational improvements as a teacher before gaining widespread notoriety as a crafts maker during the past 44 years. But Mæland, 80, now faces departure as her age is raising concerns due to the archipelago's mandate of self-dependence.

Her story is captured in the documentary

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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.



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Laurits Finjord, right, calls bingo numbers at Fruene during one of the numerous fundraising events leading up to the 2011 NRK telethon. This year's local events begin Saturday with a youth car wash.

Washing away global injustice

Month of fundraising events leading up to annual nationwide telethon begins Saturday

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Trying to stop rape, illegal imprisonments and other atrocities in war-torn countries by washing cars hardly seems like a fair fight.

But such efforts during an annual nationwide fundraiser have raised 4.5 billion kroner in Norway since 1974, with Longyearbyen contributing by far the most per resident in recent years. Locals will be asked to help again beginning Saturday, with more than a month of scheduled activities leading up to an Oct. 21 telethon broadcast on NRK.

"We are lucky that residents are willing to contribute – very lucky," wrote Lene Villumsen, head of the committee organizing this year's local events, in an e-mail interview. "And of course the pressure is on. I still hope Longyearbyen will have the highest contribu-

tions per-person, but the main goal must be to make it all happen, to make it something good to remember and to get the message out."

This year's events will raise funds to help Amnesty International detect and stop human rights violations.

The kickoff for this year's local events begins at noon Saturday in the central square, where some of the major prizes in an annual raffle will be announced, followed by a car wash at the youth club at 1:30 p.m.

Most subsequent activities are similar to previous years, including a rummage sale at The University Centre in Svalbard Oct. 6-7, an auction at the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel Oct. 14 and a food/crafts fundraiser at Longyearbyen School Oct. 17. There will also be sales of baked goods and raffle tickets Thursdays through Saturdays at Svalbardbutikken.

But new events also planned, including a five-person relay race to the center of town Oct. 6, Villumsen noted.

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

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

Bird brains are besting buckshot, as **14 ptarmigans spent the first day of hunting season (Monday) taking refuge at Longyearbyen Kindergarten**, according to *The Local Paper That Isn't Lining Birdcages*. While hunters who got up at 4 p.m. to feather their pallets were thwarted, so were the children during Occupy Playground as they were kept indoors. Fortunately, latest word on the birds is they're seeking more formal asylum at the governor's office ... Does anyone besides us find it strange that **the city is inviting Queen Sonia to the debut of her photo exhibit at Galleri Svalbard on Jan. 31?** It seems like Her Royal Majesty is of sufficient rank to show up anyhow if she damn well pleases. The exhibit of photos transferred to polymer plates, titled "Tre Reiser – Tre Landskap" ("Three Flights – Three Landscapes"), come from her previous



HILDE ASKE

Does this look like dinner? The hunted find a haven as 14 ptarmigans show the early-bird gun-toters who's goose is cooked.

visits to Svalbard, the last occurring in 2006. It's already been displayed at numerous locations, so the invite is obviously one of those protocol oddities, a royal spokesman said the queen's plans probably won't be known until around Christmas.



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Norwegian Polar Institute International Director Kim Holmén, right, and Svalbard Environmental Chief Guri Tveito discuss revisions to East Svalbard regulations at the governor's office today.

Engineering, CO2 projects OK'd

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what critics call a tone-deaf approach by the governor to a flawed revision of the environmental management plan for East Svalbard.

Among the latest developments:

- **Meltdown over East Svalbard:** Tourism and science officials are aggressively expressing objections to new restrictions on access as the Oct. 10 comment deadline nears for the proposed East Svalbard Management Plan.

A Sept. 11 meeting to discuss the revisions, which the governor's office said had "good attendance," was scheduled with only five days' advance notice – preventing adequate preparation and many from attending – and offered no new information, according to critics. Science leaders say limits on where and when they can conduct research are based on "academically weak" findings, while tour operators said eliminating access to some most-vis-

ited sites overlooks their efforts to curb impacts while increasing the environmental awareness of visitors.

- **Training engineers:** Officials with the city, Store Norske and Narvik University College gathered in Mine 3 this week to sign an agreement for an engineering course focusing on northern needs that is scheduled to begin in January. In addition to extreme conditions, factors such as climate change are posing a major challenge to new and existing infrastructure.

CO2 capture plant breathes new life: A feasibility study for a full-scale CO2 capture and storage facility in Longyearbyen was approved by Parliament this week after being rejected last year. The city needs a new power plant to meet emissions laws, but a CO2 capture facility had been seen as too costly.

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

Discovering 'mice' on ice and more

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some organisms move into greater depths rather than being carried by meltwater to warmer seas where they would perish.

The study by researchers at The University Centre in Svalbard and elsewhere, is available at <http://rsbl.royalsocietypublishing.org>.

Other recent research activities of note:

- A new geodetic earth observatory in Ny-Ålesund has been approved by the governor's office, with construction scheduled to start next year. A statement from the governor notes the facility performs functions such as exact measurements of the Earth's shape, which are necessary to ensure GPS systems function.

- "Glacier mice" are bringing "hopping life" to glacier surfaces, according to UNIS researchers. The "mice" are small, egg-shaped moss balls formed around sediment clusters. Insulated from the ice's surface, the balls can trap water and offer a refuge for soil invertebrates. Details of the study are at www.unis.no.

- UNIS researchers participating in a two-week permafrost drilling project in Greenland say they're discovering new information about the terrain such as age, ice content, stratigraphy and DNA makeup. Details about the project are at www.page21.eu.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM **SVALBARDPOSTEN** VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Jon Sandmo seeks removal from council due to cancer

Longtime political leader and Longyearbyen resident Jon Sandmo is asking to be removed from all city political boards, as he is now living on the mainland due to advanced cancer. Sandmo, one of two members of the often-controversial Konsekvenslistas party on the municipal council, submitted the request during today's Administration Committee meeting. Committee members expressed sadness at his departure, but sent the recommendation to the full council for consideration at their Sept. 25 meeting.

27 seek city manager's job, including past council head

A total of 27 people are applying to be Longyearbyen's new city manager, including the city's first municipal council chairman a decade after serving in that role. The list includes 18 men and nine women from various backgrounds, including two from other countries. Most names are likely to be unfamiliar to locals, but Sigmund Spjelkavik, Homborsund's city director, is looking to return to Longyearbyen after serving as council president in 2002 and 2003. The new manager, who will be selected by the council, will replace Ivar Undheim, who is planning to depart by January after three years in the position.

No charges against men who slept at post office building

No charges will be filed against two Spanish brothers in their 20s who spent a weekend overnighing at the post office building. They departed during the daytime on Aug. 2 only to find the room they slept in locked up. They were captured trying to break to retrieve their belongings. "They contacted several passerbys for help, without having received it," wrote Lt. Gov. Lars Erik Alfheim in an e-mail. "So they tried to break in, but were arrested before they succeeded. There was minor damage to the building, but Statbygg does not to pursue compensation claims." The men had balked at paying a minimum of 900 kroner a night for a hotel room, spending their money instead on things like alcohol. They paid for a real night's lodging before departing Svalbard.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Rain. E winds to 22 km/h. High 8C (4C wind chill), low 6C (1C wind chill).	Cloudy. E winds to 29 km/h. High 8C (3C wind chill), low 4C (-1C wind chill).	Rain. E winds to 25 km/h. High 4C (-1C wind chill), low -3C (-3C wind chill).	Cloudy. E winds to 22 km/h. High 5C (0C wind chill), low 4C (-2C wind chill).
Sunrise 5:17a; sunset 8:25p	Sunrise 5:24a; sunset 8:17p	Sunrise 5:32a; sunset 8:09p	Sunrise 5:40a; sunset 8:01p
Extended forecast: Sunday, rain, 5C (1C), 4C (-2C), light 14:06h; Monday, cloudy, 6C (1C), 3C (-1C), light 13:50h; Tuesday, cloudy, 5C (0C), 4C (-1C), light 13:35h; Wednesday, p. cloudy, 3C (-2C), 1C (-4C), light 13:20h			
Data provided by storm.no			



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Anne Mæland, right, Cecilie Denkin, discuss the movie "As Long As I Want" following a screening Saturday at Kulturhuset. Denkin said she doesn't know if the film she shot as a graduate project will be released commercially. The introduction is at www.youtube.com/watch?v=cAbKdq74RGc.

Harsh Arctic, socially, seen in film

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"As Long As I Want," filmed earlier this year by Cecilie Denkin, a student at The University of Tromsø. The seemingly ironic title is from a poem Mæland recited during this year's local Norwegian Constitution Day celebration.

The 38-minute movie features Mæland's history and still-lively daily routines, and debate among longtime locals about the dependency requirement. The second half is an abrupt shift to the urbanity and lush greenery of Skien, where family members are urging her returning to the mainland.

Although Mæland is in her "official" hometown on the mainland, and the bond with her family is obvious, scenes like taking a bus to visit a hairdresser at a mall convey a strong sense of being out of place.

One of the most painful moments is visiting her husband's tombstone, where space beneath his name awaits more engraving. Denkin's mention of the visit when Mæland returns to her crafts studio in Longyearbyen prompts a sigh and long pause.

"It turns into a trip to the cemetery when you return home," Mæland says.

The film, a graduate project for Denkin, is shot with an informal simplicity befitting that

status. Much of the dialog consists of Denkin's off-camera conversations with Mæland, with a single camera following her from the perspective of someone paying a visit.

The approach captures some "real life" moments many films miss in their rush to capture the Arctic at its most pristine and extreme. The essence of Mæland's dilemma, for instance, comes to life during the discussion in the library among longtime residents.

The problem, they said, is while government officials and others seek a family community, a normal population is abnormal in such an extreme environment.

"We can sink into poverty due to 20 retired persons," said Jon Sandmo, a city councilman now coping with his own departure from Svalbard due to advancing cancer.

Denkin said an article about Svalbard's self-dependency requirements sparked her interest in the film, and she talked "to three or four old ladies that don't want to go" before making Mæland the main subject.

"I said yes because I didn't know what she was talking about," Mæland said with the same humor that surfaces often during film.

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

Darkness brings enlightenment

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art exhibits and other cold-season activities.

The ballet company concludes a five-city fall tour with the performance in Longyearbyen, the first here in many years. The works are billed as the efforts of contemporary and rising stars in the choreography community.

Other major upcoming events include:

- A harvest festival celebration with food and concerts Oct. 13 at Huset.

- Fri Flyt Film Tour 2012, featuring a variety of winter sports movies, Oct. 14 at Kroa.

- A concert by Norwegian pop/country star

Kurt Nilsen Oct. 22 at Kulturhuset.

- Dark Season Blues, Svalbard's biggest annual festival, Oct. 25-28. The 15-band lineup includes familiar and new names including Billy T from the United States, Grainne Duffy from Ireland and Amund Maarud from Norway.

- Kunstpause, featuring various art and performance activities, Nov. 7-11. Noteworthy performers include Jonas Fjeld and Ole Paus.

- Several holiday concerts, including Aasmund Nordstoga Dec. 6 at Kulturhuset.

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

What's up

Sept. 13

2 p.m.: Board of Leisure and Cultural Enterprises meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

Sept. 15

Noon: Kick-off forevents related to Oct. 21 NRK telethon. Central square. A youth car wash begins at 1:30 p.m.

6 p.m.: Performance by the Norwegian National Ballet Company. Kulturhuset.

Sept. 16

6 p.m.: Movie: "Tina and Bettina – The Movie," Norwegian comedy, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Total Recall," U.S. action/sci-fi, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

Sept. 18

6 p.m.: Bydrift board meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

6 p.m.: Meeting to discuss local community plan, with focus on current strengths and weaknesses, and future opportunities and threats. Kulturhuset.

Sept. 19

6 p.m.: Movie: "Ted," U.S. comedy, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

Sept. 23

6 p.m.: Movie: "Skvis" (preview screening), Norwegian drama/family, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

Sept. 25

7 p.m.: Municipal Council meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

Sept. 26

6 p.m.: Movie: "Magic Mike," U.S. drama/comedy, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

Oct. 1

Q3 meter reading due.

Oct. 13

7 p.m.: Free Flow Film Tour, featuring winter sports movies. Kroa.

7:30: Harvest festival, feast and concert. Huset.

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:

- *Shell's Arctic drilling stops after one day*
- *Remains of 1845 Arctic expedition found*
- *Orcas in Arctic Ocean a climate concern*
- *Climate woes? Sea otters to the rescue!*