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Svalbard's Russian General Counsel Aleksandr Antipov, above center, lays a wreath paying tribute to fallen soldiers at the Skjæringa memorial during a midday ceremony today. At left, Per Einar Krokans, left, accepts the Typhus statuette from Longyearbyen Mayor Kjell Mork during an evening gala at Kulturhuset. Krokans received the 38th annual award, given to a person whose activities help "get (the community) out of typhus," for his involvement with the Red Cross, Longyearbyen Photo Club, Svalbard Rotary Club, Longyearbyen Hunting and Fishing Association, and many other organizations.

Not just any old election

16- and 17-year-olds eligible to vote this fall for local council members; nominees chosen

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

There will be a new mayor, new political party and new youthful presence at the polls during October's municipal election.

But the adults on the ballot may need to do extra homework to reach the 16- and 17-year-olds who will be eligible to vote for the first time as part of an experimental program.

Longyearbyen is one of 21 Norwegian cities where the teens can vote, but there doesn't seem to be widespread interest among local youths who say they are content to wait until the traditional age of 18.

"I'm not so interested in that because grown-ups are more experienced," said Heid Vilde Hammer, 15, a lifelong Longyearbyen resident.

Mathias Leirvih, 15, who has lived here for two years, said his family is very political, "but I don't care so much for it. I'm interested in other things." Also, he will be departing for the mainland this summer.

Election results "will probably not be particularly affected" by the lower voting age, according to Norway's Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development. But

See **BALLOT**, page 3

An honor to ~~award~~ get the prize

Longtime resident reverses roles on Norwegian Constitution Day

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

It was just the latest of many evenings Per Einar Krokans has hoisted Longyearbyen's most celebrated citizen award – except for one

major difference.

He was receiving the award instead of presenting it.

Krokans, 68, is this year's winner of the

See **AWARDS**, page 4

Inside

E. Svalbard plan comments sought
Page 2

Headlines from *Svalbardposten*
- Tourism site laws not our fault, company says
- Airport must modify lounge to serve alcohol
- Dog kennels a frisky market as three for sale
Page 3

Weather forecast
Page 3

Events calendar
Page 4

Major discovery in fish tale of film

Review: Hurum reveals new 'sea monster' of Svalbard in overdramatic documentary

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Discovering a new species in the soil near the North Pole is pretty dramatic, as is being Norway's first recipient of a prominent science award for doing so.

But apparently not enough for the Twitter generation.

Jørn Hurum, a paleontologist who's led high-profile excavations on Svalbard since 2004, is Norway's first "Emerging Explorer" chosen by the National Geographic Society, whose documentary "Death of a Sea Monster" will air on NRK at the end of this month. It reveals a new ichthyosaurus species

See **DOCUMENTARY**, page 3



COURTESY OF JØRN HURUM

Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

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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.

One sick race



DAG ARNE HUSDAL

Dag Arne Husdal approaches the finish line of a Chinese Downhill race from Trollsteinen on Monday, moments before wiping out in an unspectacular conclusion. Thirty-nine racers participated in the annual "downhill by any non-motorized means" event hosted by Trollsteinens Venner, which didn't name a winner but did thank the suppliers of food and booze at their website. Husdal's nausea-inducing ski-cam video of the race can be seen at www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=10150250215280955&comments.

Briefly

Comments on plan for East Svalbard sought

A new management plan for East Svalbard's nature reserves has been released by the governor's office, which is accepting public comments on the proposal until June 1.

The two large nature reserves on East Svalbard were set up by Royal Decree in 1973. The management plan covers 51 percent of Svalbard's land and sea area on the east side.

Factors in the plan include environmental preservation, cultural heritage and future anticipated commercial use. A final proposal is scheduled for completion this fall, with the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management and others giving it professional review expected to last into 2012.

Links to the plan and other information in English are available at www.ssf.npolar.no/pages/news445.htm. The governor's office can be contacted at elin.lien@syssemmannen.no.

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

Svalbard's reputation as a haven for aliens, zombies and mad scientists continues. National Geographic, hardly a fringe science publication, is listing Svalbard as one of nine "places on Earth aliens could thrive." It notes the extensive testing done here of equipment that might be used someday on Mars and it "is the only place on Earth with carbonate deposits identical to those found in the famous Martian meteorite ALH84001." Still, the top honor would seem to go to Ellesmere Island, Canada, where the makeup of its glaciers allow "astrobiologists (to) study the potential for life on Jupiter's moon Europa" ... The world is scheduled to end at 6 p.m. Saturday (um, which time zone?), but those finding themselves in a version of Hell much resembling Earth can reap some sinful mammon by betting on other events related to the Apocalypse that are closer to home. Intrade, which lets bettors buy and sell "stocks" of everything from elections ("shares" of Obama currently pay about 2-5 odds, with Mitt Romney at 9-1 his closest chal-



SOURCE: www.intrade.com

It's been a highly volatile market for Arctic ice melt this year, with odds for less cover than 2007 ranging from 25 percent to 68 percent.

lenger in the next U.S. presidential election) to disgraced ex-IMF chief Dominique Strauss-Kahn pleading guilty to at least one charge (1-5 odds). There's a whole category of likely interest for the science-minded masses of Svalbard, including whether the minimum Arctic ice extent for 2011 will be greater than 2007. Current shares can be bought for \$4 (payoff is \$10 a share) and sold for about \$3.20. You can also bet on global temperatures, cap-and-trade agreements, BP's chances of going bankrupt and observation of the Higgs boson particle.



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY



NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM



PALAEOCRITTI.COM

Paleontologists, above left, excavate a new species of ichthyosaurus at Janusfjellet in August 2009. The fossil, top right, is a dolphin-like marine reptile whose appearance is depicted beneath.

'Sea Monster' doesn't need hype

DOCUMENTARY, from page 1

discovered by Hurun's team during its excavations at Janusfjellet in 2009.

It's the latest of several discoveries that have earned Hurun world attention – and controversy. His Svalbard digs have revealed an entire prehistoric marine eco system, including a colossal pliosaurus known as "Predator X." He also co-led the reassembly and analysis of the "Ida" fossil discovered in Germany, touted as the missing link between primates and humans in evolution.

"Discovering a fossil is like finding gold every time," said Hurun, an associate professor at the University of Oslo, in a statement issued by the National Geographic Society. "It's like a scratch-off lottery ticket. When you find bones on the surface, you don't know what lies below. Many times the whole skeleton has been weathered away. But sometimes you start to uncover a bone and it just keeps going and going, deeper and deeper. Those are the big, beautiful finds."

The thrill of winning the fossil lottery isn't enough for those making "Death of a Sea Mon-

ster," who feel the need for excessively somber music and narration, plus reality show inventions writers typically call "artistic license." More substantially, the documentary shifts and repeats themes at a blurring pace, essentially playing to the modern channel surfing/Twitter crowd with 140 letters of dialogue at a time.

An ominous scene featuring a polar bear actually shows an animal filmed elsewhere on Spitsbergen, for instance. A subplot where Hurun goes to Germany to conduct a "critical investigation" is pure timeline manipulation – he told an audience screening the film he'd never do such a thing in the middle of Svalbard's short field season.

Is it still worth seeing? Hell, yes.

The revelation of the 147-million-year-old fish reptile, resembling a fat dolphin, is plenty intriguing without the window dressing. Especially for a Svalbard audience who will likely be able to recognize and filter out the nonsense that outsiders constantly bombarded with phrases like "doomsday vault" won't.

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

Youths eligible to vote, but many may not

BALLOT, from page 1

studies show it often increases youths' political awareness and likelihood of voting on a long-term basis.

Five parties submitted between eight and 21 candidates for the Longyearbyen Local Council to the city by Friday's deadline. Top nominees for each party are, in order:

- Progress: Anita Kringlethaugen, Roy Albrigtsen, Kai Edgar Trædal.
- Labour: Christin Kristoffersen, Dag

Hekne, Anita Paula Johansen.

• Bipartisan: Kristin Furu Grøtting, Lene Villumsen, Håvar Fjerdingsøy.

• Conservative: Geir Hekne, Stig Onarheim, Trond Erik Johansen.

• Svalbardlista: Jørn Dybdahl, Jens Abild, Trond Berg. The party returns to the ballot after being absent in the 2007 election due to lack of voter interest.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Company denies fault for flaws in tourism booking site

The contractor for Svalbard Tourism's faulty new online booking system is denying they are partially responsible. Small tour operators in particular have complained about the system, with some saying they have had a near-total absence of bookings. TellUs IT, in a letter to *Svalbardposten*, states "the revealed needs of the activities participants could unfortunately not be delivered by the system at the time of order" and an understanding was reached to return to the old system until further notice. The company also notes accommodation providers are using the new system and bookings in March were up eight percent compared to a year ago. Svalbard Tourism has stated an update to correct the flaws is being quickly implemented.

Ministry: Airport must modify terminal to serve alcohol

Svalbard Airport will be required to modify its serving area for alcohol in the departure lounge to meet conditions reaffirmed by Norway's Ministry of Health and Care Services. The Longyearbyen Local Council approved the serving area last year, with the requirement it be separated by dividers at least 1.2 meters high. Former Airport Director Ole M. Rambech appealed the decision, arguing it would ruin the architectural concept of the departure lounge. The ministry ruled the dividers are not "highly unreasonable" and Morten Ulsnes, the airport's current director, said they will be erected at the same time new security facilities are built at the terminal in September. He said he hopes the serving area will open in October.

Dog kennels a frisky market as three are offered for sale

Two companies offering sled dog tours in Svalbard are for sale and a third has a new owner. Spitsbergen Experience and Svalbard Villmarkssenter are trying to sell their dogs and kennels, while Arctic Adventures is being purchased by someone the current owner declined to name. A commitment to other local and mainland obligations are generally cited as reasons for the sales.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Snow. Variable winds at 2 km/h. High -5C (-5C wind chill), low -7C (-11C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. Variable winds at 4 km/h. High -4C (-8C wind chill), low -7C (-13C wind chill).	Mixed sun and clouds. N winds to 3 km/h. High -5C (-8C wind chill), low -6 (-11C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. Variable winds to 4 km/h. High -5C (-10C wind chill), low -6C (-15C wind chill).
Sunrise/sunset: 24-hour light	Sunrise/sunset: 24-hour light	Sunrise/sunset: 24-hour light	Sunrise/sunset: 24-hour light
Extended forecast: Sunday, p. cloudy, -4C (-8C), -6C (-11C), light 24:00h; Monday, p. cloudy, -3C (-7C), -5C (-10C), light 24:00h; Tuesday, cloudy, -1C (-6C), -4C (-8C), light 24:00h; Wednesday, cloudy, -2C (-6C), -3C (-6C), light 24:00h.			
Data provided by yr.no			



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Svalbard Gov. Odd Olsen Ingerø, top center, leads several hundred residents through the streets of Longyearbyen today during the traditional Norwegian Constitution Day parade. At left, about 30 students gather for a *Syttende Mai* party inside Longyearbyen's youth club as adults gather for the evening award gala at the neighboring Kulturhuset.

Student honor 'totally unexpected'

AWARDS, from page 1

Typhus statuette, a wryly named award presented to someone whose achievements bring well-being to the community.

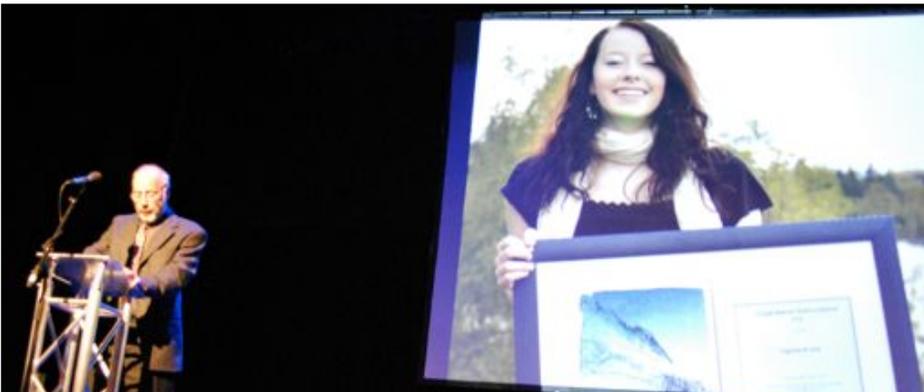
Krokans, who has lived in Longyearbyen since 1991 except for a few years on the mainland that decade, has been involved in a multitude of diverse organizations including the local committee responsible for the award, which he has given to other winners several times.

"This statuette has in many ways followed me for 20 years and that I would end up stand-

ing here today as the recipient of it is unbelievable," he said during an evening gala that is part of the town's annual Norwegian Constitution Day celebration. "I do not feel I have done so much. I've just done what I think is fun. The others have done so much."

The other major award of the evening was a 10,000-kroner youth cultural scholarship won by Ingrid Brenli, 18, for her years of involvement in numerous music and theater projects.

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



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Bjørn Brenli, left, accepts Longyearbyen's annual youth cultural scholarship on behalf of his niece, Ingrid Brenli, pictured at right. He said the 10,000-kroner prize was "totally unexpected" by his niece, a prolific musician and stage actress now studying on the mainland.

What's up

May 19

7:30 p.m.: Presentation by author Per Petterson on his recent novels. Admission 100 kr. Longyearbyen Library.

May 21

11 a.m.: Cultural exchange to Barentsburg, with show by Longyearbyen artists at 6:30 p.m. Residents of Barentsburg will visit and perform in Longyearbyen on June 4.

May 22

6 p.m.: Movie: "Arthur 3 and the Two Worlds," French animated family/adventure, ages 7 and up. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Honey," Turkish/German drama, all ages. Kulturhuset.

May 24

7 p.m.: Local Board meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

May 29

3:30: Gala performance to celebrate Telenor Svalbard's 100th anniversary. Tickets 100 kr., available at Kulturhuset cafe and online at www.lokalstyre.no. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Det Akutte Menneske," Norwegian documentary. Kulturhuset.

May 30

10:15: Environmental and Economic Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

May 31

10 a.m.: Administration Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

June 4

10 a.m.: Spitsbergen Marathon. Full, half and 10K courses. Starts and finishes at Svalbardhallen. Register at www.svalbardturn.no.

6 p.m.: Cultural exchange from Barentsburg. Show featuring Russian musicians, dancers and others. Tickets 100 kr. adults, 50 kr. youths and seniors. 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:

- *Last Neanderthals lived in Barents area*
- *Russia to 'protect its Arctic rights'*
- *Denmark readying claim to North Pole*
- *'Champion of polar bears' is ... Detroit?*