



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Russian workers in the abandoned mining town Pyramiden burn wreckage from buildings and other waste as part of an effort to revive the area for tourism. A 36-million kroner cleanup of its Svalbard settlements and plans to boost science activities were announced by Russia last week.

Cleaning up their act

Russia plans 36M-kr. waste removal from Svalbard settlements

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

The neighboring Russians seem to be reaping many spoils when they invade Longyearbyen these days.

Last time it was accompanied by the news they are resuming coal mining in Barentsburg after a fire halted operations for nearly three years in the already economically devastated community.

This time they're getting a bunch of money to clean up the area as part of a plan to revive tourism and science activities.

Russian's Ministry of Natural Resources announced last week 36 million kroner is be-

Trash = treasure: Winners of governor's "garbage lottery" and incentives for Longyearbyen community cleanup

Page 4

ing allocated for a state-ordered cleanup of its Svalbard settlements. A couple of days later Barentsburg residents who may do some of the work came to Longyearbyen for one of the regular goodwill cultural exchanges between the two communities whose countries are often in dispute about Arctic issues.

See WASTE, page 4

Carbon goes up to 10X

Emissions from fossil fuels are multitudes higher than ancient period of warming, study finds

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Carbon is pouring into Earth's atmosphere ten times faster today than during a dramatic warming period 56 million years ago that raised Earth's temperature by at least five degrees Celsius, according to an international team studying rock cores in Spitsbergen.

The results of their research, published Sunday, indicate drastic warming predicted by the end of the century will be far more damaging and abrupt than the prehistoric episode known as the Paleocene-Eocene Thermal Maximum.

"We looked at the PETM because it is thought to be the best ancient analog for future climate change caused by fossil fuel burning," said Lee R. Kump, a professor of geosciences, at Penn State, in a prepared statement.

The researchers note in the current issue of *Nature Geoscience* the source of the carbon, the rate of emission and the total amount of carbon involved in this event during the PETM are poorly characterized.

As with most climate studies, this one appears likely to have zero influence on skeptics.

See EMISSIONS, page 2

Training? That's for losers



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Jessica Wilson of the United Kingdom makes the long jog to Svalbard Airport – for the second time – during the 2011 Spitsbergen Marathon.

First-timer with 'stupid idea' of running Spitsbergen Marathon on a lark wins women's division

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Mira Karppinen said she and a friend had the "stupid idea" to run the Spitsbergen Marathon two weeks earlier. She'd never run a marathon and didn't train for this one.

She won.

"My plan was to run it in six hours but then it felt so good I ran faster," Karppinen, 28,

See MARATHON, page 3

Inside

Whale tales and tales of whale scale
Page 2

Headlines from *Svalbardposten*

- Easter dogsled photo wins international prize
- Store Norske must do EIA for gold exploration
- Change in UNIS Guest House plan questioned

Page 3

Weather forecast

Page 3

Events calendar

Page 4

Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

Editor

Mark Sabbatini

Staff writer/photographer

Karla Paz

Copy editor

Kristan Hutchison

Psychiatrist

Irene Gallion

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

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.

Copyright stuff

Original contents of this publication can be reproduced for non-commercial purposes free of charge if *Icepeople* is credited as the source. The original writers, photographers and other contributors retain their rights to all published works.

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.

Setting a trashy example



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Students at Polarflokken Barnehage pick up trash near the kindergarten Monday for what a teacher described as "practicing" for a boat trip and beach cleanup scheduled Thursday.

Dire carbon warning in rocks

EMISSIONS, from page 1

The 15 "most recommended" of 93 reader comments for a *USA Today* article are variations of the top-rated "I can't believe people are actually drawing paychecks for this B.S."

The PETM unfolded over a period of 10,000 to 20,000 years, according to the new research. That was enough for most animals and plants to adapt, although a significant number of deep-sea species went extinct.

The rate and amount of release within hundreds of years in modern times may not be enough for the biological environment to adjust, according to the researchers.

Geologists have long known that a massive release of carbon caused the PETM, but where the carbon came from, exactly how much was released, and how quickly, were still subject to speculation.

The researchers analyzed a Spitsbergen site uncovered by a coal-mining operation, determining PETM carbon emissions did not exceed 1.7 billion metric tons per year. Recent fossil fuel emissions of carbon average more than eight billion tons, with 2010 showing the highest output on record.

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

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

In "other cultures are weird" news, a seafood dealer who pleaded guilty to selling whale meat in Southern California now faces eight to 14 months in prison and a \$100,000 fine. A popular restaurant he sold the meat to inflected "self-imposed punishment" on itself by closing its doors after his arrest. Meanwhile, plenty of Longyearbyen residents were psyched about a bunch of fresh whale meat (instead of the usual frozen) arriving at Svalbardbutikken early this week. One employee at the meat counter reported selling about 15 kilograms the first afternoon it was available, so presumably far more was sold by all of the workers there. Of course those wacky "Americans" (nice of them to steal a designation that applies to the inhabitants of two continents) also tend to get into a snit when you try to do other everyday things like wear seal skins ... We see and ridicule a lot of strange references to the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, and

one we never would have expected comes from the folks running the Internet Archive (www.archive.org). It's one of the world's greatest sites with the Wayback Machine (cached copies of every Web page ever created so you can revisit "dead" sites), hundreds of thousands of film and music files (the audio archive has about 900,000 live concert recordings by past and current artists), and the largest collection of free books and publications in existence. That last bit is where the "Doomsday Vault" comes in, as the IA gurus now have the Physical Archive for all literary material at a climate-controlled facility in Richmond, Calif. (near San Francisco). Founder Brewster Kahle, on the IA's blog, compares the Physical Archive to the seed vault as "an authoritative and safe version of crops we are growing." Great except for one thing: We're not sure how "permanent" a place can be that's vulnerable to earthquakes, weather, fire and overzealous Puritans who want to ban Harry Potter.



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Kim Senger, left, crosses the finish line of the Spitsbergen Marathon on Saturday with Pernilla Carlsson, center, accompanying him for the final few meters. Carlsson said he decided to enter the race about two weeks before it started, along with his friend Mira Karppinen, watching at center background. Karppinen won the women's division in four hours, four minutes and seven seconds.

Rookie winner 'in good condition'

MARATHON, from page 1

said a few days after the race. While surprised, she didn't even mention knowing about her winning time in an earlier interview shortly after crossing the finish line ("I didn't think it was important").

Her time of four hours, four minutes and seven seconds was the best of six women running the 42-kilometer race, ahead of second-place Susanne Sloth Larsen (4:05:55) and third-place Kirsten Falk (4:09:21).

Olle Dahlberg (3:01:12) was the overall winner, followed in the 27-member men's division by Goran Karnfält (3:13:33) and Roy Addresses (3:22:05).

Half-marathon winners were Yann Rashid in the men's division (1:37:47) and Ute Schaarschmidt (01:51:23) in the women's). Winners of the 10K race were Christian Svarstad (40 minutes, 34 seconds) and Time Thorstensen (50:26).

Karppinen, a North Finland resident working for a dogsledding company in Longyearbyen, said she finished second in a mountain



MIRA KARPPINEN

biking competition in Norway last summer, but this is her first win in any race since she was a cross-country ski competitor as a youth.

"It was my first (marathon), but I've been competing in adventure mountain biking and things like that so I'm in good condition," she said.

Her friend, Kim Senger, 27, a resident of the Czech Republic and Ph.D. student at The University Centre in Svalbard, didn't finish high in the rankings. But he expressed no regrets about the hours of slogging along the course comprised of most of Longyearbyen's roads – twice.

"I don't like to run," he said. But "it's a nice view and you get lots of bananas."

Nonetheless, "once in a lifetime in good," Senger said.

Karppinen, after initially saying she also had no interest in running another marathon, said she may try again next year.

"I want to run it in under four hours," she said.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM **SVALBARDPOSTEN** VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS



Photo from Easter dogsled trip wins international prize

Lars Andreas Dybvik, 40, won the "Extreme Environment Photographic Competition" with a photo taken of his camp in Reindalen during a five-day dogsledding trip with Svalbard Villmarksenter during Easter of 2009. "It was incredibly fun and it was a fabulous prize that paid for my stay in Svalbard," he said after receiving the \$5,000 award. The competition was held in conjunction with the Antarctic Centennial year (2011-2012) in Hobart, the capital of Tasmania in Australia.

Store Norske must assess impact of gold exploration

Store Norske's search for gold in St. Jonsfjorden has been suspended until an environmental impact assessment now being required by government officials is complete. The requirement sought by Svalbard Gov. Odd Olsen Ingerø was appealed by Store Norske, but the Norwegian Ministry of Environment upheld the decision. The company conducted preliminary work last spring without an assessment, but Ingerø demanded the environmental assessment when the potential mining area became larger than original planned. Store Norske said it may take until next spring before drilling exploratory holes can resume.

Change of plan for UNIS Guest House gets opposition

Plans to build housing-like units at the UNIS Guest House are encountering some opposition from city officials. They note the building's original intent was short-term hotel- or hostel-like units for researchers and others, so the parking and storage space required at other residential complexes is lacking. UNIS officials said housing needs have changed since the original plan three years ago.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Sunny. NW winds to 11 km/h. High 2C (0C wind chill), low 0C (-4C wind chill).	Mostly sunny. N winds to 11 km/h. High 2C (0C wind chill), low 0C (0C wind chill).	Mostly sunny. N winds to 7 km/h. High 1C (-1C wind chill), low 0C (-2C wind chill).	Mostly sunny. N winds at 4 km/h. High 1C (1C wind chill), low 0C (0C 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, 2C (-2C), 0C (0C), light 24:00h; Monday, p. cloudy, 2C (2C), 0C (0C), light 24:00h; Tuesday, p. cloudy, 2C (2C), 0C (0C), light 24:00h; Wednesday, p. cloudy, 1C (1C), 0C (0C), light 24:00h.			

Data provided by yr.no



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

An ensemble of performers from the Russian community of Barentsburg, above, perform a traditional romance song about and a folk dance during a cultural exchange show Saturday at Kulturhuset. At left, a lone "soldier" performs a comedic routine to a song about the military, another frequent theme during the show. The exchanges between Longyearbyen and Barentsburg take place several times a year for sports and performing arts events, with banquets and gift exchanges also a regular part of the goodwill visits between residents whose countries are involved in numerous Arctic-related disputes.

Russians to clean up settlements

WASTE, from page 1

The cleanup project, scheduled between now and 2013, is focusing primarily on environmentally harmful waste, oil spills, scrap metal and sunken objects that may damage ship traffic, according to *RIA Novosti*.

Details are vague and other restoration projects, including an ongoing one to revive tourism facilities in the Russian communities, have experienced delays and questions about efficient use of funds.

Guri Tveito, chief environmental officer for the Svalbard governor's office, stated in an e-mail interview they have seen a news article about the cleanup, but "we have, so far as I know, not received information from Trust Arktikugol on the matter." The state-run Trust Arktikugol runs the coal mining and other operations in the Russian settlements.

The announcement does come shortly after Russia unveiled a large-scale cleanup of Soviet-era toxins resulting from military operations in Franz Josef Land national park, located to the east of Svalbard.

Russia, while aggressively pursuing oil exploration and other commercial activity in its Arctic territories (the scope of which is another significant issue), also has announced plans to build a research center in Svalbard for monitoring of the environment in the Arctic.

There are about 400 Russians living in Svalbard, virtually all in Barentsburg. A few are performing restoration and cleanup work in the abandoned mining town of Pyramiden, which Russia is hoping will become a featured tourist attraction.

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

Rewarding cleanups here and up north

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Only a few get a free trip to northern Spitsbergen to pick up debris along the beach after winning the annual trash lottery. But there's a consolation prize of sorts for those clearing waste closer to home.

The Svalbard governor's office has picked 21 of 178 lottery entrants for two four-day

beach cleanups in July. The list of winners is at www.sysselmannen.no.

Longyearbyen residents can drop off trash free at the city's waste facility – or have containers picked up from roadsides by volunteers – during a community cleanup June 17 and 18. Details are at the same website.

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

What's up

June 9

2 p.m.: Board of Culture and Leisure Business Authority meeting. Næringsbygget 1, Tundra room.

June 10

Longyearbyen Day. Free admission to Svalbard Museum and Gallery Svalbard, plus 90-minute historic walking tour of city guided by Dag Ivar Brekke of Store Norske beginning at 5 p.m. at Skjæringa. The show "Polar Eufori" will also be presented at 6:30 p.m. at Kulturhuset.

June 11

7:30 p.m.: Concert: "An Evening With Elton John" by Tundradundrene and the Longyearbyen and Store Norske choirs. Tickets at the door, cash only. Kulturhuset.

June 12

11 a.m.: Pentecost liturgy. Svalbard Church.

June 13

8 p.m.: Movie: "Thor" (3D), U.S. action/adventure, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

June 14

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

7 p.m.: Discussion with former Svalbardbutikken Director Jan Haugan hosted by Leif Magne Helgesen. Svalbard Church.

June 15

8 p.m.: Movie: "Hangover 2," U.S. comedy, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

June 16

6 p.m.: Board of City Operation Authority meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

June 17

9 a.m.: Board of Growing Enterprises Authority meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

June 19

11 a.m.: Liturgy. Svalbard Church.

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:

- *Polar bear dental checkup in Svalbard*
- *Spitsbergen glaciers key to Mars trip?*
- *Russia, Norway divvy Arctic for oil work*
- *Greenhouse gas pain? Kill farting camels*