



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Lene Villumsen, at podium, expresses worries about paying for upgrades to Longyearbyen's power plant as other municipal council members and city administrators listen by candlelight at the council's meeting Tuesday. The citywide blackout was caused by condensation in a turbine.

## About that power bill...

*Council left in the dark as electricity plant worries dominate budget*

By MARK SABBATINI  
Editor

Since paying the electricity bill was the biggest worry, it seemed fitting the discussion took place during a blackout.

A 193-million-kroner budget for next year was approved by Longyearbyen's Municipal Council after sometimes painful debate Tuesday, much of it by candlelight as a citywide power outage struck 15 minutes after the 7 p.m. meeting started.

The outage, except for a brief restoration, lasted almost exactly as long as a budget discussion that focused almost entire on the city's power plant. Government-mandated upgrades to improve efficiency and emissions are being

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### Fee increases in 2014

Longyearbyen residents will pay more for many, but not all, services. Examples:

Power:	1.59 kr./kwh	+4.6%
Water:	1,144.04 kr./yr.	+3%
Sewer:	423.67 kr./yr.	+3%
Trash (apmt.)	5,177.69 kr/yr.	0%
Car:	4,334 kr./yr	0%
Snowmobile	722 kr./yr.	0%
Kindergarten:	2,405 kr./term	+3.2%
Svalbardhallen	1,490 kr./yr.	+2.8%
Movie (3D)	110 kr.	+4.8%
Steinway piano	2,860 kr./day	+3.1%
Library late fee	70 kr.	+7.7%

# Your papers, please

*Canada joins Denmark and Russia in claiming N. Pole; will trips from Svalbard be foreign?*

By MARK SABBATINI  
Editor

First there was the worry climate change might eliminate the ice allowing surface expeditions to reach the North Pole. Now top-of-the-world trekkers might need to fret about clearing customs and immigration to get there.

Canada is trying to claim the Pole as its turf by filing an application Monday with the United Nations seeking to vastly expand the country's sea boundary. It joins Russia and Denmark in battling for that claim, a concept rejected and often ridiculed by other nations, with Russia responding a day later by announcing it will boost its military presence in the Arctic.

The fracas is the latest in a series of long-running disputes about Arctic boundaries and rights, triggered by desires cash in on what may be 30 percent of the world's remaining untapped oil, as well as more efficient commercial shipping routes made possible by climate change.

The five Arctic-region nations – Canada, Russia, Denmark, Norway and the United

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## Tragic ending for a Classic

*Pizzeria closes after 12 years to make way for Fruene expansion; owner's hopes for new site dim*

By MARK SABBATINI  
Editor

Sam Ziaei's final food delivery was a whopper – more than a million kroner's worth. Unfortunately its destination was the trash.

The owner of Classic Pizza was forced to close his Lompensenteret restaurant Saturday after 12 years so the Fruene cafe next door can

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MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Movers carry a deep freezer out of Classic Pizza on Monday, two days after the fast food restaurant was forced to close after 12 years.

## Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

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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.

## Since 'selfie' is the media word of the moment...



PAUL NICKLEN / NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

A young male polar bear takes a selfie by tripping a camera trap set up by photographer Paul Nicklen in Svalbard in 2009. The image is featured in *National Geographic's* "Around the World in 125 Years," a three-volume set of the publication's best photography during its history. Nicklen's photo is the first featured in an online slideshow of select images at cbsnews.com.

## Icesheet

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

It turns out we weren't the only ones who found that big feature article about Pyramiden last week a bit ghastrly. While we were creeped out by readers wanting to send undesirables like apartheid opponents there, the subject of the piece, **Vladimir Prokofiev, is feeling rather grave about being portrayed as a solitary survivor in the abandoned Russian mining town.** "They're making me a castaway like Tom Hanks," he said, noting several other people were working there with him this summer. "I made the real story about what Pyramiden is, what other people are there and what they are doing." Plenty of other details got lost in translation from the Russian diary Prokofiev and other workers posted online, such as a much-adored pet fox actually "belonging" to a co-worker. He's received hundreds of e-mails and Facebook posts since the article, originally published by *The Siberian Times*, appeared in publications worldwide, but he's "a little bit upset" they all have a sensationalized idea of what Pyramiden is ... Also upsetting a few



PHOTO BY VLADIMIR PROKOFIEV

**The "lonely man" actually has co-workers who can take his picture:** But we're using this man-in-the-mirror shot because selfie.

folks is the fact that **people entering Longyearbyen's municipal government building are still being greeted by a bust of Robert Hermansen, the infamous former Store Norske leader responsible for a "gross corruption" scheme that sent him to prison and the company into a long-term economic tailspin.** City Manager Lars Ole Saugnes, in a letter to the mining company, is requesting the onetime community icon be removed from the corner he's been relegated to and into storage or some other suitable place until the company opens its planned mining museum, according to The Local Paper of Repossession. Current Store Norske leader Per Andersson said he needs to "let it sink in a bit" before making a decision about the request ... The city is also being Grinch-like when it comes to sending Christmas cards to its "contacts" this year, but in the "heart grew three sizes" sense as instead it is **sending 10,000 kroner to Doctors Without Borders to support the assistance the organization is providing to victims in the Philippines affected by Typhoon Haiyan.**



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

**You've been a bad boy** and standing in the corner is no longer sufficient punishment.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CLASSIC PIZZA



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Customers, above, crowd into the few tables at Classic Pizza in June of this year. The fast food eatery was notable for being Longyearbyen's only restaurant to offer delivery and remain open until the wee hours of the morning – as late as 5 a.m. on weekends. At left, Sam Ziaei, owner of the now-closed restaurant takes down panels from the kitchen's oven fans Monday as the space is vacated to make room for an expansion of Fruene.

## Classic Pizza closes, new site dubious

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expand its chocolate-making business into the space. He said he hopes to reopen in the space now occupied by the Bruktikken thrift store, but there's been no word from city officials about reconsidering the matter after rejecting it earlier this year.

"We don't know how, we don't know when - nothing," he said.

The prospect is unlikely anytime soon because, while the city wants a better place for the thrift store than the small shack it's in now, there's no money or specific site for a move, said Marianne Aasen, administrative director of Bydrift, the city's infrastructure agency.

"Because of the budget we passed, Bruktikken will remain where it is for 2014," she said.

Classic Pizza is far from assured of getting

the space even if Bruktikken moves, Aasen said. She said the shack would need to be replaced because it's inadequate for operating a restaurant. Also, the site in the town's central square is prime real estate.

"We, as the city, can't just give that away," she said. "There are a lot of people who are interested in that location."

Ziaei and his brothers, Essy and Mehran, opened Classic Pizza in 2001 and operated it until selling it in 2006. They repurchased the business in 2009, but were told in July they needed to vacate the space by Oct. 1 because their lease was not being renewed. They got a reprieve when Fruene delayed its expansion plans, but not long enough to find a new space.

"Twelve years of work, gone," Ziaei said.

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

## HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

### Trust Arktikugol fined 1.3M kroner for mine accidents

Trust Arktikugol has been fined 1.3 million kroner for three serious accidents, two of them fatal, in Barentsburg's coal mine this year. The first accident on April 4 killed a Ukrainian man in his 50s when he was hit by a boulder 500 meters deep in the mine. On June 20 a 27-year-old Ukrainian man died in a landslide 300 meters below ground. The most recent accident on Sept. 10 involved a Ukrainian man in his 50s whose legs got caught in production machinery, with one leg having to be amputated. The mine, closed during previous accidents during the current and past years, has remained closed since the September accident until Norwegian labor officials are satisfied that "total unacceptable" management practices and conditions in the mine are resolved.

### No charges for tour company for death during boating trip

The death of a woman in an overturned sightseeing boat this summer was an accident, meaning the crew and company won't face charges, according to the Svalbard governor's office. The U.S. woman in her 60s lost consciousness when she and 12 other occupants of a zodiac were thrown into the sea when a large wave hit the raft in Krossfjorden. Lt. Gov. Lars Erik Alfheim said there was no dispute among those interviewed that the wave, not negligence, caused the accident.

### Bykaia gets road fee refund while city drafts new rules

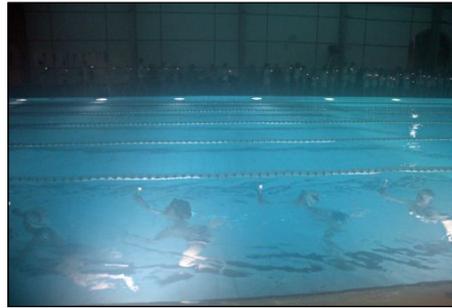
Longyearbyen municipal council has agreed to reimburse Bykaia Lagerutleie a 953,000-kroner fee for connecting two of the company's warehouses to a city street while a new process for assessing fees is determined. The decision comes after a two-year dispute, with the company arguing the fee was excessive and improperly calculated. Norway's Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development earlier this year agreed with Bykaia's claim and the city, rather than charging a reassessed fee, opted for a full refund. City Manager Lars Ole Saunes said the business will be charged once a revised fee scale is implemented.

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Cloudy. E winds to 42 km/h. High -7C (-14C wind chill), low -11C (-17C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. N winds to 42 km/h. High -11C (-17C wind chill), low -13C (-20C wind chill).	Cloudy. Variable winds to 45 km/h. High -8C (-16C wind chill), low -13C (-19C wind chill).	Snow. S winds to 49 km/h. High -4C (-10C wind chill), low -8C (-15C wind chill).
24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness
<b>Extended forecast:</b> Sunday, cloudy, -3C (-9C), -7C (-13C), light 0:00h; Monday, snow, -3C (-8C), -4C (-9C), light 0:00h; Tuesday, cloudy, -2C (-6C), -4C (-8C), light 0:00h; Wednesday, cloudy, -4C (-9C), -12C (-21C), light 0:00h			

Data provided by storm.no

## Gaining lots of weight for the holidays



Longyearbyen's new official Christmas tree, top left, lights up the town's central square after replacing a scraggy fir, top right, that was the subject of nationwide ridicule as possibly Norway's worst ever. The new tree arrived by boat from Tromsø early this week, with workers replacing it in the dead of night Tuesday. A Tromsø official blamed size requirements for shipping by air for the scrawiness of the first tree, which many residents said they wanted to keep for sentimental reasons. At bottom left, a trio performs music during the annual party for Longyearbyen's international community Dec. 5 at Svalbard Church, attended by people from 17 countries. At bottom right, local students light up the pool at Svalbardhallen by candlelight before competing in races during the annual holiday swim Saturday. All photos by Mark Sabbatini / Icepeople.

## Power plant dims budget debate

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only partially funded by Parliament, forcing the city to cover the rest with loans, grants and raising electricity fees for residents. The city received 73.3 million kroner in national funds out of the 150.1 million kroner it says it needs in 2014, with costs reaching 273.5 million kroner during the next four years.

"For the next five years we have money to pay for the interest and everything, but after 2017 when we spend all that money I wonder who will pay," said Lene Villumsen, a Bipartisan Party member, in an interview after the

council meeting.

Council members are planning to discuss increased and longer-term future funding with Norway's new Conservative-led government early next year, but Villumsen said she doesn't know if they will be more willing to provide support than the former Labor-led leadership.

"Before they were elected the signal was they were going to give us more money," she said. "I haven't heard anything about the signals afterwards."

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

## Canada puts North Pole on wish list

### CLAIM, from page 1

States – are by international law allowed marine borders extending 200 nautical miles from their northern coasts. But claims past that point can be requested due to factors such as the angle of the continental slope or the thickness of sediment on the sea floor, but vagueness in defining those factors is adding to the disputes.

Canada's application, which Foreign Min-

ister John Baird said it the result of a decade of updated mapping, seeks to expand its northern territory by 1.2 million square kilometers, roughly the size of Alberta and Saskatchewan combined. A planned follow-up submission will include a claim to an area extending 200 nautical miles beyond the North Pole.

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

## What's up

### Dec. 11

6 p.m.: Movie: "Gravity," British/U.S. sci-fi/drama, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Dec. 12

10 a.m.: Bydrift Board meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

### Dec. 13-15

Dance Marathon, featuring instruction in various styles for youths in all grade levels. Contact [birgitte@dahlknutsen.no](mailto:birgitte@dahlknutsen.no) for registration information.

### Dec. 13

11 a.m.: St. Lucy's Day celebration for children. Longyearbyen Library.

### Dec. 14

10 p.m.-4 a.m.: Holiday DJ party. Kulturhuset. No charge before 1 a.m.

### Dec. 15

11 a.m.: Third Sunday of Advent Mass. Svalbard Church.

5 p.m.: Christmas concert featuring various local performers. Svalbard Church.

6 p.m.: Movie: "The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug" (3D), U.S. drama, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

9 p.m.: Movie: "Escape Plan," U.S. sci-fi/thriller, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Dec. 16

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

### Dec. 17

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

### Dec. 18

6 p.m.: Movie: "The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug," U.S. drama, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

### Dec. 20

8 p.m.: Movie: "Kill Buljo 2," Norwegian comedy, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

### Dec. 22

4 p.m.: Movie: "Solan og Ludvig: Jul i Flåklipa," Norwegian family film, all ages. Kulturhuset.

## What's online

[Icepeople.net](http://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:

- -94.7C temp in Antarctica sets record
- 'New' greenhouse gas = CO2 X 7,000
- Warming kills shrimp industry in Maine
- Svalbard rocket nearly starts nuclear war