



Who are they? What are they watching?? We could tell you, but...

Some incognito people, above, take a look at stage preparations for the annual variety show spoofing the past year's events that will be performed Friday and Saturday at Huset. At right, Jason Roberts discusses filming and producing the BBC series "Frozen Planet" today at Kulturhuset.



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

No crime, but lots of blame

Governor says teen's death in bear mauling preventable, but no charges sought; parents appeal

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

The death of a teenage boy attacked by a polar bear at a glacier field camp last summer was "preventable," but no criminal charges are being sought because it was primarily due to unfortunate circumstances, according to the Svalbard governor's office.

The ruling was quickly appealed by the teen's parents. Also, the British expedition, whose members have been harshly attacked by the country's media, are still being judged largely guilty in the court of public opinion.

Horatio Chapple, 17, of Salisbury, was killed Aug. 5 when the polar bear attacked his tent at Von Postbreen, about 40 kilometers from Longyearbyen, during the trip organized by the British Schools Expedition Society (BSES). Two other youths and two expedition leaders were seriously injured by the bear before one of the leaders killed it with a rifle after several errant attempts.



HORATIO CHAPPLE

"The investigation shows that it was primarily a series of unfortunate circumstances that caused the event that was such a tragic

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Sun **CENSORED** a fun **CENSORED**

*New sled race site, satire on **CENSORED** wrap slushy Solfest*

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

Maybe they'll be wearing purple wigs. Maybe they won't.

Maybe it'll be smooth sledding. Maybe not.

Maybe the sun will come out at the magic moment...oh, hell. We're not giving anything away saying that's not going to happen.

Solfestuka is off to a less-than-sunny start, meteorologically speaking, as both the

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A new look at – and for – Viljar



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Viljar Hanssen introduces political dignitaries, in background, at a Solfestuka event this week.

TV documentary about recovery from Utøya tragedy and surgery to replace lost eye, all in a week

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

Watch Viljar Hanssen in reality these days and you might never guess the trauma he's overcome. Watch him on reality TV and it's all too apparent.

Hanssen, 18, is one of three youths featured in an hour-long documentary about their

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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

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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.



NRK

Viljar Hanssen, center, is welcomed by friends and family at Svalbard Airport as he returns to Longyearbyen last October, three months after nearly being killed during the shooting at the Utøya youth camp, as NRK films the moment for the TV documentary "Tilbake." The hour-long program about three survivors of the tragedy can be seen at www.nrk.no/nett-tv/klipp/831771.

Looking ahead, not back, after Utøya

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recovery from last July's shooting at the Utøya youth camp that killed 69 people. The program, which debuts today on NRK1, is also available on-demand at NRK's website.

Hanssen, hospitalized for three months with near-fatal injuries after being shot five times, talks about numerous triumphs and struggles, such as trying to count to ten when he now has seven fingers.

"When I was shot I remember looking down at the broken hand and thought that I at least had kept the fingers I need to drive a snowmobile on Svalbard," he said. "It may sound strange, but it was very important for me to think of something positive."

One of Longyearbyen's most active political youths before the shooting, Hanssen has returned to that role with a vengeance. He was elected the youngest-ever member of the municipal council last fall and this week is serving as master of ceremonies, meeting and introducing the foreign ministers of Norway and the European Union as they participate in an Arctic strategic summit.

He frequently talks about looking ahead to his political work – and getting good grades as he finishes high school a bit later than planned – instead of reliving the tragedy and being known as a victim. That also took another step forward during the past week with his final major hospital treatment, a prosthetic eye to replace the one lost when he was shot in the head.

The assailant, Anders Behring Breivik, is being formally charged this with terrorism after admitting to killing a total of 77 people at Utøya and by bombing government buildings in Oslo. Among his victims was Johannes Buø, 14, who lived in Longyearbyen for three years before the shooting.

Hanssen told NRK he has little interest in focusing on Breivik, who is claiming insanity.

"Our history is so much bigger than him," Hanssen said. "The focus should be on the victims, what they stood for and worked for. The focus should be on the right extremism and how it can be combated ... I hope he becomes more and more forgotten."

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

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

This week's evidence we don't have a journalistic clue about what's going on in our own back yard: Spitsbergen Travel Hotel has been named the third most profitable hotel in Norway for 2011, according to *Horecanytt*. We thought we knew the local lodging possibilities, pilfering things like wi-fi and waffles from them on occasion, but we have no friggin' clue where this mansion of mammon is. Sure, there's some close matches, but since they're not open all year it seems strange they'd be raking in more than, say, the Radisson ... Also in the world of shaking down tourists for maximum moola, what is about the 2012 Olympics screwing with us? First some artist comes and hauls away one of our islands on a

boat tour of England. Now Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines is engaged in a "Five-Ring Circus" by messing with its sailing schedules after signing a big-money charter deal for Games gurus, according to word passed to Cruise Critic by tipster "Captain Greybeard." The website is hearing complaints about cruisers planning mainland fjords trips now getting sent to Svalbard and those already going to Svalbard finding their schedules changed. They'd never pull this crap during the Winter Games, given that our biathlon sharpshooters are the best in the world ... And in more goodwill/ill-will news, Norway is conducting its largest military exercise in 10 years as 16,000 soldiers from 15 nations are basically playing Arctic wargames a bit south of here (no, Russia, isn't among them).



NORWEGIAN VETERINARY INSTITUTE



ARLID LYSSAN / SYSSELMANNEN

A veterinarian, above left, points to one of several bad teeth in a polar bear that may have been a factor in its attack on a youth camp on Svalbard, killing one person and wounding four others. Above right, a tripwire alarm system deployed around the camp site had no design faults, but failed to activate when the bear crossed it, according to an investigation by the Svalbard governor's office.

Governor: No charges in bear attack

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outcome," a prepared statement by Lt. Gov. Lars Erik Alfheim notes. "The governor has found that neither BSES or individuals acted negligently in criminal law."

But the governor's report of its investigation doesn't entirely absolve the expedition of blame despite a lack of legal negligence.

"There are different measures that could have been taken that might have prevented the attack," the report states. "But based on our investigation, it appears that they've done what was required of them. None of the measures were legally required under local laws governing tour operators."

The investigation found that tripwire flares set up around the camp failed to activate when the bear entered the camp, despite being tested beforehand. It also found that Chapple had already been killed by the time group leader Michael Reid fired the rifle.

The teen's father, David Chapple, is appealing the governor's decision, which will be considered by the prosecutor's office of Troms and Finnmark.

Edward Watson, chairman of BSES, said he would not comment on the governor's report until an independent inquiry being chaired by British High Court judge Sir David Steel is complete, which is expected later this year. BSES has stated previously it intends to continue expeditions to Svalbard, which have tak-

en place for decades without previous major incidents.

But the group's preparations – as well as the concept of such trips – continue to receive harsh criticism from the British public and press.

The headline in the *Daily Mail* of London about the governor's investigation was unabashedly accusatory: "Death of Elton schoolboy savaged by polar bear COULD have been prevented...but." An all-caps headline in the *Daily Star* tabloid (where, albeit, the first links bannered across their website are "our paper," "retro babes," "celeb babes" and "sports babes") screams "POLAR BEAR DEATH BOY COULD HAVE BEEN SAVED."

More neutral publications such as *The Guardian* also are playing up the "preventable" finding, however, and comments from readers about the tragic outcome mostly vary from unsympathetic to variations on "serves them right."

Among the (printable) comments at the Huffington Post UK: "These kids should never have been taken there in the open in the first place," "they just got away with negligent homicide" and "we are destroying this beautiful planet of ours slowly but surely. The lack of ice means that the bears are starving and will do anything for food."

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Local biz payment defaults twice as high as mainland

An increase in Longyearbyen businesses defaulting on payments – the highest in Norway at twice the rate of the mainland – is concerning Norwegian Creditor Association officials, who say it may give the city a bad economic reputation and make it harder for companies to obtain financing. Of the city's 136 companies, 24 have one or more default payments, a 17.7 rate compared to 16 percent in February of 2011. Håkon Bøe, the association's sales chief, said he doesn't know why Longyearbyen's default rate is Norway's highest, but "it makes it much harder to get loans and investors are reluctant to inject capital into companies that are blacklisted."

UNIS loses close vote to use guesthouse for longer stays

An attempt by The University Centre in Svalbard to change the rules for its new guesthouse to permit long-term stays was rejected Monday by a 3-2 vote by Longyearbyen's Energy and Industry Committee. UNIS argued there is a critical need for more long-term housing, but committee members opposing it cited a lack of mandatory housing facilities such as parking and storage.

No hunting of guillemots in Svalbard, nature agency rules

Polar Guillemots, listed as a near-threatened species in Svalbard on the 2010 Red List, should not be hunted in the area, Norway's Directorate for Nature Management has ruled. The population of the seabirds declined 15 to 30 percent from 1965 to 2009, which researchers attribute primarily to lack of food and hunting, especially in the wintering grounds of Canada and Greenland. The ruling, which much be approved by Norway's environmental ministry, came after consultations with the Longyearbyen Hunting and Fishing Association, which opposed the reduction, stating harvesting guillemots in Svalbard is negligible compared to other locations. The directorate states the ban should not have a significant impact on Svalbard hunting, since only an average of 12 guillemots have been shot in the region annually since 1997.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Partly cloudy. SE winds to 22 km/h. High -2C (-7C wind chill), low -5C (-10C wind chill).	Snow. SE winds to 25 km/h. High -2C (-8C wind chill), low -4C (-10C wind chill).	Snow. E winds at 18 km/h. High -3C (-8C wind chill), low -4C (-9C wind chill).	Snow. E winds to 22 km/h. High -4C (-10C wind chill), low -4C (-10C wind chill).
Sunrise 7:32a; sunset 4:48p	Sunrise 7:23a; sunset 4:56p	Sunrise 7:15a; sunset 5:03p	Sunrise 7:07a; sunset 5:11p
Extended forecast: Sunday, snow, -3C (-9C), -4C (-10C), light 10:19h; Monday, snow, -4C (-9C), -5C (-10C), light 10:35h; Tuesday, snow, -5C (-11C), -6C (-12C), light 10:50h; Wednesday, snow, -7C (-12C), -9C (-14C), light 11:05h			
Data provided by yr.no			



Saxophonist Håvard Salvesen Njølstad, above right, and pianist Espen Rotevatn perform a jazz concert Monday in the cafeteria at The University Centre in Svalbard as part of Solfestuka. At right, locals participate in a singalong led by various music groups today in the cafe at Huset. While Solfestuka, chosen as Longyearbyen's favorite annual event by residents in a poll, celebrates the return of sunlight after the polar winter, most of the events are indoors out of the elements (which are abnormally mild this year).



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Slushy Solfestuka won't be silenced

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returning sunlight and much-needed snow aren't making much effort to show up. That's not casting a shadow on featured activities such as the opening-night concert by Jonas Alaska on Sunday, but the outlook for some of the remaining events is about as clear as the slush left by rain and unusually warm weather.

Some of that is deliberate, as a variety show spoofing the past year's events is censoring its theme "not because we have to, but because we want." That reference to the show, at 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday at Huset, comes from the city's illegal censoring of a report about an emergency drill at the power plant.

"I was laying in bed one night and I knew it had to be this black 'censored' so people can wonder what it is," said Anne Lise Sandvik, who is leading the show's production.

The first glimpse of sunlight in the main part of Longyearbyen would occur shortly after noon Thursday, except the skies haven't actually been clear at that moment since 2005 and a forecast calling for snow means there's little chance of breaking the streak this year.

If it does snow, it'll be too late to save the traditional trek by snowmobile, dogsled and skis to Hiorthamn for the Ta Sjansen! sledding competition. Instead, organizers have been forced to move it inland past Nybyen on the hill below Larsbreen.

The good news is "people can walk because it's only 10 minutes from Nybyen," said Roger Ødegård, the city's cultural advisor.

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

Solfestuka schedule

Wednesday

- 10 a.m.: Sledding for youths ages 3 to 6. Behind Radisson hotel.
- 6 and 9 p.m.: "Frozen Planet," parts two and three. Kulturhuset.

Thursday

- Noon: Celebration of sun's return. Old hospital stairs at Skjæringa. Followed by food and drinks at Svalbard Church.
- 5 p.m.: Youth talent competition. Kulturhuset.
- 5-11 p.m.: Solfest BBQ. Svalbar.
- 7 p.m.: Presentation: "Svalbard and the Baretns Sea 2025," by Sven Ole Fagernæs. Svalbard Museum.
- 10 p.m.: Concert by rock band Oslo Ess. Kroa.

Friday

- 6 and 9 p.m.: Solfest parties for youths. Junior members at 6 p.m., seniors at 9 p.m. Ungdomsklubb.
- 7:30 p.m.: "***** og Kullstjerner," satirical variety show of past year's events. Huset.
- 10 p.m.: C.C. Cowboys concert. Kulturhuset.
- Midnight: D.J. party. Kulturhuset.
- Midnight: Solfest party w/ Cantarell. Huset cafe.

Saturday

- 1 p.m.: Ta Sjansen! sledding contest. **MOVED.** Now past Nybyen on hill below Larsbreen.
- 2:30 p.m.: Defrost gathering, with "cheap" hot food and drinks. Kulturhuset cafe.
- 7:30 p.m.: "***** og Kullstjerner," satirical variety show of past year's events. Huset.
- 8 p.m.: Tropical Solfest. Svalbar.
- Midnight: Two-floor Solfest party with D.J and Cantarell. Huset.

What's up

Until March 10

Solfestuka, celebrating the return of the sun's presence to Longyearbyen. See scheduled at left and at www.solfest.no.

March 11

11 a.m.: Hillmar Nøis dogsled race to determine starting positions for Trappers' Trail. Starts at Nordlysstasjonen. More information at www.longyearbyen hundeklubb.no.

6 p.m.: Movie: "Man on a Ledge," U.S. thriller, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Into the White," Norwegian drama/war, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

March 13

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

March 18

11 a.m.: Family Mass featuring concert by Polargospel. Svalbard Church.

1 p.m.: Annual meeting, Svalbard Church.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Hamilton - I Nasjonens Tjeneste," Swedish action/drama/thriller, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

March 19

6 p.m.: Presentation: Transit of Venus, which will occur June 5-6 with Svalbard among Earth's best observation points. The next transit will be in 2117. Hosted by Knut Jørgen Røed Ødegård. Svalbard Museum.

6 p.m.: Movie: "Kompani Orheim," Norwegian drama, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

March 20

Noon: Presentation: Children and nutrition, by nurse Reidun Holte. Longyearbyen Library.

5 p.m.: NCA Lent campaign and collection. Svalbard Church.

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

- *Norway: 105M for Russia, Arctic study*
- *Israel helps Sami revive tribal language*
- *Lawyers thwart climate-change chaos?*
- *Alien invaders threaten Antarctic fringes*