



Preparing for a meltdown at the (other) end of the world (page 4)



20 'tears' of ocean: 100 million viruses (page 3)



SPECIAL PIRATE (A.K.A. 'PAPER BLOG,' 'LAZY,' 'PROMOTE THE WEB SITE') ISSUE



Dwellers coaxed, visitors flock north (page 2)



Tourism a bane and bonanza for scientists (page 2)

Inside

Headlines from Svalbardposten

- New rules may hurt small boat operators
- Reindeer herders may chase away miners
- New fire tank truck arrives in Longyearbyen

Page 3

Weather forecast

Page 3

Events calendar

Page 4

Svalbard hosts Russian film fest

Week of movies, discussions, tours coming to Barentsburg

When coming all the way to Barentsburg for a film festival it makes little sense to spend the whole time indoors.

History, art and nature tours, plus an overnight boat trip to Pyramiden, are part of this year's Northern Traveling Film Festival scheduled Aug. 14-20. The Russian event, featuring the theme "Arctic Sea Nomads, Heroes and Legends," includes cinematographers, his-

torians and scientists from about 10 nations.

The festival, which began touring Northern Eurasia and North America in 2002, made its first stop in Barentsburg in 2008. Marina Yuzhaninova, the festival's director, said in an e-mail interview the Russian mining community "is a comfortable place for us because of rich history, nice nature, interesting persons."

"For me Spitsbergen is crossroad of times, cultures, traditions, folks, tragedies, fate," she wrote. "All of us are specialists in traditional

See FILM, page 4

Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

Editor

Mark Sabbatini

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

editor@icepeople.net

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.



A statue of Norway's polar explorer Roald Amundsen stands in Ny-Ålesund in this April 2009 photo. The former coal-mining village, the most northerly in the world, is now an international research center and an increasingly popular tourist destination. Photo by Pierre-Henry Deshayes/AFP.

Tourism a mixed blessing for Ny-Ålesund researchers

By **PIERRE-HENRY DESHAYES**

Tourists bring in money and represent an opportunity for outreach, for Arctic scientists. But the pollution and disruption they represent may not be worth the positive outcomes.

Coping with blizzards and polar bears is part of daily life for researchers in the Arctic but what really gets under their skin is the hordes of tourists who arrive in diesel-spouting cruise ships – even though they bring much-needed cash.

In Ny-Ålesund, an international research station in the remote Svalbard archipelago off northern Norway, the terms of the equation are well known but that does not make them any easier for the scientists to crack.

"More tourists means more money but also more pollution," says Bendik Eithun

Halgunset, a research adviser for the Kings Bay company that manages the site.

On some summer days, between 2,000 and 3,000 visitors arrive here, camera equipment slung over their shoulders.

The crowds invade the tranquil town nestled between fjords and mountains where the only sound to be heard is normally that of snowmobile engines rumbling past.

It can be a little overwhelming for the 180 researchers who work in the world's most northernmost town.

"It's a bit surreal," says Dorothea Schulze, a German engineer at the Norwegian Polar Institute. "All of a sudden you have 20 times as many tourists as scientists here."

This AFP news article can be viewed in full at www.expatica.com.

Blogging the ultimate paid vacation

(The following is an excerpt from journalist Carolyn Jasinski's blog during a 15-day Svalbard cruise "hosted" by the travel company. The full diary is at www.news.com.au.)

Norwegians have to be encouraged to live here. They are enticed with offers of tax free work in the coal mines.

Tourists, however, are a different story. They flock here – not so much to see the town, but because it is the launching pad for Arctic expeditions...We arrive in Longyearbyen at 11:30 p.m. to glorious June sunshine. People are still roaming around well into the night, taking photos of the colourful cottages lined up in elevated rows facing out over the valley.

It's all very charming but, without snow, the view is a bit messy. Snowmobiles lie stranded in back yards and vacant blocks, right next door to industrial-size bins.

The main street is lined with shops – all



A Russian passenger ship navigates Arctic ice, catering for Arctic visitors.

The view from the Radisson Hotel is priceless. Actually it's about \$500 worth for a couple for one night – but considering you're at the top of the world, and there are not many options, there's no point complaining.

Our trusty vessel is the *Akademik Ioffe* – a Russian ice-strengthened ship..."Home" for the next 14 days is basic – bunk beds, a desk, sink, wardrobes and couch.



Ester Serano, a researcher from the University of Algarve's Center of Marine Sciences in Portugal, filters sea water aboard the *Jan Mayen*. Photo courtesy of Arctic Tipping Points.

20 ocean 'tears,' 100 million viruses

By **CARLOS M. DUARTE**

Our experimental mesocosms, consisting of replicated 20 L containers holding Arctic Ocean water continue exposed to increasing temperature, from 1 °C to 9 °C in an attempt to elucidate the extent of warming beyond which abrupt changes in the plankton community may occur. Each milliliter of the 20 L container is a precious item for the scientist involved to evaluate the reponses of planktonic communities to warming

With these 20 L we must measure changes in over twenty different properties over time (from bacterial mortality to CO₂ release by the planktonic community). One of our first tasks is to agree on how much water each of us can use for their measurements, so that we can sample with the highest possible frequency and yet leave sufficient water to terminate the experiment after 10 days of exposure to the experimental temperature treatments. This is no easy task as requires some degree of negotiation among the scientists, as each is convinced that her or his measurements will deliver the key result to the experiment. The volume of water each requires ranges from 2 L to measure changes in the structure of the silica valve of diatoms, to 10 m to assess bacterial abundance and production.

The reader will surely wonder what can be learned from a few milliliters of water?, how can the observation of a few milliliters of water deliver any meaningful insight into the effects of phenomena of planetary scale, such as climate change?

One milliliter is equivalent to about 20 drops, or if we prefer, 20 tears, as our tears have the same ionic composition as sea water. In fact, as the Spanish poet Federico García Lorca conveys in his poem "The Seawater Balad" (1919), we cry seawater:

“...
These salty tears,
Where do they come from, mother?
I cry, my Lord, the water
From the oceans.
....”

Twenty tear drops are as full of content and loaded with so much feeling and emotions as the information that 20 drops of water, one milliliter, contains about the ocean.

Twenty tear drops of seawater contain nearly 100 million virus, 1 million bacteria, 1,000 protists, 200 diatom algae.

Carlos M. Duarte is a member of the Arctic Tipping Points expedition, now working at The University Centre In Svalbard. The full blog, including numerous links to research projects, is at www.eu-atp.org/wordpress.

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM
SVALBARDPOSTEN
VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Officials fear new boat rules will hurt small operators

A proposal restricting boats with 12 or fewer passengers from sailing outside Isfjorden or more than five nautical miles from a refuge is concerning some Svalbard officials. "These operators provide diversification in tourism in Svalbard," said Tove Eliassen, tourism manager for Svalbard Reiseliv. "We risk losing the niche operators." The regulation is being sought by the Norwegian Maritime Directorate because the vessels lack requirements for hull strength, stability and watertight sections. Else Heldre, the agency's director, said the change "is the mildest form of restriction" and should not cause problems because operators can get a certificate to travel beyond the limited area by establishing a security system detailing things such as maintenance.

Reindeer herders may chase away Store Norske miners

Reindeer owners upset about the environmental impact of Store Norske Gull's gold exploration activities in the Sámi mountain region of Karasjok are threatening to send 400 members to chase away company workers. The herders told the *Ságat* newspaper they see "pipe sticking up out of the ground, oil spills, chemical tests" and other damage, and parts of the area are "destroyed forever." Jørgen Stenvold, the company's exploration manager, said he is puzzled by the accusations and would "welcome" the herders to "sit down and talk together" if they arrive. But he said the company is in compliance with regulations and, absent a legal order "we will remain there."

New Longyearbyen fire tank truck replaces 20-year model

A new fire tanker truck is in Longyearbyen, replacing one that has been in service for 20 years. The 2 million kroner vehicle has more water capacity and a built-in pump, making it less vulnerable during winter than a front-mounted pump on the older truck.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday

Partly sunny, afternoon showers. WNW winds at 4 km/h. High 4C (4C wind chill), low 2C (2C wind chill).

Thursday

Cloudy, overnight snow flurries. NNW winds at 6 km/h. High 2C (2C wind chill), low -1C (-2C wind chill).

Friday

Sunny and chilly. N winds at 19 km/h. High 3C (-1C wind chill), low 2C (-4C wind chill).

Saturday

Sun, then cloudy and a few flurries. NNW winds at 16 km/h. High 3C (1C wind chill), low 2C (-3C wind chill).

Extended forecast: Sunday, partly sunny, 4C (2C), 1C (-4C); Monday, sunny, 1C (-2C), 1C (-3C); Tuesday, sunny and warmer, 5C (4C), 4C (2C); Wednesday, mostly sunny, 5C (5C), 1C (1C).

Data provided by AccuWeather.com



Visitors take a break from movies and discussions during an outdoor tour at the 2008 Northern Traveling Film Festival. This year's weeklong event includes natural and historical tours, plus an overnight boat journey to the abandoned mining community of Pyramid for an evening of screenings. Photo courtesy of Norfest.

Festival goes beyond theater

FILM, from page 1

cultures of different Arctic people so the idea 'Barents-film-panorama' is such research: ethno-psychology (and) ethno-philosophy."

This year's festival is the 40th anniversary of "Red Tent," Michael Kalatozov's film about the Umberto Nobile expedition. It will be shown as part of the multinational lineup.

The schedule generally includes a family screening in the morning, tours and discussions on various topics during the day, and evening film programs. The festival travels to Pyrami-

den by boat Aug. 17-18, with on-board history and science presentations, a film marathon in the abandoned mining town, and a morning nature tour.

Most of the films have English subtitles and there will be Russian voice translations. Discussions will also be translated into English and Norwegian. Information about booking, plus an English translation of the festival's Web site (www.norfest.ru), is available at icepeople.net.

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

An end of the world meltdown?

(There's an avalanche of news in the polar regions outside Svalbard with similarities and relevance to what's happening here. This is an excerpt from The Antarctic Sun, a weekly newspaper at the U.S. McMurdo research station, viewable at <http://antarcticsun.usap.gov>.)

More than 18 months ago, Robert Bind-schadler became the first person to stand on the crevasse-ridden ice shelf fed by Pine Island Glacier, the fastest moving river of ice in Antarctica.

It turned out to be the first and last flight to the floating sheet of ice for that field season.

Bind-schadler, along with his colleague David Holland, had been on a reconnaissance mission to this windswept, barren spot. Their plan was to survey the location for a future field camp where they could safely work on the ice shelf, which is thinning rapidly along with the glacier. Below the hundreds-meter-thick ice, the ocean is melting the shelf, allowing the glacier to accelerate its charge into the Amundsen Sea.

Nearly a third of the ice in West Antarctica drains through the region. Were it to all pour



David Holland sets up the power system for an automatic weather station near Pine Island Glacier in West Antarctica during the 2007-08 field season. Photo courtesy of David Holland.

out in a catastrophic uncorking, sea level would rise more than a meter, enough to drown coastal areas from Florida to Bangladesh. During the next century — scientists are sure Pine Island Glacier, referred to as PIG, will contribute significantly to sea level rise. Just how much remains the big question drawing them to that remote corner of the continent.

What's up

July 16

7 p.m.: Exhibit opening, watercolors of Arctic fossils and plants by Hedvig Wright Østern, Galleri Svalbard. On display until Aug. 31.

July 19

8 p.m.: Movie: "Terminator Salvation," U.S. action/adventure, ages 15 and up. Huset.

July 23

7 p.m.: Solo concert by free improvisational jazz pianist Maarten Regtien, Galleri Svalbard.

July 28

8 p.m.: Movie: "Star Trek," U.S. science fiction, ages 11 and up. Huset.

Aug. 2

8 p.m.: Movie: "Transformers," U.S. action/adventure, ages 11 and up. Huset.

Aug. 9

8 p.m.: Movie: "Knowing," U.S. action/drama, ages 15 and up. Huset.

Aug. 16

8 p.m.: Movie: "Drag Me To Hell," U.S. horror/thriller, ages 15 and up. Huset.

Aug. 23

6 p.m.: Movie "Coraline And The Secret Door," U.S. animated fantasy, ages 11 and up. Huset.

Aug. 27

2 p.m.: Meeting of cultural and leisure enterprise board. Næringsbygget 1, "Tundra" room.

Aug. 28

9 a.m.: Meeting of the board of enterprise growth. Næringsbygget 1, "Tundra" room.

Aug. 30

7 p.m.: Movie: "Harry And The Half-Blood Prince," British adventure/family, ages 11 and up. Huset.

What the heck?!

Believe it or not, people putting out a free newspaper for no pay need to focus on other things at times. We also do a daily updated Web site with a ton of stuff about the polar world worth reading. So we're showing a few highlights, hopefully properly credited and within the legal "fair use" excerpt limits. Our usual clutter of banality will return next week.