



Biggest blues bash ever

New events, record number of musicians bring glow to onset of polar night at Dark Season Blues

Maybe it's not the biggest reason most residents love the onset of polar night, but it's got to be a major factor.

A record number of musicians, including a large roster of acclaimed international talent, will make Longyearbyen's biggest music event even larger during the eighth annual Dark Sea-

son Blues Festival. The 15 bands and individual musicians begin performing at two pubs Thursday night, and conclude with a dual-stage marathon of 13 concerts Saturday at Huset.

"It's the most we've ever had," said Marianne Bakken. "It wasn't quite planned. It just escalated. We got a great deal with the artists."

There's also new events, including a Saturday afternoon concert in a Sami tent at Nyben, and free late afternoon concerts Friday and



Knut Reiersrud, seen here at the recent Punkt Festival, performs Friday and Saturday in Svalbard.

See BLUES, page 4

Collapse of mine 'almost unthinkable for us' at Svea

Svalbard miners cheer rescue, say they can relate to situation, but similar accident unlikely here

A total of 113 miners have died in accidents in Svalbard since 1948, so when 33 of their brethren were buried deep in a mine in Chile for 69 days the workers at Svea took a special interest.

They watched and cheered along with the rest of the world when the Chilean miners were brought out one-by-one last week. But those at Svea also empathized with the tremendous challenge of surviving in such a confined area and the risks associated with just going to work each day.

See RESCUE, page 2

Old is new again



Workers construct a mining cable car structure in this 1959 photo by Erling J. Nødtvedt that is part of the Svalbard Museum's new online photo archive, which debuted Thursday. Work on the archive began in January and about 3,000 photos are online now, with plans to expand the collection to 13,000. Photos can be viewed and magnified within a fixed-size browser frame, but varying fees are required for commercial use and the museum must be contacted for access to high-resolution images. The archive is at <http://bildarkiv.svalbardmuseum.no/fotoweb>.

Inside

'Tsunami' cruise triggers lawsuit	Page 2
Headlines from Svalbardposten	
- Fuel deal prevents shutdown of Ny-Ålesund	
- Mold forces residents in apartments to move	
- Miners upset about plan for fewer long shifts	Page 3
Weather forecast	Page 3
Events calendar	Page 4

'Kebab Man' back, but truck isn't

Iranian calls arrest and deportation puzzling, now must fix vehicle

The Kebab Man is back – but his famous red wagon is about to leave the island.

Kazem Ariaiwand, featured in documentaries and articles worldwide for operating the world's northernmost kebab stand in his catering truck, spent six months trying to return following his unexpected arrest at the Tromsø airport in early March. Police jailed the Iranian native for immigration law violations, to the bewilderment of Ariaiwand, who said he has also has a Swiss passport and



has traveled regularly between Svalbard and mainland Europe for the past few years.

"I was on the way back from Switzerland to Svalbard, and when I got to Tromsø airport immigration police stopped and locked me in a security cell for two days," he wrote in an e-mail this week. "After two days I got a message from the police that I would be sent back to Switzerland against my will."

Ariaiwand finally resolved the situation and returned to Longyearbyen a few weeks ago. But those hoping to grab a bite his kebab stand will have to wait a while.

See KAZEM, page 3

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.



Svein Jonny Albrigtsen, above, security chief at Store Norske's Mine 7, watches the rescue of miners in Chile on Thursday while discussing the difference in risks between Svalbard mines and the one the Chileans were trapped in for 69 days. At right, rescuers respond to a July 30, 2005, fire at Svea in this photo provided by Store Norske. A total of 25 people were working in the mine, but the only injuries were to two miners who suffered mild smoke inhalation.



Chile accident unlikely at Svea

RESCUE, from page 1

One thing many agreed upon is while the risks at Svea are potentially serious, a situation like the one in Chile is unlikely here.

"Here we go straight into the mountain, we do not go into the ground," said Svein Jonny Albrigtsen, security chief at Mine 7, in an interview with TV as he watched the rescue. "Thus we have a hole on the other side of the mountain, and also out of the sides where we have ventilation. So we would probably get us out. The question here is that of almost all the mine's collapse, which is almost unthinkable for us."

The most recent major incident at Svea was a fire on July 30, 2005, when 25 people were

working inside. The only injuries were to two miners who suffered mild smoke inhalation, although operations at the mine were halted for five weeks.

"The people here handled it very well at that time," said Odd Egil Hofstad, union leader for 160 Svalbard miners, in an interview with VG. "We were well trained for such situations and have our own smoke divers here. There was also something good out of it. The solidarity here was very appreciated."

The Chilean mine had emergency living facilities and Svea miners have discussed if something similar is needed here, Hofstad said. **There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.**

Briefly

Light campaign arrives as polar night sets in

Longyearbyen's rapid descent into the polar night during the next week will be featured in a global advertising campaign by a company handing out free Wake-Up Light alarm clocks to residents on Wednesday.

More than 200 lights from Philips Electronics, worth about 1,000 kroner each, will be given out to those who signed up for the campaign announced this spring. The reception from 7 to 9 p.m. at Huset also includes a presentation about the effects of light on people.

Those receiving the lights are being asked to blog about their experience as part of the promotion, which also features videos and other information about Svalbard's polar night, which begins next Wednesday. The campaign's

Web site is www.wakeup.philips.com.

Glacier 'tsunami' during cruise results in lawsuit

Sixteen British residents are suing a tour company after sustaining injuries during a 2007 Spitsbergen cruise when ice from a calving glacier caused a 70-foot-high wall of water to hit the vessel.

The lawsuit against Discover the World accuses the captain of the *Alexey Maryshev* of navigating too close to the ice at Hornbreen. The governor of Svalbard fined the company for negligence, but the ruling is being appealed.

About 50 passengers were aboard the cruise. The lawsuit does not seek a specific amount of damages.



Kazem Ariaiwand's Rode Isbjørn catering truck sits idle in the parking lot at Svalbardbutikken due to "major technical problems" that require sending it to Tromsø for repairs. Friends of Ariaiwand, who was prevented from returning to Svalbard for six months, operated the kebab stand this summer.

Visa woes over, kebab truck next

KAZEM, from page 1

"When I came back to Longyearbyen I discovered that my street kitchen vehicle has major technical problems that must be repaired ... so the car will be sent to Tromsø for repairs and approval of future activity," he wrote. "The vehicle is going to be closed for a while. How long depends on the authority of inspection services authorities in Tromsø."

That means Ariaiwand is spending much of his initial time back in Svalbard catching up on bills and other paperwork. But the hardships are minor compared to what what he's already overcome to become Kebab Man.

Ariaiwand fled Teheran 12 years ago, fearing his life was in danger due to personal circumstances. He moved to Sweden and then to Norway, but in 2003 he was refused asylum although his son and wife at the time were permitted to stay.

His solution was moving to Longyearbyen since the Svalbard Treaty doesn't require resident or tourist visas, and took a job at Svalbardbutikken. But realizing he might be unable to leave for a while, he decided to go into the kebab business in 2007.

Ariaiwand's famous catering wagon, the Rode Isbjørn (Red Polar Bear), is a decommissioned U.S. military field kitchen truck stationed in Germany that he found on the internet. His brother, Mohamad, who runs a car repair shop there, painted the truck red and

Chilly celebrity chef

Kazem Ariaiwand and his red kebab wagon have been featured in numerous publications and broadcasts worldwide. Documentaries available free online include:

- "Varmt Hjerte - Frossen Kebab" (Warm Heart, Frozen Kebab), a 30-minute show originally broadcast on NRK1 in 2007. In Norwegian, but the footage of him maintaining and operating his vehicle is easy for anyone to follow. At www.nrk.no/nett-tv/klipp/306378.

- "Polar Bear Kebabs," a 23-minute audio documentary broadcast on BBC World Service in February of this year. Journalist Nick Maes follows Ariaiwand through a typical day, detailing not just not his work, but the struggle in trying to see his son on the mainland and of other immigrants who come to Svalbard seeking opportunities. At www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/documentaries/2010/02/100219_fridaydoc_polar_bear_kebab_s.shtml.

shipped it to Svalbard.

He continued his efforts to return to the mainland to see his son, but the dispute proved to be a prolonged one.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Shutdown of Ny-Ålesund avoided as fuel deal reached

A shutdown of Ny-Ålesund at the end of this month has been averted as Kings Bay will take over the site's fuel tank facility from Esso Norge, ending a lengthy dispute resulting from the need to do pricey repairs to the tanks. Kings Bay, agreeing to receive Esso Norge's offer of 500,000 kroner for taking over the facility, backed down from their demand of 3.5 million kroner due to the extent of repairs Kings Bay says are necessary. Fuel for the tanks, which provide power to Ny-Ålesund, will now be provided by Statoil.

Mold forces residents in two apartment buildings to move

Residents in two apartment buildings at 309 and 310 Skjæringa are being forced to move after harmful mold was found in the aging buildings. Complaints of sore and watery eyes, headaches, sore throats and foul odors resulted in tests that detected poor conditions in the basement in particular, with high humidity and water up to the walls. The two units, owned by Store Norske and containing a total of 12 apartments, will be evacuated during the next month with occupants moved to new housing. Store Norske will then decide whether to sell the property or demolish the buildings and build new ones.

Planned cuts in longer shifts upset Store Norske workers

Store Norske workers are unhappy with plans to reduce shifts of 14 days on/14 days off and are asking union officials to intervene. Workers traditionally can choose between 7/7 and 14/14 schedules, but the company is seeking fewer extended shifts because such workers frequently commute from the mainland. Administrative Director Bjørn Arnestad said the company is trying to "maintain development of Longyearbyen as a family community." But union leaders, in a letter to Store Norske's board of directors, state "it is likely the turmoil has already led to qualified personnel resigning their positions and we fear we will eventually get a loss of key personnel."

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Snow and wind. ENE winds to 32 km/h. High -3C (-11C wind chill), low -4C (-11C wind chill). Sunrise: 10:15 Sunset 15:07	Partly cloudy. ENE winds at 22 km/h. High -4C (-11C wind chill), low -6C (-13C wind chill). Sunrise: 10:28 Sunset 14:54	Snow. ENE winds at 29 km/h. High -4C (-12C wind chill), low -6C (-14C wind chill). Sunrise: 10:41 Sunset 14:41	Cloudy. ENE winds at 25 km/h. High -5C (-12C wind chill), low -7C (-14C wind chill). Sunrise: 10:55 Sunset 14:26
Extended forecast: Sunday, partly cloudy, -8C (-15C), -11C (-17C), light 2:56h; Monday, cloudy, -11C (-17C), -12C (-18C), light 2:14h; Tuesday, partly cloudy, -11C (-17C), -12C (-18C), light 1:14h; Wednesday, cloudy, -12C (-18C), -12C (-18C), light 0:00h.			
Data provided by yr.no			



Dave Fields, center left playing guitar, performs acoustic blues at the Kullungen day care center during the 2009 Dark Season Blues festival. Fields returns to Longyearbyen this year where he will again sell copies of "78 North," recorded with J.T. Lauritsen, at left, and Billy Gibson. The song, released last year, can also be downloaded free at www.icepeople.net.

Many new artists, events at festival

BLUES, from page 1

Saturday at Karls-Berger Pub. Also new is an interview with U.S. guitarist Dave Fields by Øyvind Rønning as part of a blues lunch at noon Saturday at Barentz Pub.

Among this year's featured musicians is Knut Reiersrud, a multi-genre guitarist who has recorded or contributed to more than 300 recordings during his 30-year career. In addition to playing with blues, jazz, African and gospel legends, he's led world music projects such as concerts and albums with female Iranian vocalists – considered extraordinary since recording women's voices is prohibited there.

Reiersrud performed at one of the first Dark Season Blues and, while unavailable in subsequent years, wanted to return, said Gry Snelvedt, the festival's artist booking manager.

"I often have a chat with him in Oslo," she said.

There's more emphasis on female musicians this year, with a "Women in Blues" group of new and returning musicians performing at various locations and in varying configurations Friday through Sunday. Separate concerts are also being performed by other women, including Gráinne Duffy, who with her five-member band will be the first Dark Season Blues musician from Ireland.

The festival typically attracts an audience of about 70 percent locals and 30 percent visitors, but Bakken said the lineup this year means the ratio may be closer to 60/40.

"There are a lot of people maybe coming from south Norway," she said.

Tickets to individual concerts are available at the door, space allowing. Festival passes, available at MIX Isbjørnbutikken, are 900 kroner Friday through Sunday and 1,000 kroner Thursday through Sunday. More information about tickets and other arrangements is available at the festival's Web site at <http://blues.svalbard.com>.

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

Dark Season Blues 2010 schedule

Thursday, Sept. 21

- 9 p.m.: Ledfoot w/Noora Noor. Barentz Pub. 150 kr.
- 9 p.m.: Cadillac Kings. Svalbar. 150 kr.
- 9 p.m.: Reba Russell Band/Victor Wainwright. Kroa. 200 kr.

Friday, Sept. 22

- 11 a.m.: Kindergarten concert by Rita Engedalen and Margit Bakken.
- 11:30: School concert by Deadwood.
- Noon: Cadillac Kings. Barentz Pub. Free.
- 5 p.m.: Westby Band. Karls-Berger Pub. Free.
- 6 p.m.: Blues dinner/concert featuring Knut Reiersrud, Noora Noor and Bill Sims Jr. Spitsbergen Hotel. Festival passes not valid and event is sold out.
- 9 p.m.: Women in Blues with Tuva Syvertsen, Susanne Hansen and Linda Gail Lewis. Barentz Pub. 200 kr.
- 9 p.m.: Deadwood, Blåmyra and Dave Fields. Svalbar. 200 kr.
- 9 p.m.: Gráinne Duffy, Bill Sims Jr. and Knut Reiersrud. Kroa. 250 kr.

Saturday, Sept. 23

- Noon: Dave Fields and friends, blues lunch and interview by Øyvind Rønning. Barentz Pub. Free.
- 3 p.m.: Ledfoot and Tundra Event. Karls-Berger Pub. Free.
- 4:10 p.m.: Sami tent concert by Westby Band. Festival passes not accepted. Bus from Karls-Berger Pub to 4:30 p.m. concert. 150 kr.
- 8 p.m.: Duel-stage concert marathon at Huset. Main stage on upper floor features Longyearbyen Storband w/Noora Noor and Susanne Hansen, Reba Russell Band, Victor Wainwright, Gráinne Duffy, Cadillac Kings, Dave Fields, and Knut Reiersrud. First-floor concerts, beginning at 8:30 p.m., feature Women in Blues, Westby Band, Ledfoot w/Noora Noor, Deadwood, Bill Sims Jr. and Linda Gail Lewis. 500 kr.

Sunday, Sept. 24

6 p.m.: Gospel and blues concert with Women in Blues and the Longyearbyen Storband. Svalbard Church. 100 kr. adults/50 kr. youths.
9 p.m.: Blues jam hosted by David Fields. Barentz Pub. Free.

What's up

Oct. 19

7 p.m.: Discussion of "Tett på" ("Hands-on") with Priest Leif Magne Helgesen, Longyearbyen Mayor Kjell Mork and Svalbard Museum Director Torá Hultgreen. Svalbard Church.

Oct. 21-24

Dark Season Blues. See schedule at left.

Oct. 25

6 p.m.: Guided tour of new Longyearbyen Cultural Center for organizations interested in using the facility.

Oct. 26

10 a.m.: Administration Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 1, Tundra room.

Oct. 28

8 p.m.: Book launch: "Jeger i Svalbard's Villmark," about Tommy Sandal, a trapper who has lived alone in Svalbard's wilderness for years. By Julie C. Knarvik and Sverre Jarild. Svalbard Museum.

Oct. 31

11 a.m.: Liturgy with substitute priest Ragnar Aase. Svalbard Church.

Nov. 1

7:30 p.m.: Book presentation by Tom Egeland, a thriller author. Soup, wine and other drinks. 100 kroner. Library.

Nov. 4

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

6 p.m.: Bydrift board meeting. Næringsbygget 2, Smutthullet room.

Nov. 5

9 a.m.: Board for Controlling Growing Enterprises Authority meeting. Næringsbygget 1, Tundra room.

Nov. 6

11 a.m.-4 p.m.: Sports exchange with Barentsburg. Various sports competitions with members from the Russian mining community. Svalbardhallen.

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:

- *Why are half Svalbard's flora white?*
- *U.N. summit: Save species now or else*
- *Svalbard seen as global clean-coal model*
- *X-rays of Svalbard seed vault as art*