Sophomore quarterback Anthony Freuan passed for 56 yards and a touchdown to propel the Barrow Whalers to a 20-14 victory in the Division III state football championship. Below, Freuan holds the Whalers’ trophy.

Late stand lifts Whalers to first state football title

Barrow charges to thrilling 20-14 victory over Homer Mariners

BY TOMMY WELLS
The Arctic Sounder

PALMER — With the game, and the Barrow Whalers’ dreams, on the line Saturday at Machetanz Field, reserve linebacker Jalen Tracey made sure his team got to kiss the golden football — as the groom for the first time.

Having entered the game only moments earlier when the team’s starting outside linebacker was injured, Tracey found himself at the side, the lieutenant governor on the one hand, the governor on the other, his parents at the end, and he told a story bigger than the conference room, a story of a life on the wild lands and in the rough seas.

Chris Apassingok of Gambell on Monday told how he helped catch a massive bowhead whale in April when he was 16, and how radical animal-rights activists went after him and his family. The whale changed their world. But the critics won’t change how he lives, he told the First Alaskans Institute Elders and Youth Conference, a precursor to the upcoming Alaska Federation of Natives convention.

“Agagrigjihuarga,” he said at the start of his conference keynote speech, speaking in St. Lawrence Island Yupik, then in English. He started with his Yupik name. “I am Agagrigjik. Chris Apassingok.”

He told how he started hunting seals at age 7, where his favorite nengki or seal blind is, how climate change is affecting hunts in the Bering Sea.

He wore a ceremonial hat of polar bear fur and seal that an auntie gave him and a new gasqeq with an appliqued bowhead that his mother special-ordered from a seamstress in Nome. As he read his speech, elders, youths and chapter presidents at the Denali Civic and Convention Center interrupted with applause time and again.

Apassingok is 17 now, a high school junior in Gambell.

The great land and ocean provide us with whales, walrus, a few kinds of

Animal-rights activists didn’t like Chris Apassingok’s catch. He’s not backing down.

By Lisa Demer
Alaska Dispatch News

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Students learn to love STEM education

ANSEP offers hands-on learning opportunities

BY SHADY GROVE OLIVER
The Arctic Sounder

It’s afternoon when the shaking starts. The floor rumbles. The walls sway back and forth. Will the support beams hold? The 60 seconds on the clock tick down and the building stays standing.

Surviving this earthquake means success for the Northwest Arctic Borough students who’ve traveled to Anchorage this month for the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program’s middle school academy.

Building a structure that could survive one minute on the shake table at the University of Alaska Anchorage was just one of the many challenges they have to face as part of the program.

“I liked the earthquake engineering because we got to build (something) and it was really fun because we got to test it out and see whose would last the longest. We tested it where the professors had a shake table and it had the number of how high the earthquake would be. If our buildings last more than a minute, everybody got happy and that’s what I liked because our team did really good,” said Kotzebue eighth-grader Adriana Arnold, 13. “A lot of teams did exactly awesome and it was really fun to see different ways they built them.”

Every year, ANSEP partners with school districts around Alaska to offer area-specific programs in engineering, computer science, physics, marine science, biology, and the environment. This year the ANSEP students are learning how to build a computer that they will be able to take home with them once the program is over.

Students from across the Northwest Arctic Borough traveled to Anchorage for the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program’s middle school academy this month. ANSEP partners with school districts around the state to engage students with the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, math). These students are learning how to build a computer because it helped me follow instructions. You look at some adults and they don’t take away all the different guest speakers here and they’re able to talk to you and inspire you to do something with your future. I was really drawn to the program for that reason. What kept me involved in the program was the community that was built from the people who are involved in it.”

Kramer said he’s not sure exactly what he wants to do when he’s older, but he’s got some ideas.

“I think from this program I’m going to take away all the different guest speakers that we had that taught us about what they did. I don’t know what I want to do in life, so I think I’m going to be a really fun activity because we have partners and we get to work together as a group and it’s not just a one-person thing. It was, it would have been really hard. So, I’m looking forward to seeing how our team’s bridge turns out.”

“There’s more to this program than just encouraging kids to take an interest in the STEM fields, though, Storms explained. Being together and working together as part of a residential program for this long means they have to learn interpersonal skills, too.

“I love it. It’s a lot of fun and it’s really nice to meet the new students every year from the different districts. It’s really interesting to see them grow from the first day they get here to the very last day. One of the other things we try to focus on is that this is a professional development skills. That could be learning how to introduce yourself to people you might not know. So, on the first day we have the students say their names and where they’re from and tell everybody if they have an Inupiaq name or another Alaska Native name, and asked them what grade they’re in and what school they go to,” Storms said. “Seeing them grow from the first day to the last day it’s huge. On the first day, they haven’t met a lot of the kids and they’re a little shy and on the last day, you see them have this confidence and it’s amazing. You look at some adults and they don’t have that level of confidence, but you have these middle school colleagues that are going above and beyond with it.”

More information about ANSEP can be found at www.ansep.net.