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### Levi West-Harkness - A New Road to Travel

by Tamara Blogett



Levi was born in Dillingham, Alaska in August of 1990. He lived in Naknek, Alaska, population 678 until age one, moving to Kenai until age three, and finally settling in Homer where he lived until thirteen. A tragic house fire that destroyed his home that his sister, Melanie, and mother, Gina, were living in caused a transition in his life for the better. While the ashes were settling, Levi's father, Rick Harkness, offered to give him shelter until things could return to normal. Levi was sad to leave his steady home and would miss his family, but was excited about getting to know his father.

This transition brought about a positive impact on Levi's life.

*How has living in Seldovia affected you?* It played a major part in turning my life around in a positive way.

*What is your favorite memory in the time you've lived here?* Making it to state this year (basketball)!

*What has been your favorite subject?* Shop (Welding and Construction).

*What is your favorite sport/hobby?* Basketball! I also like 4-Wheeling and snow machining.

He developed a love of basketball, taking care of himself in combination with a school environment that was a better fit for his needs and he blossomed. He lost fifty pounds, became goal-oriented and gained self-confidence. Now Levi knows what he wants and is going after it.

Levi leaves in August to attend classes at AVTECH (Alaska Vocational Technical education) with commencement in May of 2009. This is something that he has been planning on for awhile now and took classes during his high school career that prepared him toward this end. He especially enjoyed his “shop” classes such as Welding and Construction taught by Paul Chissus.

He looks forward to continuing to set net fish in the summer with his extended family. Each summer, Levi has enjoyed his time at Kalgin Island where he shares duties with his cousin and fellow senior, Griffin Swick and parents Roberta and Alvin. Alvin’s mother (Cleo), Levi’s adopted grandmother, took over the care of Levi’s mother (Gina) when she was just one year old. The youngest of eleven children, Gina’s mother was accidentally killed and when the load became too much to bear for the family Hank and Cleo West took over Gina’s care and became her new guardians. After Hank passed away Cleo remarried Ken Swick who is Alvin’s father. These close-knit ties have built lasting relationships and a work ethic which Levi values. He hopes to continue to manage his time so he can work these summers on Kalgin with his family. Levi will miss his late childhood experiences but takes those with him as part of the positives of a life he has loved and has allowed him the confidence to start out on his adult path.

*What will you miss most?* Family and friends.

*What are your plans for the future?* I will be attending AVTECH (Alaska Vocational Technical Education) School to become a certified Pipe Welder/Welder (Levi will be certified to work on Natural Gas Pipelines).

*What are you most grateful for?* My father “stepping up” to raise me.

*Who was an important influence on you?* My father.

*What is your favorite band/song?* Too many favorites to mention! Too difficult! (Obvious music lover...)

*Your favorite catchphrase is...?* The past is past, the future is now.

*Final words?* Those (students) that are coming up, be yourself and don’t forget who you are.



Levi and his team at State - 2008



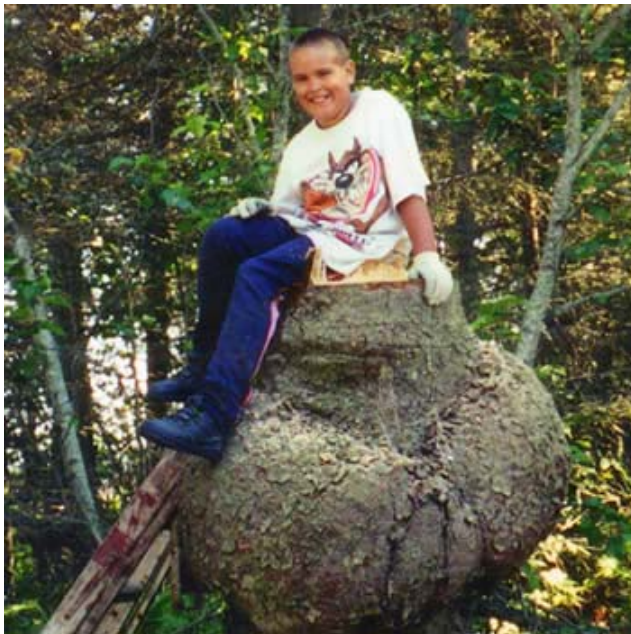
2007 Bear Kill



Levi and Dad at awards ceremony



Playing well and hard at basketball



Levi - 8 years ago on Kalgin Island



Levi and his sister



First seal kill



Fishing, Levi, Wyatt and Griffin



Levi's Dad, Rick



Page would not be complete without one of Levi's Mohawks!



**What a great play!**

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