

General Yates, Colonel Banks, Lieutenant Colonel Hendrix, Lieutenant Colonel Telencio, Dr. Davenport, Teachers, Distinguished Guests, Honored Parents of the class of '94, and fellow graduates:

Welcome to the last graduation from Berlin American High School here at the Schoeneberger Rathaus, a historic site suitable for this historic event.

We welcome your participation in rite of passage from childhood into adulthood of the finest young people the world has to offer. Not only do we represent American students, but also some of the finest students from all five continents of the world are represented here today.

Being that our school is as international as it is, many students from all over the world have been introduced, through this school, to a system and culture very different to the one they have been used to from their part of the world. But also the American students at Berlin American High School have learned something about cultures different from their own, a very valuable and useful knowledge that will help them through the future.

These past twelve years have been years of learning. Twelve years that have culminated in this year. A year during which we have enjoyed the privileges that follow a senior class, but also a year where we have worked very hard to be worthy of the honor it is to be the last class ever to graduate from Berlin American High School.

One "privilege" that we will never forget was the journals we had to write for Mr. Schmoll's English class. As Wesley McKeown describes it: "Journals, journals fun to write, tend to keep you up at night." So many Wednesday nights were spent writing those 7 journals that were due the following day. But we all pulled through and looking through those journals, some interesting ones appear. For example some from early on, in which expectations were expressed. The following journal entry was written by Christie King:

"It was a new sensation, starting a new school year knowing all of my teachers and classmates. Having moved around so much, I never got the chance to become familiar with my school before. I like it. Now that I have been here two years, I almost know everybody in the school's name, and they know mine. You feel as if you belong, when you're in a small school.

Excepting fourth and sixth period, I had already been taught by all of my teachers. That's an advantage because I know how my teachers work. There was so much less anxiety in the beginning of the school year, only anticipation of what the year would bring. Turns out I correctly forecasted lots of homework and intense studying. Hopefully, this will teach me to be more organized because I won't be able to indulge in the luxury of procrastinating and stressing out.

There's a couple of new faces, but there is too many old ones missing. The seniors all left. I can't possibly fill their shoes. I don't feel like a senior or look like one, neither do the rest of my classmates. I've always looked up to the upperclassmen and considered them to be bigger and better, almost larger than life. This new crop of freshmen certainly looks little. But the sophomores and juniors aren't making me feel like a "big senior", but that's probably because they are bigger than I, at least in stature.

It's fun to look at the new faces because by the end of the year, relationships will have been formed that I had never expected to happen. Not only with new people, but also with people that I have known for one or two years already. On the flip side, it's sad to look at familiar faces I no longer have a relationship with. Significant others who won't talk to me now, the people I have never gotten along with, and never will. But anything can happen, and everything probably will!"

At the beginning of this year, I would probably have disagreed with Christie's last observation, however, during the course of this year, my mind has changed. Things do happen, sometimes whether we want them to or not.

Attendance at Berlin American High School has been an unusual experience for me. I had attended Danish schools only before I came here in January of 1993. This experience here has provided me with

knowledge and understanding of Americans and the American Educational System. While at BAHS, I have participated in activities unique to American schools such as various clubs, athletic activities, and even being the Salutatorian of the graduating class.

All of the students in the class of 1994 have learned from each other and from our teachers. Our knowledge and perceptions of others have broadened. The experiences we have had as a truly international class can only help us be better citizens in a global society.