



British receive royal sendoff (See story on page 6)

# Berlin OBSERVER



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photo by Gregory Foss

Graduation caps flying, the senior class of Berlin American High School celebrate their success after the graduation ceremony May 28.

## Graduation 1994

### BAHS students, faculty save best event for last

by Michael Ertel  
Assistant Editor

May 28 students of the class of '94 at Berlin American High School turned their tassels and celebrated the fact that theirs was the last class to graduate. The graduation, at the Rathaus Schöneberg, culminated a remarkable year for these 60 new alumni, who watched not only the end of their high school career, but the end of their high school.

Class president Christi King had written in her journal at the beginning of the year, that "After being here two years I almost know everybody's name and they know

mine. It feels that you belong in a small school." King's graduation speech as valedictorian cited survivors who are "able to keep their heads while others around you lose theirs," as Rudyard Kipling wrote in "If".

The graduation was held at the historic Rathaus Schöneberg, site of President John F. Kennedy's "Ich bin ein Berliner" speech in June, 1963.

Charles Bluem, the students' choice as commencement speaker, urged the young adults to start the next phase of their lives now. "For those of you who don't get accepted to college right away or don't join the military, get a job

fast. Being at a job helps focus your life. . . You will soon become another person and hardly recognize yourself in three to five years."

Joachim Jensen gave the salutatory, the BAHS band played several selections, and Winifred Marshall, class vice president, gave the officers' address. School principal Dr. Allen Davenport congratulated the class for a 100 percent graduation rate, awarded the diplomas and thus ended the last BAHS graduation.

For a story on the high school's history and the spirit that made BAHS special, see page four.

## TAR leaves time capsule: 'Do not open until 2019'

photos and story by Angela McLendon  
Photojournalist

What will the year 2019 be like? Maybe flying machines will be used by everyday people for everyday travel -- to work, to school, to the store.

Maybe jobs and school will be a series of computer programs. Fashions will probably be startlingly different. Computers and robots may clean our homes, cook our meals, brush our teeth.

But one thing we know for sure -- in 2019, schoolchildren will open a time capsule buried by the students of Thomas A. Roberts Elementary School May 25. In 2019, today's kindergarten students

will be at least 30, while the sixth graders will be approaching 40.

A time capsule is intended to capture a moment in time so clearly that those who look into it will understand and can visualize that time. This time capsule, created by the last students to attend TAR, contains things they believe captures the spirit of TAR.

"We buried the time capsule for the future kids who will be here to dig it up and see what the past was like," said Edward Bass, sixth grader. "They could learn about their past and the past of the school they go to."

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Robert Resto helps Edward Bass, in sixth grade, bury a time capsule under the Thomas A. Roberts flagpole May 25. It is scheduled to be opened in 2019.



## Beyond Iron Curtain, education shone through at BAHS

by Michael Ertel  
Assistant Editor

Kids have always considered the last day of school to be the best one. This was when the teacher returned all the toys, comic books and pea shooters, when students would discuss their summer plans and when they cleaned out their lockers housing books and other assorted junk.

The final bell of the final class, which seemed to last for hours, would sound off and the hallways would flood with a mass exodus of children. Local radio stations would play the Alice Cooper song *School's Out* at least four times. Cooper would lead chorus of children school-wide who would wail, "school's out for summer." In 1994, the song's next verse had special meaning, "School's out forever."

The day: June 1, 1994. The place: Berlin American High School

As this school year began, Principal Dr. Allen Davenport knew the road to graduation would be filled with obstacles, but he challenged his students, "I want to help the students keep their academic process moving. After all, learning is the most important thing," he said. Davenport also

added that he wanted the year to be a celebration of the many achievements of BAHS through the years.

The school's origin dates back to 1946. The school was named after 45-year-old father of three, Col. Thomas A. Roberts, who had given his life on the beaches of Normandy in the wake of the D-day invasion. Doors flew open Oct. 14, 1946 and the first graduation was held that May.

For the first 19 years, the high schoolers shared the campus with the elementary kids on Am Huttenweg, which is still the site of the TAR elementary school.

That first graduating class of the school named after a WWII hero took more than historic first steps, they left a legacy.

At their graduation they wrote, "we the senior class dedicate this gateway of 1947 to those democratic principles for which America stands and democracy has been reborn anew another generation."

Unfortunately, world events dictated that their school lost two generations in that pursuit.

By the time the sophomore class of 1947 reached senior year, the city was enveloped by the Iron Curtain and vital supplies had to be airlifted into Berlin. Residents lived in fear and the world watched as the city was blockaded. The students lost some of that youthful innocence while grown-ups toyed with their future.

From here on, American children in Berlin lived in a fishbowl. As the only Department of Defense Dependents School behind the west's frontiers, the kids had to make amends.

In the fall of 1961, while high school football coach Ed Brandon held tryouts for the Berlin Bears, the Wall was constructed and once again, the school was isolated.

Sports and other programs that rely on competition to build school pride were especially hard for the youngsters first held by the blockade's grasp then surrounded by the clutches of the Wall.

The school teams were subject to security searches, passport paperwork and tedious trips on the road enroute to friendly

games of basketball, football and chess matches among other activities.

Halfway through the school's existence, in December, 1971, movement for the students and the rest of Berlin was made easier when the two Germanys agreed on a limited freedom of travel.

In November, 1989 as Bears head football coach George Pepoy was preparing his team for their final victory of the year against the Woolbridge Warriors, the Wall opened as a gateway to freedom.

Even though their surroundings were bending world history, the faculty were focused on shaping the student's future. The school's future however, was gratefully doomed.

As the phase-out of soldiers in Berlin began, so did the thinning of the school's roster. At the beginning of the 1993-94 school year, there were 60 students in their senior year. The kids that had bonded because of the isolation and size of the community looked to the final year with anticipation and self-doubt.

BAHS, which has always been under the microscope because of its location, has recently served as a microcosm for the world. Salutorian Joachim Jensen, a Denmark Denmark said, "the experiences we've had in this truly international class can only help us be better citizens in a global society."

German citizen and classmate Stephan Ripplebeck agreed, "It is interesting to see all the different cultures we had here at BAHS." Cultures like the Asian one fellow graduate Nobumi Katsu came from, "when I first came here (three years ago), I didn't speak much English, with the help of my friends and Mister (Jack) Lyon, everything is different now," said the youngster who was selected as a member of the National Honor Society this year.

School was not just out for the kids of BAHS though, the teachers were graduating too. This was also their final year at BAHS. They, just as every other person that called the school home for eight or more hours a day, will be the new guys on the block come September.

The next few weeks will be spent clearing out the school's inventory, coordinating for the transfer of the school grounds and looking towards the future. But always, they will keep the images of the past etched in their memory.

Room 202, which for years was the site of Phillipp Schmoll's English class, will be renovated and then occupied by a German teacher and students.

Stanley Perkins said at graduation, "I've been waiting to leave here for a long time, I'm ready to start my future now." Berliners have hoped for a chance to start their future without us for years, too. In September that future will begin. The future of Berlin lies in room 202.

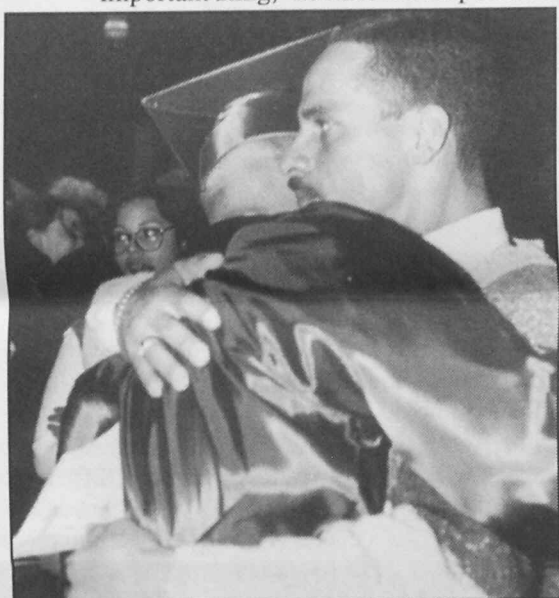


photo by Gregory Foss

**NOW:** Sgt. Jorge Inglés embraces his son, Jorge Jr., at the BAHS graduation May 28. The class of 1994 was the school's last to graduate.



photo by J. G. Freeman

**THEN:** Katrine Lindroth is crowned 'Prom Queen 1971.' Crowning Lindroth are the runners-up Toni Yarborough (left) and Renee Shipley (right) as Bill Planz, the queen's escort, looks on.