

Turkey leftovers

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The American Embassy in Ankara has provided the following statement to the writer who described the controversy in School Library Journal:

The European desk at the State Department relayed your query about a book at the Tarsus American School in Turkey. pOur colleagues at the US Consulate in Adana looked into the situation and found that the book, "Number the Stars," is still at the library and available on the shelves. pWe were informed that the inspectors did look at the book and a paper test based on it, and that they questioned whether young children in primary schools should be involved in subjects with strong religious or political connotations. However, school authorities told us that no further actions were taken by the inspectors regarding the book and, as noted previously, it remains available on the shelves.

This description is not consistent with the description given by the eyewitness. But it gets everyone off the hook and apparently puts the issue to rest. It seems an enforced rest to me, like a child sent to bed with the words, "I don't want to hear another peep out of you."p

So be it. I have heard, incidentally, from a teacher in Dubai that she is not allowed to use "Number the Stars" nor to mention the Holocaust to her students.

And I must apologize for having said, in one quote, that Turkey is an Islamic country. I was wrong in my phrasing. The population is nearly entirely Islamic but officially it is a secular state.p

New England is badly flooded once again, and two days ago I drove to Fitchburg, Massachusetts, to speak at Fitchburg State College as part of their cultural arts series. Parking lots and streets and sidewalks were under water. I had to go to a shopping mall where, at Marshall's, I found wonderful bright green and white boots that make me look---and feel--like a frog. But they sure felt good as I slogged around through the downpour and the swirling puddles.

While I was there I visited the Fitchburg Arts Academy, to meet 8th graders studying "The Giver"...and to see a wonderful dramatic production of "The Willoughbys" created by the fifth grade. They had incorporated the words of the glossary into their daily vocabulary and become, the teacher told me, particularly fond of "squalorous" and "odious."

Tomorrow I will visit my grandson's third grade class in Falmouth, Maine, and I have promised him that I will not kiss him in front of his classmates.

Tags: Untagged