



Author shares history with FA students

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History, unlearned, will be repeated. Middle school students at Frederica Academy explored the world of Cold War Germany over the summer through their assigned reading, “A Night Divided” by Jennifer Nielsen.

This semester, their teachers have immersed the students in components of the novel by crafting cross-curriculum lesson plans that included writing, history, math and culture.

And the students had the chance Wednesday to discuss the book and its historical context with the author herself. Nielsen, a New York Times bestselling author, traveled from her home in Utah to meet with Frederica’s middle school students and to talk about her book. She also offered advice to students who wish to someday put their own words and ideas on paper.

“Every visit I do, I will meet students who love writing and want to be a writer, but they don’t believe it’s possible for them,” Nielsen said, before she met with the middle school students. “And then, they meet an author and it’s like, ‘Hey, I could do this too.’”

“A Night Divided” tells the story of a young girl who must escape East Germany after the Berlin Wall has gone up, dividing her family.

“When I’m talking about ‘A Night Divided,’ a lot of the focus is on history as it was, helping them to understand that there was a time and a place in world history where people were imprisoned by their own government,” she said.

Frederica Academy’s teachers approached the instruction of Nielsen’s book, along with the other summer reading assignment, Margot Lee Shetterly’s “Hidden Figures,” in a multitude of ways.

“We had faculty members across the curriculum come up with lesson plans that help support the discussion of the book, and then our advisory program also talked about the metaphorical walls that we put up between ourselves and others,” said Nicole Walbridge, an En-



Provided photo

New York Times bestselling author Jennifer Nielsen met Wednesday with Frederica Academy’s middle school students to discuss her book, “A Night Divided,” which the students read over the summer.

glish teacher at Frederica Academy.

The students discussed the history of the Cold War and the culture of the country at that time. In math class, they compared free market economies to communism in a hands-on activity.

“Starbursts were the currency,” Walbridge said. “... Black markets emerged, and they had this really interesting discussion about how communism is supposed to be fair, but in the end it’s really not.”

In Walbridge’s English class, the discussion focused on the metaphorical walls, rather than the physical ones, she said. Nielsen’s book is relatable for nearly all students, Walbridge said, and teaches important lessons for students this age.

“The kids need to understand that they can be the main characters in their own lives,” she said. “It doesn’t always have to be about the grown-ups. They can create change too.”

Nielsen met with the entire middle school and then in small groups with students, allowing them a more intimate opportunity to ask questions.

During her talk, she alternated between discussing the history of the Berlin Wall and Cold War Germany and offering writing advice for the students.

“If you have a story idea, put it on paper,” she encouraged them. “And then write to the end.”

But that’s not all, she told the students. Next, a writer has to edit.

She showed the students a snapshot example of her own writing, which had scattered comments in the margins from herself and from her editor.

“Every rewrite, it’s going to make it a little bit better,” she said. “If you want to be a writer, learn to love this phase. It’s where we turn writing into art.”

She showed the students a map of North and South Korea and reminded them again that atrocities from the past will happen again, if no one takes action.

“One day, we will be able to get inside (North Korea), and I promise we will be horrified at the way these people had to live,” she said. “And we, as a Western civilization, have done nothing.”

Nielsen’s most recent published novel, “Resistance,” came out last month.

Crime SCENE

Among reports filed with police:

Arrests

**1400 block of Gloucester Street:** A man was driving on a suspended license in an unregistered vehicle. Not one for keeping a low profile, he drove through a red light right in front of a cop. Guess how that ended up.

**Charing Crossing and Glyncro Parkway:** A man in a gray sedan crashed his vehicle into the entrance sign to a neighborhood. Police arrived and determined he was drunk. They took the 22-year-old to jail, charged with DUI.

**U.S. Highway 341 and Brian Drive:** The driver of a gold sedan caught the attention of a patrol officer because he swerved across the lane. The officer followed him for about mile, during the which the driver was all over the road. The resulting traffic stop earned the 37-year-old man a trip to jail for DUI.

**3800 block of Frederica Road:** Get this. An officer began following the driver of a Cadillac STS because it “was weaving repeatedly from the fog line to the center line,” the report said. This pattern of poor driving continued as the officer followed. The officer then conducted a traffic stop, naturally expecting to find a drunk driver behind the wheel. No. The 20-year-old kid said he “was making food deliveries and that he was just dancing to the music in his car,” the report said. He did have a suspended license, for which the officer took him

to jail. Go figure.

**Mary Ross Park:** A group of homeless folks were hanging out in the park after hours when a fight broke out, resulting in police intervention. One guy ended up with a cut on his head from the fray, but he did not want the brawler responsible arrested. However, the roughneck would not let it rest, so police took him to jail anyway, charged with disorderly conduct.

**100 Mall Blvd.:** A couple of thieves swiped stuff from the Belk store, then took off running. Police eventually caught them. Later, a security guard at Belk caught a thief red-handed. Police arrived and took the 39-year-old shoplifter to jail.

**Sea Island and Demere roads:** The driver of a white Dodge Durango swerved off the road at plowed over a Yield sign at this intersection on St. Simons Island. The driver kept going, but a witness called police. Police caught up to the driver, who went to jail for DUI.

**Gloucester and Albany streets:** Police saw a couple of guys making “a hand to hand transaction” that smacked suspiciously of a dope deal. Sure enough, after making a traffic stop on the recipient of the transaction, he went to jail for possession of dope. The dope dealer managed to slip away — for now.

**5411 U.S. Highway 341:** A guy named Travis entered the Parker’s convenience store and started stealing stuff. The manager called police, who took Travis to jail for shoplifting.

— Larry Hobbs



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