

Material Selection Policy

Policy for the Selection of Library Materials

People of a free nation, in order to make wise choices, to develop intellectual competence and to function as thoughtful and clear-thinking citizens, must have available a large body of reliable information, opinion and thought on issues and question influencing themselves, their community and their nation. The Martins Ferry Public Library, through its Main Library in Martins Ferry, its six Branch Libraries, and its bookmobile service, has the responsibility of providing such library and information service to people of all ages, all educational levels, and in all areas of Belmont County and its surrounding communities. The staff and Board of Trustees view each person and element of our service population as equally needful of such library service.

It is impossible for most people to acquire personally the necessary collection of books, periodicals, audio and video materials and electronic information due to limitations of space, finances and knowledge of what is available. Because every citizen in a free society has the right of equal access to such materials, adequate, free and impartial public library service is an indispensable part of every community. Every member of the community must have free use of such library services and resources. It is not the role of the Martins Ferry Public Library, or of any library serving the public, to make decisions regarding who will be served and whose access to public library materials and services will be restricted or limited. Such decisions are the role of individuals and, in the case of minors, their parents.

Within the limitations of budget and space, the role of the Martins Ferry Public Library is to provide books, periodicals, audio, video and graphic materials, electronic information sources, and other types of library information on all subjects in which residents of Martins Ferry and Belmont County may claim an interest or for which they may have a need.

Materials in the Martins Ferry Public Library collection should furnish information, education, inspiration and enjoyment for persons of all ages and educational levels. Such materials should reflect the full range of thought on issues and ideas and should be selected for their intrinsic value by the professional personal and published reviews, through expert knowledge by staff and outside consultants, by awareness of issues, dialogues and trends in the public arena, and through the immediate and recurring needs of the Library's users.

It must be understood that the inclusion of any material in the collection of the Martins Ferry Public Library does not imply support for, or opposition to that material's viewpoint by the staff or board of the Library. What we have in the Library reflects reality, and for this reason some of it will be controversial or offensive to some. The collection of any public library, like the public that it serves, is diverse, multifaceted, contradictory, changing and inclusive. Its richness is the richness of society at large; and its importance is directly related to its availability to all who choose to make use of it.

This policy which guides the selection of books and other library materials for the collection of the Martins Ferry Public Library includes ideas expressed in the American Library Association

statements entitled Library Bill of Rights and Freedom To Read; and in the Film Library Association's statement entitled Freedom To View.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Martins Ferry Public Library, November, 15, 1994.