

MS. INNES / MS. MATZ

(Reading a prepared statement to the council.)

To my fellow council members and conscientious citizens of Big Cherry, It's been my great pleasure to serve on this council for thirty-three-and-a-half years, thirty-five if you count my leave of absence. Sure, over the years, we've had our dust-ups and differences, tête-à-têtes over policy, clashes of personalities, to say nothing of a certain rape and subsequent abortion, but that's all water under the bridge. Though the former mayor served no jail time, he lived out his days in sober disgrace, a Big Cherry pariah. All in all though, we as a governing body have had a successful tenure, measured as only these things can be: by the continued health, safety, and prosperity of our constituency. The events of last week's meeting still loom large for every member here, I'm sure. I know that, as individuals, each one of us holds a slightly different perspective on Mr. Carp and his fate, and each of us is certainly entitled to that perspective — *(skimming through)* — intense feelings — loyalty — ruled by fiat — long gray wet winter — pepper jelly — Here we go, On my first day as a council member, freshly scrubbed and wide-eyed with innocence, I was told we were given one responsibility that outstripped all others. That regardless of how badly we might bungle the distribution and management of services and funds, no matter how much we might waste our community's time and money and goods and services, regardless of how crooked and slimy and subhuman we might be as individuals, that above all else the prime responsibility of this civic organ is the loving care and firm management of the Big Cherry Heritage Festival. There is no event, no document, no motto or creed, indeed no person more important to the preservation of our civic mission than this festival. It is the pride of our city, our state, our people. In short, it is who we are.