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08063108 WITH FREY HEALTHY AGAIN, EAGLES ARE SOARING STATE
(COLUMBIA) (CS) - FRIDAY March 3, 1995 By: GARY GRAFF, Knight-Ridder
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TEXT: Glenn Frey is deep into a lengthy and detailed explanation of his recent gastrointestinal surgery when he begins to laugh.

"I'm sure that's more than you want to know," Frey says. "The important thing is, I'm OK and fully recovered."

Of course, the same prognosis could be made for Frey's band, the Eagles. Since reuniting last year for a tour and a new album, both dubbed "Hell Freezes Over," the group's success has been nothing short of spectacular.

Despite ticket prices that have run higher than \$100, about 2.5 million fans have flocked to see the band, with ticket sales of more than \$80 million.

And the "Hell Freezes Over" album, recorded at an MTV concert special and released last November, shot straight to No. 1 on the Billboard charts -- it's still in the top five -- and has so far sold almost 3 million copies. "Get Over It," one of four new songs on the album, was the band's first hit single in almost 14 years.

Frey's health problems last fall forced the cancellation of some Eagles shows. But even in illness, he and the rest of the group -- Don Henley, Joe Walsh, Timothy B. Schmidt and Don Felder -- found a silver lining.

"I think it gave us an opportunity to step off the Eagles' fast track just long enough to take another sort of good, long look at what we're doing and where we were going," says Frey, 46, who lives in Los Angeles with his wife and two young children. "I think it's probably given all of us a new appreciation of what we have and what we are.

"And in some ways, I think that may contribute to the longevity of this project."

That's good and perhaps unexpected news for Eagles fans, who made the group one of the most popular American bands of the '70s with enduring hits such as "Take It Easy," "Desperado" and "Hotel California." But as the band began to splinter at the end of that decade, the individual Eagles' turbulent interpersonal relationships seemed to eclipse the music they made.

Several attempts at reuniting during the intervening years failed, while the band members pursued solo careers with Henley and Frey having the most success. Even as things finally came together in 1994, Frey acknowledges that expectations were kept low.

"In some ways we were sort of prepared for the sleigh

ride from hell," he says. "Originally it was going to have a beginning, a middle and an ending . . . just before last Christmas. Now that this album has come out and all these good things have happened, . . . it looks real good for us to maybe stretch this out a little longer."

That seems to indicate that even singer-drummer Henley -- Frey's songwriting partner and the man who coined the "Hell Freezes Over" term to answer questions about Eagles reunions -- has had a change of heart. Last fall he gave a scathing interview to Billboard editor Timothy White in which Henley declared that "some of the things that broke us apart years ago have not gone away."

And he told White that he expected the Eagles' reunion to come to an end after the group's current tour ends in early May.

Frey, however, says he never read that interview. "You should always trust what you see yourself," he says, "and what I see right now is some guys who are very, very happy and getting a tremendous amount of satisfaction out of the shows they're doing and . . . enjoying each other's company."

And that has Frey making plans for an Eagles' future. The group will take the summer off. Walsh will tour with Ringo Starr, while Frey and Henley plan to release "best-of" albums that they owe their old record companies. Frey's will include four new songs in addition to hits such as "The Heat is On" and "You Belong to the City."

Frey also plans to rest a little during the break. "You have to remember, the last Eagles vacation was not a vacation for me," he says. "I'll spend my summer writing songs and spending time with my family and making a lot of golf swings. Hopefully, some of them will be good."

Then the Eagles are slated to come together in the fall to prepare for a year-end tour of Australia, New Zealand and Japan. Frey has high hopes that they'll also begin recording a new Eagles album, holding the band together at least until it's eligible for the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame in 1997.

The Eagles, from left, Joe Walsh, Timothy B. Schmidt, Don Henley, Don Felder and Glenn Frey, will perform in Charleston Saturday.

CAPTION: Photo, bw

The Eagles, from left, Joe Walsh, Timothy B. Schmidt, Don Henley, Don Felder and Glenn Frey, will perform in Charleston Saturday.

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