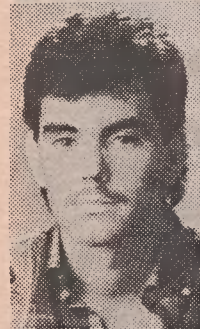


Acceptance: Key To Life

Frankie Perkins: Recovery Is Steady

Six weeks, three major surgeries, and many hospital rooms after Frankie Perkins was taken to the hospital, it can finally be said that he's doing well.



Perkins

On February 11, Frankie was taken to Charlotte Memorial by his lover Scott Higgs only to find out that he had developed a staph infection which ultimately resulted in a possible cerebral aneurism, right side paralysis and complications with a congenital heart problem.

In the last six weeks he has undergone two open heart surgeries and one surgery involving his brain. He has been in and out of various intensive care units and now is expected, amazingly, to be transferred to a rehabilitation unit sometime during the first week of April.

Frankie, who will celebrate his 20th birthday on May 2, is a staff dancer at Scorpio's with his dance partner and lover Scott. Frankie is also a model and an employee of a local bank. Frankie and Scott have been together for seven months and anticipate a lifetime together.

The Charlotte gay and lesbian community has responded wonderfully to Frankie's battle. The Anniversary Carnival at Steven's raised \$457 to go to help pay Frankie's hospital bills and Scorpio has a benefit planned for April 27. The performers for the show will be Tracy Morgan, Boom Boom, Kasey King, Tina Terrell, Jackie Barbot, and Kevin Scott (Mr. Gay USA). This should prove to be a great show with an excellent cause.

Anyone wishing to send Frankie a card may do so by mailing it in care of Q-Notes at P.O. Box 221841, Charlotte, NC 28222.

This column is being written several weeks before the Deirdre McCalla concert, so it's obvious I can't cover it now, except to say I hope it was at least 75% as successful as the Cris Williamson concert. Back to what did happen...are you aware that the Gay/Lesbian Community was invited to participate in the St. Patrick's Day parade on March 12th? This is the first time that we have been recognized in Charlotte as an existing group! (Even if the parade was just for fun, it's a start.) Hey! Looks like Charlotte is beginning to accept us.

ACCEPTANCE. It's something the gay population and we as gay individuals have been searching for ever since we found out we aren't "normal." But wait, I'm normal. I do everything everybody else does — I've got a career, a house, a car; I had a dog but he's with my "ex" now. I enjoy music, theatre, sporting events, I hate grocery shopping, and Friday evenings after a long week, I can fall asleep at the drop of a hat. That sounds pretty normal. It's even normal for me to be attracted to someone of the same sex.

We grew up in a society and are an integral part of a society which says there's something wrong with being gay. Most of us believed it too. Unfortunately, our values and beliefs don't change at the instant we become aware of our feelings. Do you remember when you first felt attracted to another woman?

What thoughts went through your mind? "Oh, no, I can't be a Lesbian. That's such a terrible word."

"It's just a crush, I'll get over it." "Oh, my gosh, I must be the only person in the whole world who feels like this. All my friends are dating men." "What would my parents say if they knew?"

Regardless of how old you were, or where you were at the time, it's a

The Soft Spot By Ann Michele

lonely feeling. Who do you turn to? People make jokes about "lezzies" and now I think I am one. In a society that teaches us to be homophobic, our worst battle is often within ourselves. God help us if our self-esteem is low to begin with, and we tack this on to it. We feel ashamed (I'm not like everyone else), guilty (I'm not going to live up to Mommy and Daddy's expectations), dishonest (I can't share my true feelings with my friends), fearful (if anyone finds out, I could lose my job, get kicked out of school, etc.)

Okay, enough negatives. We've all been through this. Yes, we do have some obstacles to overcome; it's not an easy lifestyle at times. But I'm not sure any lifestyle is if you don't accept yourself first. Being gay is only a small part of our total person. It doesn't change who we are or who we can be. It doesn't change the fact that we are sensitive and loving human beings. It doesn't change our being someone's daughter, sister, best friend, or even someone's mother. What often changes, though, is our perception of ourself. We see this little part of us as being different, we equate different with bad/wrong, and therefore cannot accept ourselves, because our perception is that we're doing something wrong. Is it really wrong to be true to yourself, to do what is normal for you? How much is really different about the gay and straight person? One small thing — the gender of the person we fall in love with. Yet we allow it to affect how we feel about ourselves, and how we feel about others, because one small part of us doesn't conform.

I remember growing up in a Catholic school — one day a classmate announced that she would be leaving at the end of the year to become a nun. Suddenly, we treated her differently, because this pretty, vibrant woman did not conform to our expectations. Nobody told jokes around her anymore; she wasn't invited to parties; no one asked to copy her homework — you get the picture. Kind of silly, wasn't it? She didn't change overnight, but our perception did.

Acceptance means loving yourself for who you are. It means taking all those parts of you, and integrating them in a positive way for your own growth. It means feeling comfortable with you, wanting to be the best person you can be. It means realizing that each of us is unique and special in her own way; that each of us has a contribution to make, regardless of our sexual orientation. We can make our lives a fulfilling and beautiful experience or a constant battle — the choice is up to us. Quite frankly, I can think of a lot worse situations to be in, in this world, than being gay in Charlotte in 1988.

As I climb down from my soapbox, I'd like to mention one last thing — Queen City Friends will soon begin publishing a monthly newsletter. If you would like to get on their CONFIDENTIAL mailing list, drop by at one of their meetings (see Organizations, Page 2), or send your name, address, and phone number to Queen City Friends, P.O. Box 10496, Charlotte 28212. Also, if you have a (legitimate) professional service to provide, please list it. There are plans to publish a Directory of Services (similar to other cities) in the future.

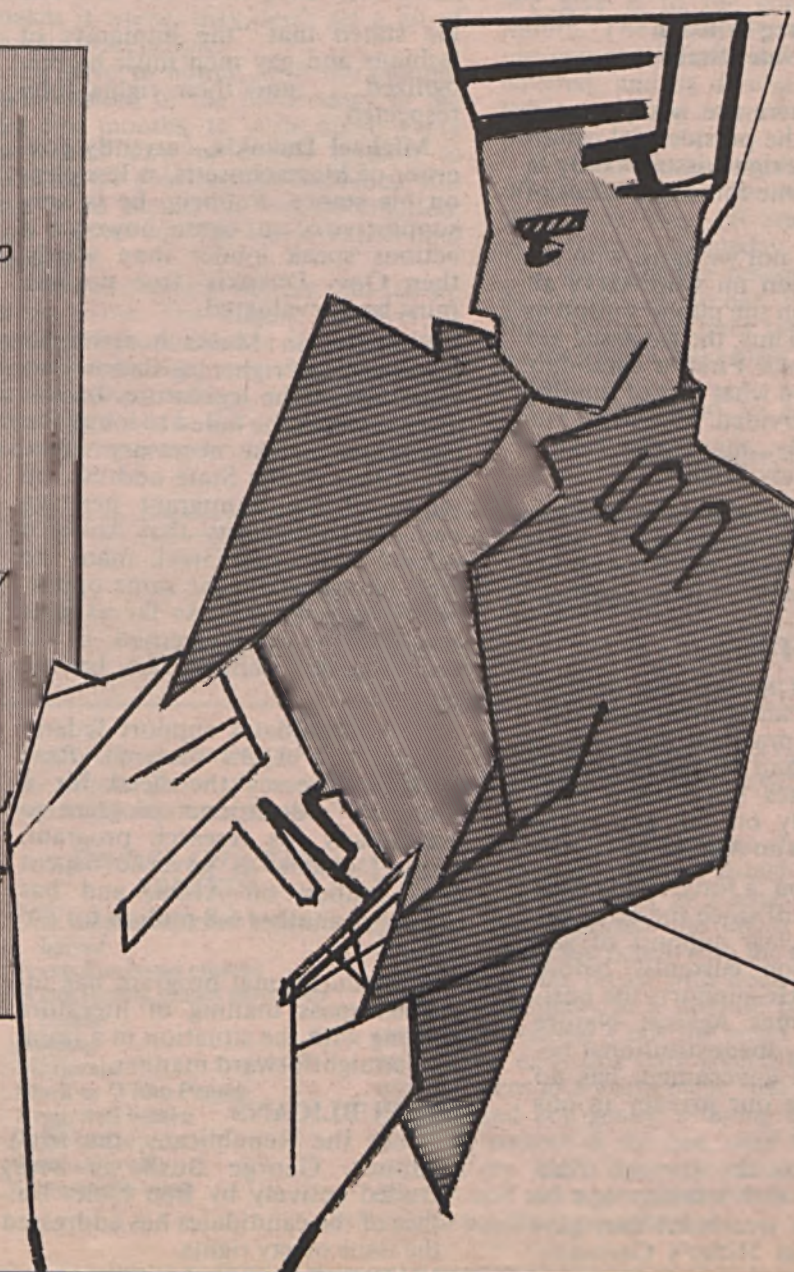
Well I'm going to make like the Easter Bunny and hippity-hop out of here. See you next month.

ALL THE ANGLES

April is heating up!

- Friday, 4-1 Kaysey King, Gypsy Starr
- Sat. 4-2 Mr. Oleens Contest Cash Prize
\$250.00 winner \$120.00 1st runner-up
- Friday 4-8 Shea Lateece, Linda Locklear
- Sat. 4-9 NTE
- Friday 4-15 Coco Vega, Brittany Gwen
- Sat. 4-16 Coco Vega, Kaysey King
- Friday 4-22 S'asha Tate, Sex Kitten
- Sat. 4-23 S'asha Tate, Sex Kittens, Tina/Terrell
- Friday 4-29 Misty St. James, Tiffany Storm
- Sat. 4-30 Tammy Delove, Vannessa Canova, Gypsy Starr, The Judds

- Mondays & Tuesdays Free Cover \$1.50 House Drinks, 25¢ Draft
- Wednesdays Pool Tourney, \$20 Bar Tab to Winner, \$1.50 House Drinks
- Thursdays Beer Bust \$4.00 All The Draft You Can Drink, DJ Request Night with Steve
- Sundays Open at 3 PM, Free Pool Until 8 PM, \$1.50 House Drinks
- 11 PM Kaysey King's "Bargain Basement"



OLEEN'S

1831 South Boulevard • Charlotte • 377-9604