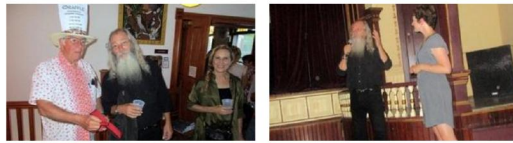


## Media hoaxer visits EOH



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Earlville Opera House volunteer Art Zimmer, left, media hoaxer Joey Skaggs, center, and film producer Judy Drosd pose at the EOH on Aug. 27. Skaggs and Drosd were in town for the showing of "Art of the Prank," a documentary on Skaggs' work. (PHOTOS BY MIKE JAQUAYS/MID-YORK WEEKLY)



Thursday

Posted Sep 1, 2016 at 9:43 AM



By Mike Jaquays

A brothel for dogs. Condominiums for guppies. A priest traveling busy New York City streets with a portable confession booth on the back of his bike.

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Joey Skaggs has brought these and many other equally intriguing stories to national attention via the news media. Unfortunately for the reporters relating his news, however, none of them were actually true.

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Decades before anyone was "Punk'd" on TV, Skaggs - a multi-media artist and activist - was making his own personal message known by promoting his less-than-truthful stories in a wide variety of news outlets, including such luminaries as CNN, Good Morning America, and the New York Times.

His hoaxer career has been immortalized in the new film documentary "Art of the Prank," and Skaggs, along with several of his fellow driving forces behind the movie, came out to the Earlville Opera House (EOH) on Aug. 27 for an intimate look at the film and the prankster himself.

Skaggs said his quest to fool the news media is designed to illustrate their own lack of research in verifying news sources. He also wants to make people think while making them laugh at the same time, he said.

"I've always gotten away with it - clothes really do make the man," Skaggs said of his hoaxes.

His appearance at the EOH was a fitting tribute to the man who once saved the much-loved venue from oblivion. Back in 1971, Skaggs was living on a farm in the area when he heard the building was for sale - and possibly facing a future as a parking lot if not saved from demolition. It had already been abandoned for 15 years, but Skaggs saw the building and felt a connection.

Skaggs bought the facility and incorporated it, later offering to donate it to a non-profit group who would keep it alive with cultural offerings to benefit the community. He reflected on the accomplishments of the EOH personnel over the interim years with a sense of pride.

Skaggs gave kudos to the audience for keeping his dream alive.

For more information on his work, visit [www.joeyskaggs.com](http://www.joeyskaggs.com).

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