It's No Place for a Dog to Tomcat

By CAUSEWELL VAUGHAN

April Fool!

That's what Attorney General Louis Lefkowitz and several news reporters may turn out to be today because of a joke that is being called the Cathouse Hoax.

The so-called hoax was perpetrated by Joey Skaggs, a Greenwich Village artist, who earlier this year conceived a "cathouse for dogs," a place where people could take their "sex-starved" male dogs and have them mated with females in heat.

'A Conceptual Art Form'

However, Skaggs said, the only heat generated came from the ASPCA, other animal organizations, the attorney general's office and a lot of people who wanted their bow-wows to make whoopee.

"But there was never a cathouse," Skaggs said. "What I did was conceive a conceptual art form. It was a play that was documented and acted out by the media."

Among the media suckered into the supposed hoax was Channel 7's "Eye-Witness News," radio stations in several major cities, the SoHo Weekly News and "Midnight Blue," a cable tlvision program.

Assistant Attorney General Cyril Moore, who was ordered to probe the cathouse, said "it's conceivable" that Skaggs' idea is a joke, but he added he would listen to all arguments to the contrary. Skaggs is scheduled to appear before Moore this morning and among the things he will say is "April Fool."

A Practical Joker

Skaggs has a history as a practical joker. Among the things he has done was to organize a tour of Queens for Village hippies. He has been arrested many times but, he said, never booked for more than a misdemeanor.

Skaggs said he believes that today's hearing before Moore resulted from pressure brought on the attorney general's office. "I believe that a sex service for dogs morally outraged a minority of the people," he said, "and they were vocal enough for the attorney general to respond."

Moore said he was interested in any person who had information about the supposed service. If it exists, Skaggs may be liable to prosecution. The only question is, who will have the last laugh.