Rusty Dewees

BRÅDFORD—There wasn't a dry eye in the Bradford Academy auditorium Friday and Saturday nights when The Logger came to town. The Logger walks on stage, weaves his magic and the laughter doesn't stop. "I laughed so hard it brought

tears to my eyes". "I've never laughed so hard in my life!" "He's my hero!" "He's hysterical, unbelieveable!"

Who said New Englanders were reserved?

You hear him on the radio and see him on TV commercials. Rusty Dewees is Vermont's native son. He has fine-tuned his performances and works hard so that everyone knows who he is.

That is what is so appealing about the man behind the stage persona. He makes connections with people.

'It's that constant connection the keeps people knowing who you are," Dewees said in an interview prior to his show on Friday." I am out there promoting myself, producing the show and that's what sells the show ... me!"

His focus is Vermont communities like Bradford, St. Johnsbury, Richford, North Hero, Arlington, Barton, Bellows Falls, and Barre. The Logger venues are town halls, auditoriums, fairs, community centers and opera houses.

'It is a community show I do," he said. In one weekend, he'll perform two shows in front of over 500 people.

Behind the scenes, it's all Dewees. There is no support staff or entourage. He has long-time friend Don Como play fiddle in the show and Como's wife, Peaches, handles the ticket sales at the door. He does have a graphic artist and a bookkeeper who help him in those areas. But he handles everything else himself.

He rents the hall, sets up his he can't have back-to-back perfor- his second book. own equipment, handles all the mances year after year. The Logger promotion and public relations, prepares the stage, and arranges his meals.

town, Rusty really canvasses the area.

'I schedule a day months ahead and travel up and down the river here-Orford, Fairlee, Piermont, Bradford, Wells River-hanging posters myself.

He's out shaking hands, hanging posters, stopping in at local businesses about ticket sales. It's about getting your face out there and that is exactly what Dewees does

energy into it than having a nonprofit organization present

pass venues around Vermont and parts of New York, such as Plattsburgh or Elizabethtown, and New Hampshire, like Enfield or Lebanon.

He doesn't want to go said. nationwide because it's harder to control when everything falls onto Dewees' shoulders.

"Like Maine, it's too far to do it the way I do it," he said. "If I wanted a bigger arena, I could do it but haven't decided I want to. I don't want to be like Larry the Cable Guy.

He is organized and has a full calendar. He schedules approxi-mately 100 performances a year, 70 shows and 30 appearances. The Logger appears at graduation ceremonies, high school motivational talks, retreats, conferences and private company parties.

To keep the demand and allure of The Logger, Dewees knows that



grow fonder," he said. "It's been

French approached Dewees about scale. doing something for a baseball team fund-raiser. Dewees noted City and began his acting career that and when he had booked Bradford for 2011, he called French and made arrangements. So the Oxbow baseball team held 50/50 raffles at both shows and raised over \$500.

Everywhere.

There is no set demographic for Logger fans. He is a people person decided to return to his home state. Dewees has designed his and connects with everyone, from performance schedule to encom-native Vermonters, children, senior citizens, doctors, lawyers and character The Logger. He debuted farmers. Yes, even flatlanders, er, out-of-staters.

His focus is on Vermont.

walking around Vermont and mouth, which draws people in It's meeting people. I make it clear that the quality of his showmanship that I'm The Logger on stage, but a real keeps them coming back. guy." He has a huge fan base and he sells not only tickets for shows, but people because they relate to the compilation of essays and colalso a large assortment of Logger stories and jokes. His focus is on merchandise, including DVDs and living in Vermont and humor about a book. He is currently working on flatlanders, health nuts and the

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The Logger success and "Absence makes the heart strategy didn't happen by accident. "I designed The Logger shows four years since I was at the this way," he said. "When I worked When The Logger comes to Bradford Academy. Yes, that as an actor in New York, I dealt works. And follow through is with agents, managers, and the another part of it," Dewees said. Four years ago, Oxbow High thought that I could really promote School baseball coach Shawn myself and do this on a different

there. He spent 11 years working in film, television, theater and commercials. He appeared with the late Patrick Swayze in Black Dog and Liam Neeson in Ethan Frome as well as 11 other movies. He also "I produce the shows myself," Dewees said. "I promote them and have found that I can put more perergy into it than having a

> Dewees designed a marketing show plan and developed the The Logger show in 1997 and the rest is history

Just like any other success, "I spend a lot of my time much of it is based on word-of-

The Logger shows reach

that lead into a song. He adds new own stuff, and added more 50something humor.

umns, has been successful. Dewees published it himself-no publisher, agent or promotional

staff. Just Dewees. it's more rugged than down country. School closings, govern-ment intervention and stupid road signs are fodder in the Loggar's book, it's more essays about my dad and shows a

all the time. He is working on his second book now. Relating that's the key. New

own telling stories and jokes about things they understand and have experienced. That's why The Logger has become so popular.



daughter of Troy and Erin Perry of Bradford, got a free Logger tank top at the Saturday performance. The Logger talked to Natalie and her younger sister, Emma during the show and gave them free tanks which they had autographed after the show. (see more pictures on page 7.) JO PHOTO BY MICHELLE SHERBURNE

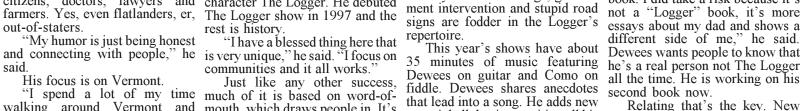


Dewees on guitar and Como on fiddle. Dewees shares anecdotes material all the time, writing all his Englanders relate to one of their

His first book Scrawlins, a

Night Live," and others. After growing up in Stowe, he

faint-at-heart who try to live where it's more rugged than down signs are fodder in the Logger's





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