

Winning budworm battles in pesticide war

Budworm Battles: Elizabeth May. Halifax: Four East Publications Ltd., 1982. 139 pages.

by Jean Matthews

Elizabeth May's *Budworm Battles* is a compelling description of the massive effort of Nova Scotians to keep their government from spraying the province's forests with pesticides.

Though this is, by now, a familiar issue to most of us, the book is indispensable to anyone who wants a glimpse of the real workings of provincial governments. It is the story of powerful multinational industry lobbies, of a news media often only too willing to ignore, or worse, to distort the issue, and of the moral difficulty of politicians who felt as indebted to industry as to the people they represent.

Most of all, it is about a true people's movement, an organization of normal, powerless people who together are able to take on wealthy, sometimes unscrupulous business interests, and win.

Elizabeth May is a law student at Dalhousie now, completing her studies to become an environmental lawyer. I heard her speak at one of the many talks she gives across the province, this one at the Halifax City Library. She is an articulate and persuasive speaker, and her talk was good-natured and often humorous. She writes in the same way.

The author's sheer energy and dedication are amazing, yet she refuses to proselytize or even put herself at the centre of the movement. She is content to see herself as, at most, a catalyst, bringing together people of diverse backgrounds in their common goal of protecting the forests, and the people, of Nova Scotia from industry's expedient solutions.

May is invariably generous, especially toward government figures who resisted the industry's considerable pressure. In fact, she herself has withstood, without bitterness, personal attacks (the gall of

a Swedish corporation accusing the soon-to-be Canadian May of being an "outsider!").

The battle, which took place from 1976 to 1981, was essentially a battle of information. Medical researchers, life-long foresters and housewives tried to be heard against the persistent arguments of the forestry industry that jobs would be lost if its priorities were questioned.

The environmentalists wisely refrained from emotional or sentimental arguments, putting their ideas in a form with which the most hard-headed businessman could sympathize. Budworm spraying simply did not make economic sense. New Brunswick had been spraying for over 20 years, with no certifiable success in routing the budworm. The possible connection of the chemical sprays with the

children's disease Reye's Syndrome need hardly be stressed.

In addition to economic arguments, the Nova Scotia group outlined alternatives to current forest practices which would be job-intensive and would help prevent a future budworm outbreak.

The case of New Brunswick is a particularly tragic one. One wonders if, even given the tremendous cohesion and enthusiasm of the Nova Scotia protestors, any headway could be made against this callous government. Simply trying to find the name of the chemical being sprayed meant endless encounters with a fierce barrage of secretaries.

Since K.C. Irving the industrialist owns both most of the media and a pulp mill, it was evident the people of the province could never have full access to information. Yet even here a valiant effort was

made, the Concerned Parents group standing up against such bureaucrats as the Minister of Natural Resources, Roland Boureau, who called the spraying program a "phenomenal success."

Though in Nova Scotia as well, despite having the overwhelming force of facts and supporters on their side, those opposing the spray could never be certain of final victory. In fact, many of the small victories along with way seem nothing short of miraculous. That is what makes this book such an exciting narrative — it's hard to put own. And in the process it questions our all-too-easy cynicism and fear of involvement.

The book, in the final analysis, is a challenge to defeatist beliefs. It is a proof that successful action is possible, even here, if it is based on sound knowledge and unflinching faith.

Program delightful

continued from page 20

boots. Music was provided by John McMullen who filled in all the right spaces with music matching Olio's movements across the floor.

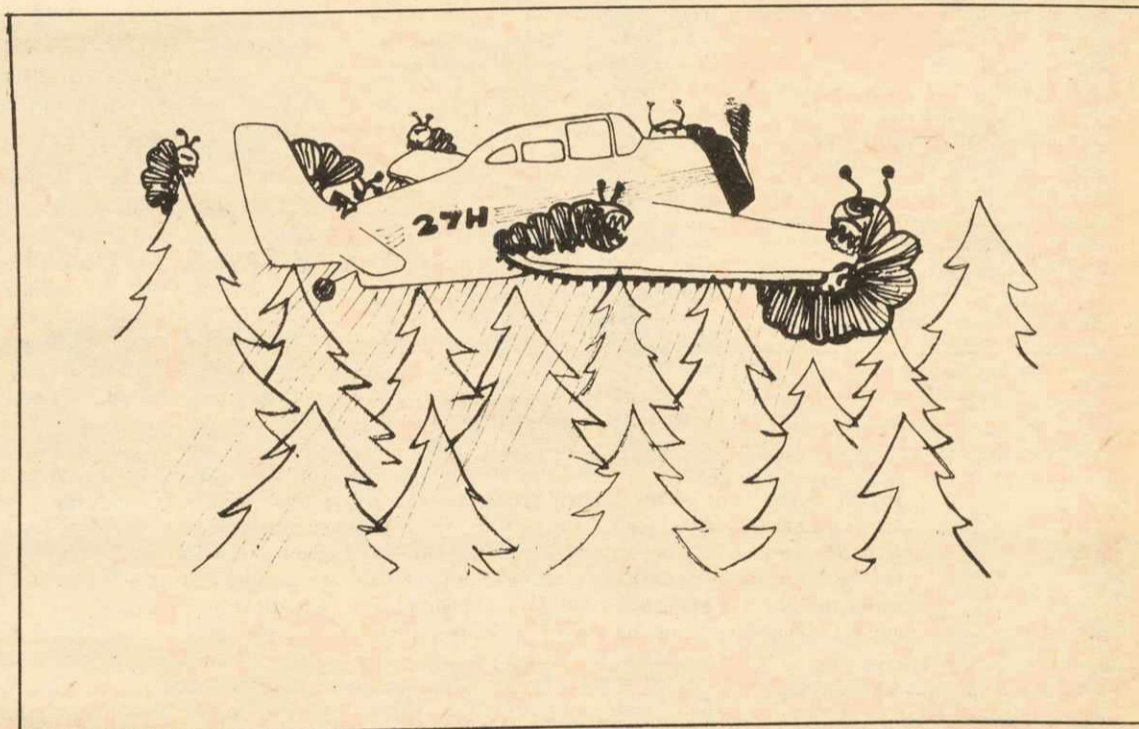
All in all it was pleasant entertainment. After the performance I spoke to Michael Hirschbach and he filled me in a bit on the why, where, what, who and so on of the production.

Hirschbach said it looks easy as pie but in fact it takes natural talent, deep desire to entertain and ability to stick with practice makes perfect and imagination. Michael cited one of his chief mentors, one Sherry-Lee Hunter, also a mime-clown performer who has done per-

formances here in the Halifax area. Both Sherry-Lee and Michael have performed in the Portable Mime Theatre's production, "Visual Alchemy."

Sherry-Lee was in the production of "Olio" in the piece "Hired Hand," but I can't give away her secret but essential part in the number.

I would say that Mime and Clowning and the skills that make up the art are alive and well as the old cliché goes in Halifax, and with talent as Hirschbach, MacLean and Hunter, and their fellow performers around, we can expect to see and hear about this type of entertainment genre more and more as Halifax grows and develops.



LONDON TO EUROPE

Student Flights

TRAVEL CUTS has some great fares available to Europe from London:

AMSTERDAM \$99

ATHENS \$169

BERNE \$119

FRANKFURT \$89

PARIS \$89

ROME \$149

TEL AVIV from \$239*

ZURICH \$109

Add these fares to a TRAVEL CUTS London flight for an unbeatable combination!

- All prices quoted in Canadian dollars for one-way flights
- Double price for return journey except for *Tel Aviv flights where the return price is \$420
- Contact your nearest TRAVEL CUTS office for booking conditions
- Price subject to change due to currency fluctuations
- Some fares apply to flights originating in Europe

Going  TRAVEL
YourWay!  CUTS

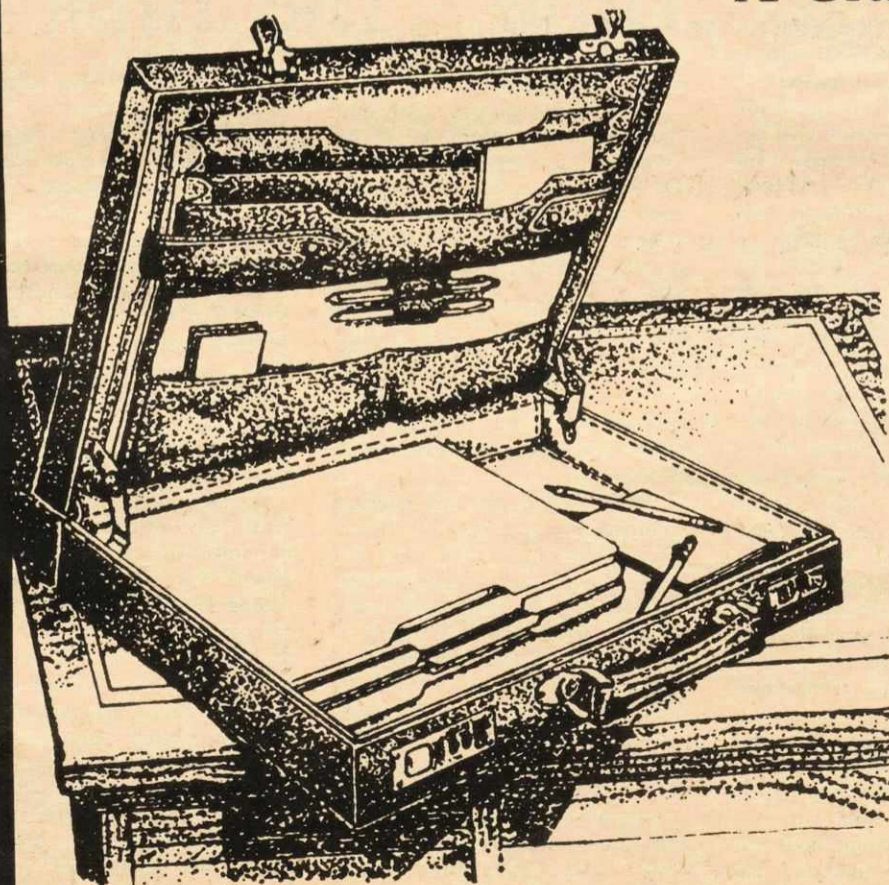
The travel company of CFS
TRAVEL CUTS HALIFAX
Dalhousie, Student Union Building
902 424-2054

A Graduation Gift from D.J.'s

Special 10% discount on leather luggage, attaché cases, briefcases and wallets with a valid Student I.D. Card.

Discount does not apply to other store merchandise.

Offer expires May 15th



D.J.'s
TANNERY SHOP
and
CAFE
5472 SPRING GARDEN ROAD, HALIFAX