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—For section.....Voices/Letters from readers  
—Format.....Opinions - Letters to the Editor - Special  
—Dateline.....Brattleboro  
—Article Number:.....43040



**Notes from editor (not for publication):**



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Australian ballot is a step toward equality

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2

####END SUBHED####

3 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

4 As member of Representative Town Meeting more than  
5 several years ago, I found the old boys' club of the RTM to be  
6 very active and likewise very effective at blocking certain people  
7 and certain ideas from discussion and or consideration.

8 A recent advocate for RTM admitted very clearly that  
9 part of the dynamic of the RTM has included flooding the  
10 meeting with friends to vote with the clique (my word).

11 I found this to be quite true and very frustrating for the  
12 several years I was part of the RTM team. I found my presence to  
13 be ineffective and the experience quite unfulfilling because  
14 discussions were systematically and repeatedly cut off when  
15 someone suggested they had heard enough even though others  
16 were waiting to speak.

17 The vote would be taken to end the discussion, the  
18 clique voted yea, and the others were essentially censored. And  
19 the town was robbed of the opportunity to hear from those who  
20 were not in the clique.

21 I know for a fact there are other folks in town who are  
22 equally disillusioned with the non-democratic system in  
23 Brattleboro.

24 RTM is a show-and-tell facsimile of "democracy in  
25 action," but the Australian ballot is another system worth a try  
26 and will likely increase the numbers of people participating in  
27 our experiment of self governance.

28 The decision-making power will be in the hands of each  
29 one of us individually and collectively. Now is the time to replace  
30 the old way with a clear path to the future.

31 For those of us who believe in equality, the Australian  
32 ballot is the way forward.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

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####END BIO/COATTAIL####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

####BEGIN MAXISSUE####

34

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LINKS:

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VIDEO:

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####BEGIN VIDEO####

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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

37

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