After hearing politicians from all over the country speak, including Sen. Barack Obama, I went with an open mind, not knowing what to expect. As I entered the Fleet Center, the atmosphere was like a rock concert, only instead of young people dancing around to their favorite band, the stadium was filled with people of all ages talking about politics with that same type of excitement.

In other words, I am basically an average young adult. When I turned 18 and became old enough to vote, I was not much into politics and had a complacent attitude toward voting. I didn’t really give it much thought, as the things candidates were talking about didn’t really affect me at the time—or so I thought.

That all changed, though, when I got a chance to go to the Democratic National Convention in Boston in 2004. I went with an open mind, not knowing what to expect. As I entered the Fleet Center, the atmosphere was like a rock concert, only instead of young people dancing around to their favorite band, the stadium was filled with people of all ages talking about politics with that same type of excitement.

After hearing politicians from all over the country speak, including Sen. Barack Obama and former President Bill Clinton, I left the convention with a seed planted. That seed would grow into the understanding that whether you are a Republican, a Democrat or an independent, you have a voice, and that voice is important.

Now, four years later, the political waters are deeper than ever, with an endless stream of information coming at you from the Internet, 24-hour news channels and your local newspaper. Republicans and Democrats debate their stances on issues like abortion, gay marriage, taxes, the Patriot Act and No Child Left Behind and your local newspaper. Republicans and Democrats debate their stances on issues like abortion, gay marriage, taxes, the Patriot Act and No Child Left Behind legislation.

This sea of information can have you lost and frustrated in an instant. As I waded through these waters, though, I realized something: knowledge is power. The privilege comes with the responsibility to make an informed decision.

It’s not so much about which party you choose, but about knowing which candidate you support and why. See, you owe that to yourself and to the person you support and why. See, you owe that to yourself and to the person you.
ignoring your problems or hoping they will solve themselves, maybe you should take a little time to get informed and determine who is best fit to guide this country into the future.

The presidential election only happens every four years, and the 2008 polls are just a month away. My challenge to you is to set aside some time this month and get informed about the candidates. Do some research and find out where they stand and where you stand. Then, on Tuesday, Nov. 4, find out where your polling center is, make a choice and cast a ballot.

If not for yourself, do it for the person standing next to you.

For information on how to register to vote, visit www.presidentialelection.com. For a guide to local races, visit www.ontheissues.org. For a guide to the federal issues, visit www.procon.org.