WE THINK

STILL WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?
HERE ARE 5 WAYS

In the months leading up to Super Tuesday, Americans were engaged — there we say engaged — in a way we haven’t seen in generation.

Voters anticipated their day at the polls with glee, not the usual malaise of duty or disdain.

This time, Americans overwhelmingly felt that their vote mattered.

This time, we may actually turn.

But now it’s not-the-Super Tuesday.

What do we do with all that enthusiasm, all that promise?

Nobody can “clean up the big problems of the day” in an instant, including the war in Iraq, global warming.

But we can offer a few suggestions on how to make a difference — even by our own hands.

Suffering from a Super Tuesday “bad day?” Consider these antidotes.

Live green

We don’t have to wait for politicians to solve the problems of global warming. We can ship away our waste and our lives. First, for riddling our millions of single-use containers and bags destined to clutter our lives.

At www.myspringfield.org, you can easily remove your name from hundreds of catalog mailing lists.

A few other signs turn off the water when brushing your teeth, say no to plastic bags, paper towels, drinking straws and plastic utensils, especially when eating at home, and try改革 for wrapping paper. On another Web site, www.carbonfootprint.com, you can calculate your impact on the environment and learn how to take steps to reduce or offset carbon emissions.

Tutor a kid

Democrat John Edwards made ending poverty a central theme of his candidacy, inspired by his mother. As many (and too) may put that aspiration into action in a manner or manner a stochastic count.

And lucky for us, Dan Russell, president of Catholic Charities, a first-class tutoring program, runs a Website with a searchable database of up to 500 tutors and mentoring programs in Chicago and the suburbs. Go to www.catholiccharities.org and click on “find a program.” If you don’t have time to tutor, consider donating your expertise — Web site design, perhaps, or accounting or fund-raising help — to one of these groups.

Volunteer on a political campaign

Never did it before? Now’s the time to get in the game. With the Internet and e-mail, it has never been easier. If Barack Obama moves you,

- make phone calls for the man, stuff envelopes or raise money
- if you feel passionately about ending police and prosecutorial misconduct, volunteer for one of the candidates for Cook County state’s attorney.

Favor the candidates in your district for the campaign efforts of your local candidates for state representa-

tive or senator. Read local politics. It doesn’t have to be a dirty word.

Support the troops

For “the war” against it? No matter your position, we all want to get behind our soldiers, veterans and their families. Count and reserve soldiers deployed overseas can take a huge financial hit when they leave their regular jobs. The state of Illinois has set up a fund to help their families make ends meet. To contribute, you can check a box when filing your Illinois income taxes. You also can send a check to the Illinois Military Family Relief Fund, P.O. Box 9609, Springfield, IL 62794.

To send a care package, a valentine or a letter to a soldier, contact Operation Support Our Troops Illinois through its Website, www.osot.org.

Help an immigrant

Putting your policy on immigration reform aside, it’s worth considering how we can help immigrants and asylum-seekers. How about helping a newcomer learn English or prepare for the citizenship test?

Volunteers are needed at groups such as Centro Unido or Heart Neighborhood House. Better yet, get out of your comfort zone and check out their neighborhood — their food, their language, their customs.

You’ll likely find we’re far more alike than we are different.