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## We should be inspired to do great things

By Ron Kitchens  
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What an amazing time to be alive.

We are witnessing an election of unprecedented scope. Regardless of which box you check on Election Day, this is an election that has been in the making since the founding of our nation.

And for those of you with TiVo, do not be so quick to pass over the presidential commercials. Some of them are very creative and should be appreciated for that. Oh, go ahead and admit it, the Paris Hilton response to the McCain ad was very witty.

I had the pleasure last weekend of seeing a great show at the Mason Street Warehouse Theater in Saugatuck that featured not only a great trio of Broadway actors but a host of local talent, including Chelsea Swanderski, a Grand Valley State University junior, who stole the show.

Last week, I was a guest of the Michigan Economic Growth Authority at its monthly board meeting at which 20 companies received the state's support to grow jobs in Michigan. One of those companies was Business Intelligence Associates, which selected Kalamazoo over Seattle, Manhattan and San Francisco for the location of its new facility, which will employ 251 high-wage individuals.

Then there are the Olympics. Once again, we witnessed the best athletes in the world, some of whom are competing in sports I never knew existed. What a great opportunity.

It was truly rousing to listen to the coverage and hear Kalamazoo's connections to the games. Did you know we are the home of the chief medical official of USA boxing? Did you see Lindsay Tarpley on the soccer field as the American women again brought home the gold medal? Know that soccer players all over the community and, indeed, the nation are being inspired to greatness by not only her play but the class in which she does it.

As the first leaves begin to blow, I am a bit introspective as I begin to wonder how each of these areas that inspired me came to happen.

It reminded me of a story that Bruce Jenner, the 1976 Olympic gold medalist in the decathlon, tells about speaking to a room full of the nation's top Olympic hopefuls. He asked how many of them had written goals. Every person raised their hand. He next asked how many of them had their goals with them.

Only one hand went up, that of Dan O'Brien, who went on to win Olympic gold in decathlon at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

I would wager that the athletes, the actors, the politicians and the businesses that inspired me this week could each tell you in great detail their goals and their plan to achieve them.

I hope that, if you were asked yours, you would be equally as prepared. If we in Michigan are going to lead the nation's new economic century, then we better set our goals and get to work.

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