This issue represents great achievements in academics, community service, leadership and relationships. As we expose talent, tenacity, passion and testimony, we also pause to celebrate. There is advice about getting more from technology with a connection to Shirley Williams, internationally recognized Social Media Expert. We again enjoy the counsel of Willie Johnson, award-winning speaker and lead trainer of a major U.S. based corporation. Our resources and our readers are top notch.

As often happens, this issue contains a sudden flash of insight (an unplanned entry that I wonder how I would have done without). As often happens, I was nearly finished with the layout and content of the newsletter, and needed just one more thing. What would it be asked? This time there was a glaring blank section on the right-hand side of Page 2. It didn’t take long for the answer to come. In an issue filled with young people, high achievement, going against the “Norm”, AHHA; Bullying! YES, Bullying, something that so negatively impacts the young and the not so young. Yes, that thing that so often steals hopes and dreams, and sometimes even lives. The previously blank space now contains a few comments and a valuable connection to aid in the “war on Bullying.”

Again, a challenge (the blank space) was really a stepping stone to building a stronger foundation (the story and connection), and once again, prayer worked. Remember that often times what seems to be a setback, is a setup for a comeback.

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STOP The Bullying by Henry Ford

Those of my generation well remember people dying for the right to receive an adequate education. We therefore have a difficult time understanding the reasoning behind bullying, particularly when it targets those who are simply trying to learn. The "Dumbing Down" of a people so long denied cannot be tolerated. Our children need every opportunity to learn. The Greater Cleveland area is fortunate to have Kent Wise among its anti-bullying proponents.

Kent is a Pastor-Life of Faith Ministries, Personal Development and Life Coach, Youth Character Development Specialist, Entrepreneur, Award Winning Inspirational Speaker, Toastmaster of the year 2004 and author of S.T.O.P. - Award winning anti-bullying and violence program. Find out more about Kent at www.kentwise.com, email kwise2000@yahoo.com or call 216-436-2661.

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I brought children into this dark world because it needed the light that only a child can bring.

~Liz Armbruster

VISIONS Newsletter is published Bi-Monthly
Subscription $10.00 per year payable to FORD & Associates
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Phone 216-348-4612 - E-mail: successisyou@yahoo.com

Want to Make a Difference? - We Need YOUR Story! Someone's Future Depends Upon Sharing Who YOU Are!
DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE - 6-10-2012
Breyanna Mikel, a member of the National Honor Society, uses her knowledge to educate and inspire others. She recognizes as many of us do, that Black History is American History, and she is doing something about it. In addition to being a Leadership Mentor at Kennesaw State College with a demanding workload, Breyanna shares Black History Facts and other information on a daily basis on her family Facebook page, not just in February, but all year. Her cheerful “Good Morning Family” and inspiring information is a powerful incentive to achieve. THANKS Breyanna, you truly are “what the world needs now.”

CONGRATULATIONS Marlon Lopez

Don’t let the laid back pose (left) confuse you. You are looking at National Honor Society Inductee Marlon Lopez, son of Regina Mikel Quarles. Another of Marlon’s poses (right) is as a player on the winning Horizon Academy “Dragons” Baseball Team.

CONGRATULATIONS to Marlon, his teachers, his team, and of course, his mom Regina.

From a Tribute posted on Facebook by William Mikel:

Today is my wife, Sharon’s, birthday. I figure it would be a good day to talk a little about the woman who’s put up with me for more than half of her life.

This woman we call: Sharon, Dionne, Momma, or Sergeant Mikel is truly a gift from God. Everyone that has come in contact with her can relate. In your time, of need she will be there to help, to talk, to listen, to give advice, to laugh or to cry. My wife has made me the man I am today. Her kindness has rubbed off on me. Her thoughtfulness has rubbed off on me. Her generosity has rubbed off on me. I think that each and every person who reads this has their own Sharon, Dionne, Momma, or Sergeant Mikel moment. I would like to say to this woman, to my woman - Sharon - a very happy birthday.
It was celebration time as our beloved Godmother, Mrs. Willie Gardner, affectionately known as “Ma Gardner” celebrated her 95th Birthday while engaging in one of her favorite pastimes (sharing good food with friends). As she continues to bless so many others with her wit, wisdom and compassion, we wish her many more smiles and celebrations. Joining her at dinner were Dianne and I, Betty Suber, and Minnie Lewis. Photo at the right shows Ma Gardner flashing her famous smile as she reads one of her many greetings and patiently waits for her food at the Bahama Breeze Restaurant.

CONGRATULATIONS to Judith El-Amin, who was honored during North Central College’s 150th anniversary. During Black History Month, North Central put together posters that were also reduced to a booklet featuring alums and special historical guest speakers of African descent. Shown below is Judith’s wedding picture with an inset of a picture taken of her when she volunteered in northern New Mexico when she was a freshman.

(“Chicago Lawyer” text enlarged below to enhance readability on this page)

Chicago Lawyer

While Judy Brown El-Amin (Class of ’69) was a student at North Central College, she was very active in promoting civil rights for black students. In January 1966, she was one of six students who were encouraged by campus chaplain Rev. George St. Angelo (Class of ’43), to volunteer at an Evangelical United Brethren mission in New Mexico. In 1968, Judy was part of the exchange program with Spelman College, a historically black women’s college in Georgia. “My experience at Spelman was life changing. I was there when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was killed. The campus was engulfed in grief and we held an all-night vigil. I studied with Dr. Vincent Harding, a noted historian and theologian, and gained a greater understanding of history and the political system.” Judy was also one of the founding members of the Black Student Association, Black Cultural Center and the African American Alumni Association. Judy is now a lawyer in Chicago.
By Henry Ford

As I read a recent review of *Social Media Week* in Toronto (Feb 13-17), I was impressed by the content of the valuable information shared during one of the panel discussions. The panel lineup included the powerhouse lineup of Sam Graham-Felsen, Chief Blogger for Obama for America, Aliza Licht, SVP of Global Communications for DKNY, Sam Champion, Weather Anchor for ABC's "Good Morning America", Kelly Balz, North America Social Media Manager for Avon, and Kristine Welker, Chief Revenue Officer of Hearst Digital.

The panel lineup also took me back in time to the mid nineteen seventies when I first attended a conference of the National Association of Investors. There was no representation of African Americans on most panels (and almost none in the audience). This is not a condemnation but an observation. African Americans were not locked out, but they had “sat out,” not purposely or in any organized fashion or for any reason, but they just were not there, except for myself and about ten others at a conference of over 500. That’s not a condemnation either, but another observation.

The reality is that trends that connect, educate, and empower often escape the majority of African Americans for too long. How long? Too Long! That is an observation also, one that I attribute in part to the social and professional circles we tend to operate within. Often we are so tuned in to what we perceive to be the upper limit or the “What is,” that we cannot embrace The Dream, The Vision, The Possibilities.

The Investment Education movement took many more years to find its way into the African American Community than it needed to, denying so much to so many, and negatively impacting generations to come. Today two of the movements in danger of taking place without us are those of Technology and Social Media. It should not happen, it does not need to happen, and we cannot afford to let it happen. There is enough African American presence on the Internet, Facebook, and other platforms to convince me that we are well represented. The question is will we incorporate into our Social Media agenda, the education that can help us bridge gaps in technology, education, business, and help enhance our personal and professional development?

One of the powerful eyes, ears and contributors to the Social Media scene is a dynamic, informed and personable young lady by the name of Shirley Williams. A bright light on the Social Media scene, Shirley is an internationally recognized Social Media expert that can help us understand and narrow the gaps that so desperately need closing. A bonus in following Shirley is that she freely shares with others without targeting any specific group; but absorbs, evaluates and contributes, touching lives in over 160 countries. Her openness allows valuable information to flow, leaving her objectivity unobstructed by special interests, and keeping her credibility impeccable.

If you have any serious intent of allowing Social Media to powerfully impact your life and your business, you can follow Shirley at [www.socialmediapearls.com](http://www.socialmediapearls.com).
Dianne Ford is well known for her month-long birthday celebrations, but this year she took it to another level. She celebrated her birthday with her Birthday Club members early, so by April 8th she was ready for takeoff. Easter Sunday morning, the limo arrived at 4:00 AM to whisk Dianne (and myself of course) off to the airport to catch a Miami bound flight. By 4:00 PM that afternoon we were on our way to the Southern Caribbean aboard The Norwegian Dawn.

Our trip included ports in the Dominican Republic, the British Virgin Islands, St. Maarten, Antigua, Barbados, St. Kitt, and of course back to Miami.

Just so there is no concern about the two of us having all the fun, we traveled with Dianne’s cousin Betty, and Janice Munn, a former neighbor and friend of Betty. Once on board ship we met the rest of the fifteen person party group.

The cruise, initially planned to celebrate the 50th Wedding Anniversary of Lewis and Colette Matthews, grew into the celebration of an anniversary, three birthdays, and a celebration of “glad we are still here and breathing.”

As those who cruise know, and those who hear the stories might imagine, cruising is not for dieters, and this one was no exception. We were fed and pampered, and then pampered and fed, and no one complained.

We watched sunrises, sunsets, shows, and people. We listened to Motown Reviews, musicians and more. We took island tours, learned history, and did practically anything one might imagine, except buy souvenirs! We did take over 1000 photos and a surprising number of them ended up on-line. Visit www.cruiseapril2012.blogspot.com to view photos.
**... Celebration Time Continued**

Of all that was special about the celebration, the appreciation of relationships tops the list. We met people who made the moments special by their words, their expressions, their sharing of themselves.

From our guides, some of whom delivered more than was promised, to other travelers whom we encountered throughout the cruise and shared our most recent experiences with, to our faithful and amazingly efficient room steward, everyone contributed in a way that only they could have. The other members of our fifteen member group embraced us as though we were longtime friends.

If there is anything that matches the excitement of our recent experience, it is our expectation of what possibly lies ahead. I would encourage everyone to take the time to smell (and to water) the “roses.” Experience the beauty of your surroundings and of those who surround you, even on those occasions or in those circumstances where you have to make a little effort to do so.

Be the change you wish to see in the world. Only you have that power!

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**ABOVE: SOMEWHERE in the Southern Caribbean**

**HAPPY 50th Anniversary to Lewis & Colette Matthews**

Betty Suber finds that even a monkey can be a friend.
Personal discipline, when it becomes a way of life in our personal, family, and professional lives, will enable us to do some incredible things. A saying I heard many years ago and have adopted goes like this: “when you discipline yourself to do the things you need to do when you need to do them, the day will come when you can do the things you want to do when you want to do them.”

We need to understand the difference between discipline and punishment. Punishment is what you do to someone: discipline is what you do for someone. My friend and mentor Henry Ford, through his talks and speeches, points out that some people are very disciplined in one phase of their life and not in another. Take a moment to think about people you know; you will surely find that some are perfectionist, let’s say in their fields of endeavors, and yet totally unregulated in their, let’s say, eating habits. You will also find that some even have a discrepancy between their personal life and their creative life. I have also noticed of late that there are people with superior talent who have not submitted to discipline and so they are not becoming known or recognized for their abilities. Wouldn’t you agree – that is sad.

Discipline then, is building good habits into reflexes which become part of our life. It’s absolutely true that unless you can instill discipline upon yourself “first”, you will never be able to instill this attitude on others. When discipline becomes a habit within you, you will be able to control your impulses in each area of your life and succeed in a balanced way.

I know that some of you reading this article are already arguing with me and my position relative to personal discipline and habits. That’s okay, because as a Performance Improvement Consultant, people argue with me at times. They don’t like to admit that I am right. Bottom line: Your success can be and is directly tied to your “personal discipline”, along with the positive habits you develop within.

Your life is exactly the way you want it to be; otherwise it wouldn’t be that way. You must like it the way it is.……….. Do you need a new direction in life?

Publisher’s Note: I debated with Willie his reference to me as his “mentor,” insisting that he is my mentor. Anyway, my experience as a mentor to others has always left me wiser and better off, so “whatever.” The lesson is that when you become engaged in helping others, it is almost assured that rewards will flow your way. So Willie, I left it as you wrote it.