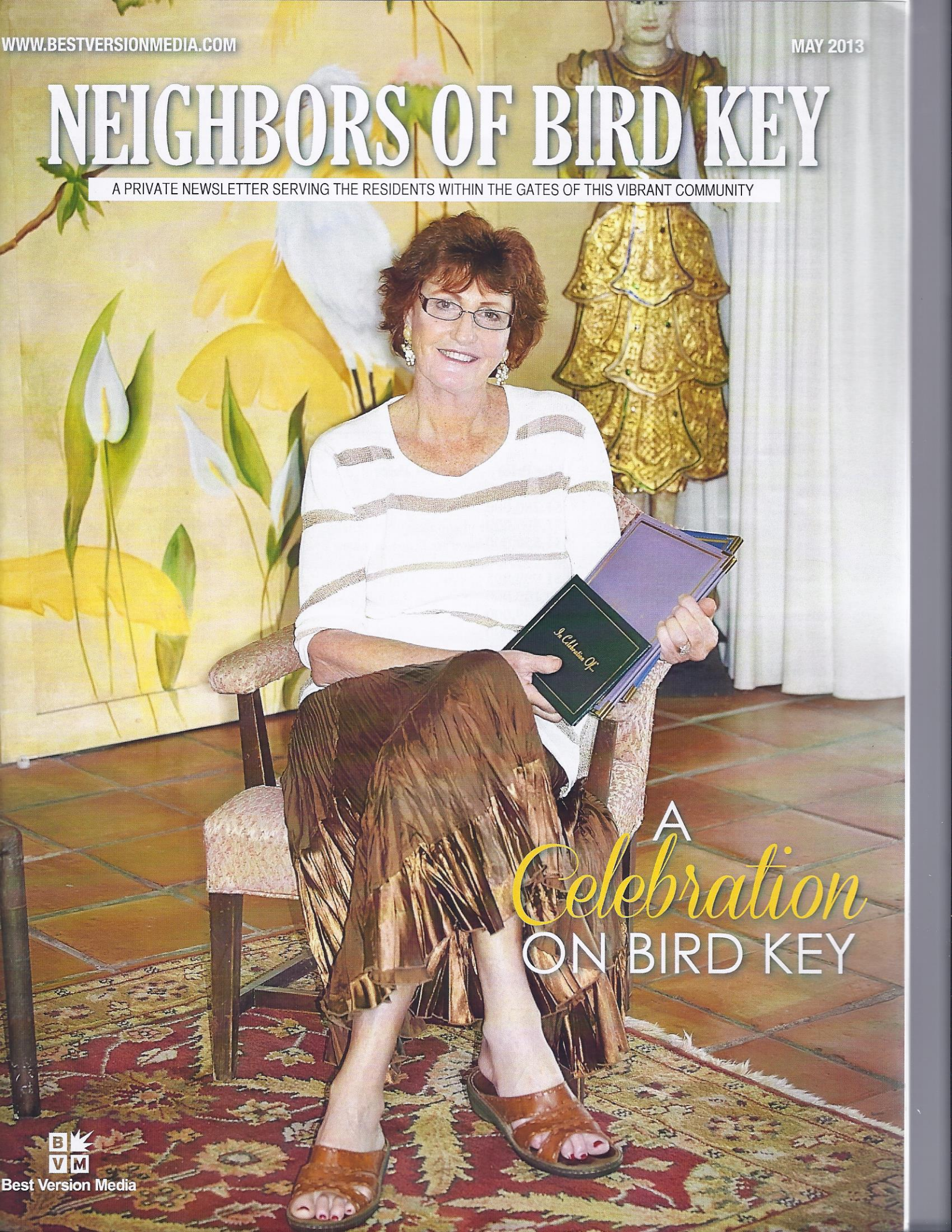


# NEIGHBORS OF BIRD KEY

A PRIVATE NEWSLETTER SERVING THE RESIDENTS WITHIN THE GATES OF THIS VIBRANT COMMUNITY



A  
*Celebration*  
ON BIRD KEY





## *Bird Key Resident* **JOAN BREINER CREATES WEBSITES TO HIGHLIGHT AND ENHANCE OTHERS' LIVES**

Joan Breiner loves Bird Key. She loves the people, the location, the activities and the freedom to cruise out on the water with her husband of thirty years. She describes herself as an “entrepreneur that believes in having fun and also empowering people.”

“Sarasota is a fantastic place to live and one of the reasons I love Sarasota is when you ask people about it, most people I know love living here,” she said. It’s a happy place. That’s my experience. There is plenty to do and plenty not to do. It calls to you.”

After retiring from a successful career in banking human resources in Connecticut, Joan and her husband spent time sailing the Bahamas and the islands for four years. When they got back home,

she was ready to work. She was hired by one of the major banks to find solutions to training issues. She developed a very innovative way to greatly improve the ability of call center personnel to answer questions about employee benefits with outstanding accuracy. This led to a demand in the next five years that resulted in over fifty Fortune 500 companies using her system in their call centers.

After selling this business, Joan decided to take twenty-five of her closest friends to Jamaica for a vacation as a thank you to them for their support and collaboration over the years. Her friend had compiled a tribute book into which everyone was given the opportunity to write their thoughts about her and what she meant to them. It was so touching and such

an inspiration for her that she decided to start another business, CelebrateAHero.com.

“CelebrateAHero.com is a fantastic little site because it allows you to celebrate the special people in your life by creating collaborative tribute books where you can invite people’s friends and family to toast them and tell them why they’re special,” Joan said.

Once the input is complete, the information is then compiled into a book and sent to the person who initiated the “Celebration”. She is having so much fun with this business she just recently rolled out CelebrateAHero.com Version 2.0.

“What I really believe in as a mantra

*Continued On Page 6*

Continued From Page 4



for living is that everybody needs to be loved and appreciated," she said. "If you're given recognition, appreciation and love there isn't a much better gift than that. And most people, if I tell you you're great, they brush it off. But these books have a special energy that you can't brush off."

Using her graduate degree in vocational counseling and needing something more to do than just Celebrateahero.com, Joan began volunteering at the Women's Resource Center. She recognized the need for people to be empowered and started a self-esteem and empowerment group. The group was so wildly popular it became difficult to get into. In addition, the newer members could not catch up with the lesson plan. So she started a web site called SelfEsteemExperts.com, a site which provides free self-esteem building activities and exercises to boost low self-esteem and change the way you feel about yourself.

Contacted by a publisher who was using this site, he encouraged her to write a book. So, she co-authored a book with Susan Reeve: *The Inspired Life: Unleashing Your Mind's Capacity for Joy*. It is a compilation of the lesson plans that you will find on the site.

I think it is safe to say that Bird Key is lucky to have a neighbor like Joan. She believes in having fun, staying busy and empowering people to be the best that they can be. And she really, really loves it!

By: Jean Lejnar, Contributor

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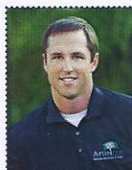
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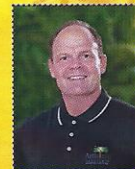
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