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**E-news**

**March 2009**

**Remembering John Updike**

We were saddened by the recent passing of one of the literary world's most prolific and beloved authors--John Updike. We were fortunate enough to have produced on audio one of his children's books, **[A Child's Calendar](#)**, a book of poetry beautifully illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman (and a Caldecott Honor book.) And even more fortunate to have him read his book for us. He agreed to narrate it because, as he said, "better me, I figure, than another." Our producer, Arnie Cardillo, corresponded with Mr. Updike, who responded on cards or notepaper, typed on a typewriter, with corrections made by x'ing out the letters!



When he received his copy of the CD, Mr. Updike seemed to be pleased with the recording, saying "It never ceases to amaze me how my voice does not do what I hear it doing in my head. It's a heavy voice, slow to move through the words, and not always as distinct as I would like. My slowness, I suppose, is an attempt to do the words justice, to let them carry the message."



John Updike and Arnie Cardillo

His words will, we're sure, continue to carry the message to generations of readers to come. We are grateful to have had the opportunity to work with him - he did, indeed, do his words justice.

**Live Oak Cassettes**

Live Oak Media is one of the few audio publishers that continues to offer recordings on cassette. We believe it is important as many schools and libraries don't have the budgets to replace existing audio materials and equipment. Cassettes are also among the sturdiest and most reliable of the audio formats - especially for younger listeners. We find that elementary schools in particular continue to request this format. Since we are a small company, we don't have the restraints of managing a huge warehouse or massive inventory. Therefore we are able to keep both CDs and cassettes in stock.

While we support traditional formats, we are also keeping up with new technology to meet the needs of customers. Some of our audiobooks for older listeners (ages 8 - 12) are available on [Playaways](#) and more are planned. Many of our recordings are also offered for download through [Overdrive.com](#) and [Audible.com](#). You can always listen to sample clips by [visiting our website](#).

**Win a Playaway**

Speaking of Playaways, you can win one from us! Just [email us and tell us](#) which format you prefer for listening to audio -- which technology do you prefer, and why? We'll enter you into a drawing for a free Playaway unit!

**Q&A: Video at Live Oak**

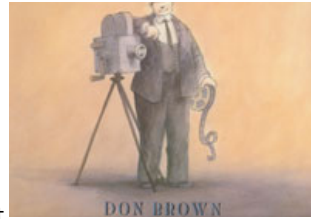
Many of you might not be aware that Live Oak produces video as well as audio. In fact, last year's **[Mack Made Movies](#)** was named a 2009 ALA Notable Video Recording. Arnie Cardillo talks about producing this video:

**Why did you choose to produce [Mack Made Movies](#) as a video as well as a**



### ***readalong?***

We usually look at books to see if they would translate well into audio, since we consider ourselves an audio producer, first and foremost, and produce only 1-2 videos a year. Don Brown's *Mack Made Movies*, however, was the first book that



reoriented our thinking. In other words, we first thought of what a great video it would make, before we even thought about it as a readalong, because it was about one of the pioneers in filmmaking, Mack Sennett. We were also inspired by the illustrations, which in many cases were depictions of actual scenes in front of and behind the camera.

### ***What did you enjoy most about producing this video?***

One aspect that excited us about the project was that Sennett's films were made before color was introduced, so we thought it would be fun to take some of the color illustrations and convert them into black and white for the video, especially the illustrations that depicted actual movie footage. Early animation was also featured in the book, and we decided to create simple animation in the video in the same way it had been done in those early films -- shot by shot.

With the advanced techniques that are now available on the new digital editing systems, we uncovered a number of optical effects that we could use to make the video look like old black-and-white footage -- worn out film with scratch lines, and human hairs moving across the camera lens. It's ironic that modern technology has enabled us to create the feel of old time movies.

### ***How is the process of making a video different from audio?***

Our principal focus as an audio publisher is to create an audio recording for our readalong productions, so we start with the audio production and make that first. Then we take the audio track and listen to it as we look at the illustrations, one by one, in order to determine how the art can be shot in order to synchronize it with the narration, music, and sound effects -- the equivalent of creating a storyboard, as it is done in real filmmaking. It's important to note that we use the original artwork when we shoot the video. Then the audio track is revised, if necessary, to make sure that it will match up with the video blueprint that we have created, and it thereby becomes the soundtrack for the video. We then shoot each piece of art while listening to the corresponding segment of the soundtrack to insure that the sound and visual elements work together as we had planned.

The final step is to take all the video footage and the soundtrack into the editing room and piece it all together. As they say in Hollywood, movies are made in the editing room, and it is no different with our children's videos.

### ***Are there other videos in the works?***

Our next video will be of Eric Kimmel's book, *Anansi's Party Time*. It will be the fourth Anansi book by Eric that we will have made into a video--the Anansi books have become [our most popular video series](#).

### **Going out of VHS sale**

All of our video titles are available in DVD formats, but we still have some leftover inventory of the VHS format. [Visit our website](#) or call us for a list of titles that are still available at the ridiculously reduced price of \$9.95! Supplies are limited - so hurry!

Questions or comments? Please write us at [info@liveoakmedia.com](mailto:info@liveoakmedia.com) or call us at (800) 788-1121.

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