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E-news

May 2009

Greetings from Arnie & Debra Cardillo

Spring seems to finally be on its way to the Northeast, and none too soon for some of us! Especially for the one of us who didn't get her tropical vacation this winter! They say that April is the cruelest month -- we're desperate for spring to arrive and it's so often just more harsh winds, bitter coldness and wet slush. We've certainly been known to have a snowstorm or two here in April. So, we all look forward to May when the forsythia begin to bud, the daffodils and tulips unfold, and the leaves on the trees begin to shine with that neon green shimmer. Ah, Spring!

Announcing Spanish Readalongs winner!

Becky Calzada from Westside Elementary School in Cedar Park, Texas, has won a Live Oak Media tote bag full of Readalongs in Spanish for writing us with her suggestions for our Spanish Readalong program. Live Oak Media has a long tradition of publishing Spanish recordings, with more than **40 readalongs** available. With your help, we hope to build on the program in 2009 and 2010. Thank you, Becky, and thank you to all of you for your participation. Please keep your comments coming! We will be announcing the new productions on our website as they are released, and of course, in our 2010 catalog.



Audio for Early Childhood

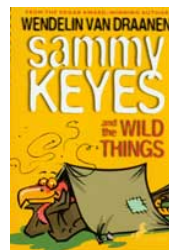
In February, President Obama signed into law the economic recovery package containing \$2.1 billion for Head Start. According to the Harvard Education Letter, there is "a growing body of research that demonstrates the critical role high-quality early childhood education plays in students' success, not only in the elementary grades but throughout their lives."



At Live Oak Media, we've always recognized the importance of Early Childhood Education and have created many recordings for young readers and listeners. Visit our website and [click on Early Childhood](#) titles for some excellent readalongs for your youngest readers. Adding to this list of great titles will be **Mañana Iguana**, due out in June. We'll tell you more in next month's newsletter.

May Preview

Get ready for serious fun this summer with these two rollicking titles and the eleventh Sammy Keyes title in the best-selling series:



Available now: **Sammy Keyes and the Wild Things** by Wendelin VanDraanen; read by Tara Sands. Just in time for summer reading, the eleventh book in the always exciting series is available on audio. This time, Sammy Keyes finds herself in the wilderness helping eco-friendly Girl Scouts save the endangered condor.

Punctuation Takes a Vacation by Robin Pulver, illustrated by Lynn Rowe Reed and read by John Beach, will be available by the end of May -- a fun and interesting summer reading assignment for students to help them remember the value of punctuation even while *they're* on vacation!



Louise, the Adventures of a Chicken will also be available by month's end. A picture book written by Kate DiCamillo, illustrated by Harry Bliss and narrated by the indomitable



Barbara Rosenblat. A freed chicken on an amazing adventure. Need we say more? Stay tuned for our June newsletter as we'll be announcing more fun with Louise at ALA in

Chicago!

Q&A: Technology

There has been a great deal of interest in evolving technology and the new electronic formats. But we'd like to focus on a format that we continue to support and sell - cassettes! Debra & Arnie Cardillo share their thoughts:

What are your thoughts on audio downloads?

We have our older audiobook titles available for download through Overdrive and Audible, as well as on Playaway units. We think these formats make sense for the older listener. Younger listeners, however, continue to do well with the tried and true, old fashioned cassettes. The cassettes are durable, and the format is easier for smaller hands to manage.

Do you think listening habits are changing?

Clearly, more people are listening to books on audio, even in our young market. Three year olds are on computers and kids are growing up far more techno-savvy than we did, and even more so than our young adult children did, so that certainly means change. But there's still a vast number of children holding books in their hands, looking at the illustrations while being read to by a person, or listening to the story on cassette or CD while reading along. We don't have statistics, just feedback from teachers and librarians who work with this age group and are quite loyal to the formats. And, many don't have the budgets to convert hundreds of books & audio in their classrooms and libraries to the latest technological trend.

How do you feel about hearing computer-generated voice reading of text as in the Kindle?

We think it has application for adult listeners who are interested in hearing informational material, like the news, rather than listening to a good book. The narrator's performance is one of the most important criteria in creating a good audiobook - listeners are expecting (and deserve) an effective and entertaining narration of the book. A computer generated voice is no match for a great narrator.

In the case of readalongs, the need for a professional narrator or actor to read the text becomes even more essential for a good reading & listening experience. Children's books, especially picture books and beginning readers, have multiple characters, often from all genus of the animal kingdom, and part of the fun for young listeners is having the opportunity to hear the various characters come to life on the illustrated pages of the book. We don't think children will be too excited about reading and listening to picture books if a monotone computerized voice is reading to them; rather, they need a voice that captures the nuances of the characters and readalong pacing that is designed to hold their interest.

How do you think your authors feel about the technology?

We think authors are interested in new ways to get their books out to readers, listeners, moviegoers, etc., just like the publishers are. It's exposure, and nobody minds having a new revenue stream, as long as it's expanding their markets and not reducing them. And, as long as it's not compromising the quality of what they've created.

What impact will these new formats have on children's book and audio publishing?

It's probably too early to tell. Book and audio publishers continue to grapple with new technologies and try to understand their places in the market. At Live Oak Media, we do our best to accommodate our customers, and as long as they continue to request the traditional formats, we'll continue to offer them. At the same time, we are venturing into the world of technology -- as long as whatever format we put out there enables us to keep our high standards of production and delivery intact. We owe that to our ultimate customers - the children who are reading and listening.

Web Special

Email us which format you prefer for listening to audio -- which technology do you prefer to provide to your students, and why? We'll enter you into a drawing for a free Playaway unit!

Tell a Friend

We hope you've been enjoying our newsletter, where we bring you news about Live Oak Media as well as a behind-the-scene look at issues and people important to us. Please be sure to tell your friends to join the conversation by [signing up for the newsletter on our web site.](#)

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

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