

IN THE NEWS

Anancy goes hi-tech

Jamaica's favourite little prankster can now be enjoyed with a modern twist due to the creation of animated Anancy stories on DVD.

The DVD, which was launched last month at the St Andrew High School, consists of three stories — *How Anancy Became Famous*, *Anancy and Common Sense*, and *Anancy and the Cowitch Patch*.

Children age six and older will be able to enjoy a colouring and activities book that accompanies the DVD.

Graphic designer from Savannah Georgia in the United States and creator Andrew Davies, speaking at August Fair 2010, says that the idea came from listening to the noted Jamaican storyteller Joan Andrea Hutchinson's CD of Anancy stories.

"Anancy is a character that everyone in Jamaica would know and I figured this would be a good avenue to preserve our culture, so I approached her and asked if she would be okay with me doing some animated versions of the stories with her as the voice-over and the narrator, and she said yes," Davies told the **Observer**.

With the fight to preserve the Jamaican culture as well as the lack of interest children of today show in reading, Davies say the use of animation will help to captivate the minds of Jamaica's youth.

"In the world of Sponge Bob, they are not really going to sit down and listen to a story. Most people don't have their aunty and grandma telling those stories anymore and it's a way to engage ages 6 and up with the same stories that we or our parents might have grown up knowing about, in a way that they are more familiar with now," Davies said.

Davies says that though there were sceptics, the response to the DVD has been good from locals and foreigners, with steady sales of the 2000 copies published.

Based on the success of the animated stories, Davies hopes to continue the series or venture into doing other characters in Jamaica's vast cultural heritage.

"Our culture is so deep," he said. "There are so many characters, content and avenue that we can tap into, it's just a matter of getting the new media and technology to tell the stories now. After that the world is the limit."

— Sheneka Dias