



WORLD CULTURE. This image released by the Public Broadcasting Service shows a scene from the animated series "Let's Go Luna!" The show, aimed at children between four and seven years old, recently debuted on PBS and PBS Kids video-streaming platforms and visits countries such as Beijing, Delhi, Tokyo, Bangkok, and Istanbul. (LATW Productions Inc./Public Broadcasting Service via AP)

# "Let's Go Luna!" takes kids on a globe-spanning tour

By Lynn Elber  
AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES — Carmen, Leo, and Andy are globetrotters to envy, jumping from Paris to Nairobi to New Orleans and beyond in the company of a tour guide who knows her way around: Luna the moon.

An animated series by the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), "Let's Go Luna!" is a road trip aimed at giving viewers between four and seven years old a glimpse of the world's people and cultures beyond their own familiar corner.

The series, which debuted in November (check local listings for times), visits seven continents and 19 cities. Antarctica is the stop for a special Christmas episode airing December 10.

PBS joined with Emmy Award-winning artist and writer Joe Murray ("Rocko's Modern Life," "Camp Lazlo") to fill a social-studies need for its young audience, and the result is lively, fun, and — don't tell the kids — educational, since it's public TV.

Carmen, a butterfly from Mexico, Australian wombat Leo, and Andy, a frog from the United States, are buddies travelling with Circo Fabuloso, a performance troupe run by their parents. The group's fourth wheel is Luna, whose nightshift duties makes her available for daytime adventures. As created by Murray and voiced by Judy Greer, Luna is a joyful — even madcap — companion.

In the first episode, her exuberant dancing unleashed minor chaos in Mexico City when she joined the children's emergency search for a substitute band to entertain the president.

There are mariachis to meet, a tour of the city, and a dash of hiccup-causing salsa flavoring the story, a taste of what's to come as the series hopscoches around the world with clever, engaging animation.

Skeptics contended that young viewers would be at sea over the show's concept, said Linda Simensky, vice president of children's programming for PBS.

"We've been told a number of times that kids wouldn't really understand global awareness," with a perspective limited to their town and perhaps where relatives live, she said, adding, "We took that as a challenge."

While history, geography, anthropology, and more are folded into the series, the result is what Simensky calls a "very simple" concept: People do a lot of the same things all over the world, just in different ways, or they do different things to get to the same point.

"That sort of compare-and-contrast approach works well for this age group," said Simensky, who knows her audience. She's been at PBS since 2003, developing series including "Wild Kratts" and "Odd Squad," and previously worked at the Cartoon Network and Nickelodeon.

Murray made the jump from network to public TV for "Let's Go Luna!" and found it a welcome change. As the father of a toddler and a five-year-old, he's familiar with the barrage of ads targeting young TV viewers, and as a creator recalled one network's request that he work on a fast-food spot (he said no).

"I started feeling more and more that this wasn't really the place for me at this point of my career," he said of network TV.

For "Luna," produced by 9 Story Media Group, Murray has resources, including early childhood advisers, an anthropologist to vet cultural depictions, and composers schooled in international music.

Each of the central characters was given a specific interest to explore in their travels. Carmen, whose mom conducts the circus orchestra, is musical; Leo, a chef's son, is a foodie; Andy is an artist.

Episodes will be available across PBS Kids streaming platforms, including the PBS Kids video app. The series, in the works for about three years, was inspired by Murray's own family travels.

"My wife is from Belgium and my kids have spent a lot of time in Europe. We could see the advantage of having kids be more exposed culturally to other places," he said. "I thought America was especially kind of sequestered."

## Dictionary.com chooses word of the year: "misinformation"

By Leanne Italie  
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Misinformation, as opposed to disinformation, has been chosen as Dictionary.com's word of the year on the tattered coattails of "toxic," picked earlier in November for the same honor by Oxford Dictionaries in these tumultuous times.

Jane Solomon, a linguist-in-residence at Dictionary.com, said in a recent interview that her site's choice of "mis" over "dis" was deliberate, intended to serve as a "call to action" to be vigilant in the battle against fake news, flat earthers, and anti-vaxxers, among other conduits.

It's the idea of intent, whether to inadvertently mislead or to do it on purpose, that the Oakland, California-based company wanted to highlight. The company decided it would go high when others have spent much of 2018 going low.

"The rampant spread of misinformation is really providing new challenges for navigating life in 2018," Solomon told The Associated Press ahead of the word of the year announcement. "Misinformation has been around for a long time, but over the last decade or so the rise of social media has really, really changed how information is shared. We believe that understanding the concept of misinformation is vital to identifying misinformation as we encoun-

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Lao: ການຄວບຄຸມໂລກເຕີຍາຂ້າງເພື່ອຊີວິດຂອງທ່ານ.  
Vietnamese: Luôn Kiểm Soát Tiểu Đường. Để Suốt Đời Sống Khỏe.  
Thai: ควบคุมโรคเบาหวานเพื่อชีวิตของท่าน.  
Gujarati: અભિયાન બેલોગ્લુસિસ ઝવણવર ડાહ્યાની રીતે.  
Korean: 당신의 당뇨병을 조정하십시오. 평생동안.  
Sinhalese: la pulea lou ma'li suka. Mu lou soifuaga.  
Tamil: Pamahaalan ang inyong diyabetis, upang manatiling malusog at masigla.  
Chinese: 珍惜生命控制血糖