

# From Marquesas Islands, sailors Skype old school

By Alicia Doyle  
Special to The Star

Seventh-graders at Cabrillo Middle School in Ventura took a virtual trip to French Polynesia on Friday, using Skype to chat with two former classmates who sailed to the South Pacific with their family earlier this year.

Bryce Rigney, 13, and his brother Trent, 11, sailed out of Ventura Harbor aboard the 42-foot sailboat Kandu on Feb. 10, along with their parents, Eric and Leslie Rigney. Their plan is to spend five years traveling around the world.

Bryce and Trent are now enrolled in a French Polynesian public school.

The Rigneys are chronicling their experience at RigneysKandu.com. In the Dec. 2 Captain's Blog, Eric Rigney wrote: "Leslie and I dreamed of Bryce and Trent learning to someday speak fluent French. ... It is one of the main reasons for our extended stay in French

Polynesia, allowing us to enroll Bryce and Trent in a French public school."

Before they left Cabrillo, Bryce and Trent made arrangements with life skills teacher Allison Maires to stay in touch with their classmates through Skype. They checked in from the Galápagos Islands last spring.

During Cabrillo's third and fourth periods on Friday, Maires' students chatted with not only Bryce and Trent, but with several students in Sylvie Brignone's class at a school in Taiohae on Nuku Hiva, the largest of the Marquesas Islands.

"In life skills, we talk about the virtues, and we try to practice them and set up activities where they can be experiencing that," said Maires, who was Bryce's teacher when he was in seventh grade. "It's also called asset development, and part of asset development is being culturally competent."

Students on both ends

prepared their questions and answers ahead of time. Brignone, who speaks English and French, translated for the French-speaking students, who are honing their English skills.

"What are you doing this weekend after school?" one student in the Marquesas Islands asked.

Andrew Doyle responded: "This weekend, I have a surf contest."

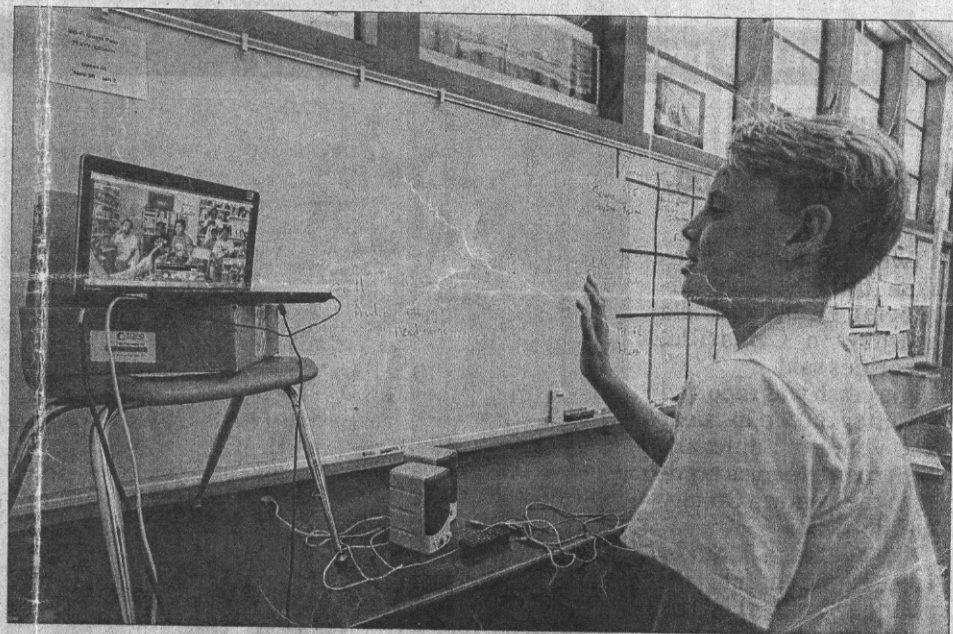
Breanna Burke answered a question about what she wanted for Christmas: "I'm asking for an old-fashioned camera and a new camera."

Alina Calamia replied to a question about what she wants to be when she grows up.

"I want to be a photographer and an actress," she said.

Matthew Madrigal was asked if he has a computer in his house in California.

"I do have a computer in my house," he replied. "It's an Apple computer. It's super fast. It's wireless. It has Wi-Fi and it's dependable."



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Andrew Doyle introduces himself to students attending a school at Taiohae, Marquesas Islands, while using Skype during class at Cabrillo Middle School in Ventura on Friday.

Then the Cabrillo students got the chance to ask questions of their Taiohae counterparts, wanting to know what they do after school and how they spend their time during their allotted 90-minute lunch period.

Answer: Volleyball.

Crystal Castillo asked if the Taiohae students ride horses to school, and Trent answered.

"They usually go by

bus and by cars," he said, "but sometimes they go to school on horses."

Cabrillo student Sachiel Oberto asked if the island has phones and television.

"We have everything," came the response. "We're very modern."

The Cabrillo students ended their Skype session with a farewell chant in unison: "We are all equal. Respect. Kindness. Consideration. We'll

make a better world."

Maires explained why Friday's session offered a valuable lesson to her students.

"We live in a global community now, and we need to understand that people are just people," she said. "We need to all be able to listen to each other first, and communicate to understand each other's differences and similarities so we can come together in oneness."