

## Morverand to move out. Next stop: Brest

*Frenchman, 21, blessed twice at Blessing of the Fleet*

By Marilyn Miller

With his custom-made unsinkable kayak, the Capitaine Cook II, which was filled with food to last 100 days, and with several Rolling Stone cassettes and books packed away for idle hours, young Mathieu Morverand was to have paddled out of Provincetown Harbor this morning, bound for his homeland of France.

Morverand, who will turn 22 on September 8, hopes to become the first person to cross the Atlantic Ocean in a kayak.

### YOUTHFUL PADDLER TO PROVIDE INSPIRATION FOR TINNED SEAFOOD PRODUCTS

His father, Patrick Morverand, who accompanied him on his trip to America, watched as he paddled from his berth at MacMillan Pier alongside the Portuguese Princess.

Sunday, he paddled past Msgr. Henry Munroe to be blessed along with the Provincetown Fleet, wearing a small cloth angel around his neck that his colleagues gave him earlier for protection.

"The Lord knows he'll need a blessing," said Neil Cronin, a teacher at Barnstable Community College who helped coordinate Morverand's singlehanded crossing.

Candice Collins-Bodin, director of the Provincetown Chamber of Commerce, showed her mother's instinct Friday when she first saw Morverand maneuvering in his 25-foot white craft.

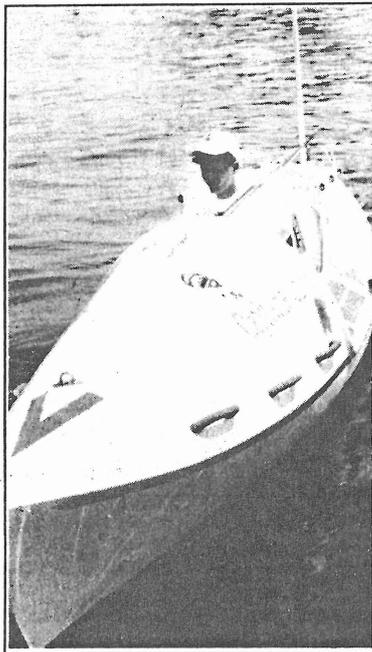
"He looks so young," she said. "You just want to hug him and tell him not to go."

Garry Hills took one look at Morverand and said, "He'd never be served in a bar in Provincetown."

Morverand, during a press conference Friday, spoke in halting English of his plans and hopes for the journey.

Naturally, his parents are concerned, he said. "They say it's a very strange story," his wanting to cross the ocean. "But if they say don't do that, they know for me it would be impossible to live afterwards. They know it would be too hard for me if I do not do this now."

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Mathieu Moverand in his seagoing kayak

The specially designed kayak, which includes solar panels to provide power for his radio, cooking stove, desalination pump and high-tech electronic equipment, was financed by Capitaine Cook, a French company that specializes in tinned sea food.

The president of Capitaine Cook spoke in French of his interest in financing Morverand's "adventure," noting that he "is very young," but has "prepared for this adventure for two years."

Cronin, a kayaker who speaks fluent French, said Capitaine Cook "has provided support financially and morally for several voyages," including the 1980 crossing of the Atlantic Ocean by a row-boat. "This adventure particularly interests them" because of Morverand's youth, Cronin said, noting that Morverand will make the trip not "in spite of his youth, but because of his youth."

Michel Caminada, who introduced Morverand to kayaking several years ago, said he saw the young man turn into a French champion kayaker who now wants to cross the ocean so he can "see all the world." As a youth, Morverand "had a lot of energy and it was necessary to challenge this energy, Caminada said. "He has to stay dynamic."

Morverand "has told us his reason for going is a passion that cannot be quelled," said Cronin.

"For me, crossing the Atlantic is like the astronauts who take off across space," Morverand said. "It is a small boat, but it is a very big kayak."

Made of carbon fiber kevlar, the kayak was designed and built by Jeanneau Co. of France. It weighs 204 pounds fully equipped with the desalination units, a telex, multiband receiver, a VHF and solar panels and the safety harness Morverand will wear while paddling. With the 100-day supply of food, which is kept in the front water-tight compartment of the kayak, the craft weighs 1,000 pounds.

It was fully packed last Friday morning when "Pinky" Silva took his backhoe down to the pier and lifted the kayak from a truck into the water.

"Pinky came down in the wee hours of the morning and scared the crew members," Cronin said. "They wanted to know what the heck he was going to do with that back hoe, but he had the 1,000 pound kayak in the water in a matter of 20 minutes."

Morverand said the kayak was designed with one purpose in mind: to enable him to cross the ocean safely.

"It has a radio and a distress system, both an electronic and a manual one," he said. "It has everything to make a safe crossing. I have a satellite distress system and a second manual one, and I have a flare and solar panels to use my radio and I have two radios to keep in contact with my crew."

He will cross the ocean alone, without any one following him. But he will keep in touch nightly by radio and satellite with his eight crew members who started to make the return to France Sunday, after Morverand was blessed during the blessing of the fleet.

He left Provincetown headed toward the Gulf Stream, using charts provided

by the National Oceanographic and Aeronautics Administration.

"He will plot the charts to see if there is any change in the current, and when he shoots out of Provincetown, he'll follow the Gulf Stream and try to avoid the ship traffic," Cronin said. "We know where the shipping lanes are and he will try to avoid them."

Morverand said when he gets to within 400 miles of France, a boat will be sent out to help him avoid the traffic in the sea lanes there.

"I like his optimism," Cronin said on hearing this. "He said, 'when I get there.'"

Morverand will paddle for 10 hours daily at a speed of three knots, retreating to his watertight "bedroom" to sleep on a suspended hammock for five-hour stretches. He will not paddle at night.

He took along a Walkman cassette player, some Rolling Stones tapes and two books, "The Petit Prince," and "Jonathan Livingston Sea Gull."

The total voyage is 3,300 miles. "It will take me about 70 days to go between Cape Cod and Brest," he said. If it takes longer, he has food to spare. From Brest, he will then kayak to Paris, the final leg on the journey that will take another week's time. Daily he will use his pump to desalinate sea water for drinking and cooking purposes. "It will take me one hour to make five litres of water with my pump," he said. "I'll cook with that, drink it and use it to wash."

He did not mention using the water to shave. It appeared as if that is something he does not have to do often.

"I like music, so I will take my Walkman with me," he said. "I like the Rolling Stones, yes, but I also like lots of things."

Morverand is not a man to bite the hand that feeds him. When asked if he would eat fresh bread and wine when he arrives in France, instead of his tinned seafood, he said he will eat the food he took with him. "I especially like this one," he said, holding up a tin of mackerel. "It's heavy yes, but it has lots of calories. I also have some freeze-dried food and chocolate bars."

For those who wonder if he is too young to challenge the elements in such a small craft, Morverand can only say, "It's not a question of age, but a question of maturity."

The whole thing "is not an adventure, it's an enterprise," he said, as he was surrounded by his on-shore colleagues and the corporation president who have helped to make the crossing possible.

This is the most ambitious crossing Morverand has made, although he has crossed the English Channel and paddled from France to Iceland.

He does not plan to abandon the ocean when this trip is completed. "I want to do something with the water and the ocean with my life," he said, "not to fish, but something to do with science and the ocean."