## Aquarium shop will open in mall

## Group will run kiosk as part of project fund-raising effort

By A.J. Plunkett

STAFF WRITER

You, too, can have a ceramic mug with the official logo of the state's official aquarium. Or a T-shirt. Or a bumper sticker. Or even an official coozie.

From where, you ask? All this and more will He offered for sale at the official Texas State Aquarium gift shop, which will open today in a kiosk at Padre Staples Mall.

In anticipation of building the state's officially designated aquarium on half of the proposed. Hbut unofficial, eight-acre bayfront landmass, the Corpus Christi Aquarium Association will open Othe shop as part of a \$10 million fund-raising

Grand-opening ceremonies are today at noon. A Featured ribbon cutters include House Speaker Pro Tem Hugo Berlanga, Corpus Christi council members Linda Strong and Joe McComb as well as representatives of the aquarium association and the Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce.

Free refreshments, soft drinks and cheese goldfish - it's an aquarium, remember - will be served.

The shop will feature such items as chocolate fish Christmas decorations (two for a quarter), visors (\$4.95), caps (\$6.95), ceramic mugs (\$4.95), T-shirts (\$6.50 for children and \$8.50 for adults) and coozies, also known as the foam jacket things you put around your canned drinks to keep them cold, (\$2.95). Sales tax will be added.

A local pet care store also will set up an aquarium display outside the kiosk.

Free bumper stickers will be available at the gift shop to promote as well as raise money to build the Texas State Aquarium, association officials said yesterday.

"The purpose is to create more awareness and interest in the aquarium," said fund-raising consultant Marvin Collins, noting the shop will not be a major source of fund-raising.

About half of the money spent in purchasing

items from the gift shop will go into the aquarium building fund, Collins said. "If somebody wants to drop off a \$1 or \$100, we'll gladly accept it." Donor cards will be available at the

Collins said the aquarium association, which hopes to open a second gift shop next year in the downtown area, could raise as much as \$100,000 from both shops by January 1987.

Of the \$10 million needed for the nonprofit sea center, \$9.4 million will be used in building and stocking the aquarium while the rest will be used to raise the \$10 million, he said.

The facility must be built by 1991 in order to maintain designation as the state's official aquarium as outlined in the Berlanga-sponsored legislation passed last May.

The gift shop will be operated by volunteers, Collins said, adding that the mall space, cash registers and other parts of putting the shop together have all be donated.



Deana Sutherland displays some of aquarium shop's wares

# Drive for aquarium is gaining momentum

he on-again, off-again effort to get a first-class aquarium for the city of Corpus Christi is on again — and this time it looks like it's going to stay on until the job is done.

Civic-minded residents here have long dreamed of an aquarium on the bayfront: Considering

the city's setting, such a project is a natural.

The key questions, of course, have been those of money and location. Up to now, the efforts to raise the necessary cash have been sporadic; and with the continuing concern over the future of the proposed bayfront landmass, the question of an aquarium site—an integral part of the landmass concept—has also

been a distinctly iffy one.

Now, however, things look to be coming together. On Wednesday, the Corpus Christi Aquarium Association announced plans to mount a statewide effort to raise \$10 million for what is to be called the Texas State Aquarium. As part of the effort, an experienced fund-raiser, Marvin Collins, has been retained to head up the campaign. Already, the group has raised \$2.5 million toward its goal, and it is seeking to involve 1,000 volunteers in the effort to come up with the rest.

And the siting question seems to be nearer resolution: By coincidence, the association made its announcement just as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers let it be known that it had no environmental objections to lodge against the landmass proposal — clearing one obstacle that's been delaying that project. (Even should the landmass plans fall through, it should be noted, the aquarium backers have a fall-back position on the

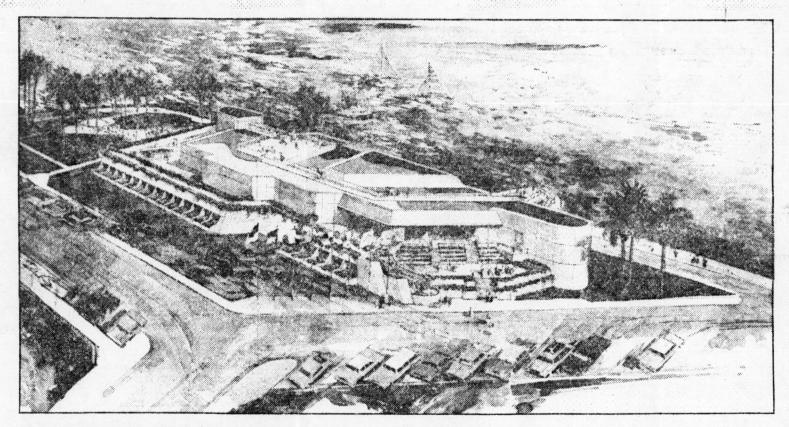
Peoples Street T-Head.)

Things, in other words, seem to be looking up where the aquarium is concerned — and that has to be counted good news for the community as a whole. The need for such a facility, both in terms of recognizing Corpus Christi's natural legacy and in terms of adding new life to the bayfront, has been clear literally for decades. It's to be hoped the city will respond generously to the appeal for support in this important and worthwhile effort.

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### Corpus Christi Caller

October 17, 1985



Artist's rendering of the proposed Texas State Aquarium to be located on the bayfront

# Aquarium

### Group selects name for facility planned to be built on landmass

#### By Cindy Tumiel

STAFF WRITER

Capitalizing on its state designation, the George Bush's run for the U.S. Senate. Corpus Christi Aquarium Association has

The group also has added Corpus Christi native Marvin Collins to its staff in preparation for a statewide, \$10 million fundraising effort next month.

"We're not going to leave any stone unturned," said Collins, an experienced campaigner hired as a consultant to help organize the fund-raising effort. "This is going to be the largest fund-raising effort Aquarium office at 1806 S. Alameda. ever out of Corpus Christi."

Collins is no stranger to statewide campaigns. He has been executive director of the Texas Republican Party and, in 1970, was campaign director for Vice President

The Corpus Christi Aquarium Associaselected the name Texas State Aquarium tion last May got the state Legislature to for the facility it plans to build on the city's designate its project as the official state aquarium.

So far, the association has raised \$2.5 million of its \$10 million goal. Collins said the group hopes to have another \$5 million raised by the end of 1986.

About 1,000 volunteers are being sought for the fund-raising effort, according to association president John Dorn. Interested persons should contact the Texas State

# LOGAL NEW

Sunday, September 15, 1985

## Aquarium backers hope waiting brings good things

By Cindy Tumiel

STAFF WRITER

Aquarium backers in Corpus Christi are well acquainted with the virtue of tolerance.

For two years, they've waited and endured - if not patiently, then at least tolerantly - while bureaucrats. politicians and environmentalists have tugged back and forth over the ultimate piece of a puzzle that will set the stage for a long-sought bayfront aquarium.

The Corpus Christi Aquarium Association now is counting on the word that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will decide the fate of a planned bayfront landmass by October.

Aquarium supporters are counting on a positive word; one that will launch their planned \$10 million fund-raising campaign in November.

The Corps has had the landmass application since

1983, when developer Bayfront Associates applied for its permit to build the eight-acre landfill north of the Peoples Street T-head. Four acres of that landfill are destined to be the site of the proposed 25,000-squarefoot aquarium.

"You have to assume it's going to be approved and go along with that," John Dorn, Aquarium Association president, said of the pending landmass permit.

But Dorn admits there is anxiety and concern in some corners over the potential for further delay.

"If it runs into substantial delay, we're going to have to give it some hard thought on what's going to happen," he said. "We're going to have to reassess how vital the whole situation is to our project."

The group has a safety valve in the form of a 1981 agreement to build the aquarium on the Peoples Street T-head. That agreement was extended last year when the landmass permit ran into delays.

But the aquarium group hasn't wavered in its agreement to move that project to the new landmass, said Assistant City Manager Tom Utter.

"In my conversations with aquarium association members, the association has recognized there would be a symbiotic relationship between the aquarium and the proposed commercial development on the landmass," said Utter. "It would be beneficial to both of them."

Construction and maintenance costs would be lower, too, he said, since the city's contract with Bayfront Associates requires the developer to install and maintain paving and landscaping for the aquarium.

But time is a critical factor in light of a Texas Legislature bill last March that designated the Corpus Christi aquarium as the official state aquarium.

"With our state designation, we have to be virtually

constructed by 1990," said Dorn. "And in all frankness. we don't want some other city coming up to the Legislature and saying, 'We can do that,' and take it away from us."

So, landmass or no landmass, fund-raising will begin in earnest in early November.

Aquarium fund drives have been promised before over the past three years, only to be delayed for one reason or another.

But this time, Dorn said, the Aquarium Association means business. A full-time staff is being hired and detailed strategy is planned to launch a major statewide campaign.

"It's important that the aquarium get moving," Dorn said. "The association has been organized since 1978 and right now, we're poised to do something."

The group is trying to catch a ride on the tail of what

Please see Aquarium/2D

#### Aquarium

FROM PAGE 1D

it sees as positive motion in the

\*All the momentum in Corpus Christi, because of the Homeport decision and our state designation, istreal positive right now," Dorn said. "We feel people will be receptive to this type of program now."

There's going to be a lot of volunteers and a lot of work," said Ddrn. "With our designation as the official state aquarium, we'll be looking for donations from all over the state of Texas, especially from foundations and corporations."

\$1.5 million grant from the Brown Foundation of Houston. The foundation will award \$1 of the grant for every \$3 raised by the aquarium from other sources.

To date, about \$2.5 million of the \$10 million goal has been raised. Dorn said.

The \$10 million goal will give the aquarium association enough money to build most of its facility in one swoop, rather than in phases as first planned, Dorn said.

"What we're talking about is adding the mammal display - the dol-Dorn feels his group is already off phin tanks - right away, instead of