

The Neighborly Neighbor

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At Orange Park Christian Academy

Tekna-Theos Receives \$50,000 Gift

By Hayne Spivey

Staff Writer

The students at Tekna-Theos are \$50,000 richer thanks to the estate of Lydia G. Nocar. The Chicago native, died last year and left the funds to Orange Park Christian Academy's student-run research program.

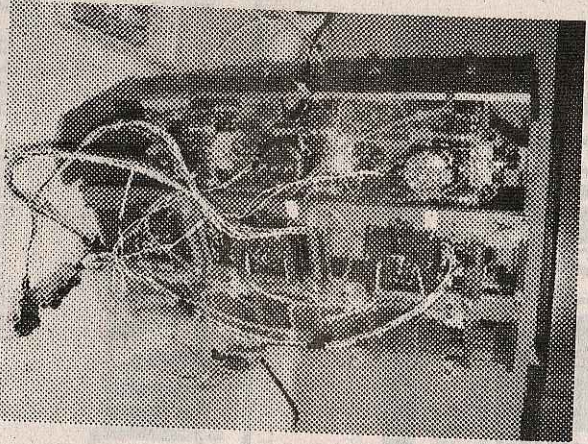
Tekna-Theos is a non profit research and education corporation staffed and operated by science teacher Kevin Simmons and students at OPCHA. Their research activities include investigating potential chemical and mechanical countermeasures for microgravity induced bone loss, according to Simmons. The research will aid in the study of arthritis and its cures. The students have already built a prototype bioreactor which will eventually fly aboard NASA's Space Shuttle and conduct research on osteoporosis. The arthritic experiments use mice skull cells to study regeneration in a weightless. *Continued on page 2*



Photo by Wayne Spivey
 Claire Piatt, Kevin Simmons, Alice Basford and Principal Jerry Srigliano presented Mrs. Nocar's \$50,000 legacy to Tekna-Theos, before the Orange Park Christian Academy's student body in January.

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environment. "The \$50,000 check is in the form of a grant to help fund the bioreactor for the space program," said Claire Piatt, Secretary/Treasurer and former student at the Christian Academy. Ms Piatt is a member of the Tekna-Theos Board of Directors along



with seven other 18-21 year old former students of Mr. Simmons' science and math classes in Orange Park.

At the Orange Park Christian Academy, Educational programs consist of a private pilots ground school, the development of an educational curriculum to be distributed to area schools, and NASA themed event with which area students can participate. Future education efforts will entail the development of regional science competitions, and promoting student designed flight experiments to be developed by Tekno-Theos Inc.'s primary contractor, according to their executive summary.

Since those early days, the science club has been awarded four other research grants, two Florida Space Research Education grants totaling \$33,640. In 2003 students met with Marshal Space Flight Center representatives, their Primary Bioreactor contractor. The program has received a number of awards as well as a Aerospace Education Program Grant. "This is a significant gift for us today," commented Ms Alice Basford as she presented the \$50,000 check to Tekna-Theos in honor of Mrs. Nocar.

The Tekna-Theos grant was the first of Mrs. Nocar's legacy. Other gifts, to be presented at a later date include: \$100,000 to the Shriners Hospital for Children and \$50,000 to the Shoshanna Arts.