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Governor
Toni Jennings
Speaks at Clays
Most Influential
See Page 2



DER IN LOCAL NEWS

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page 3

Kids get “Spacey”

Lori Atkinson
Staff Writer

Students from Clay and Duval Counties were invited to attend Space Day at Orange Park Christian Academy on March 1st from 10am-2pm. The event, largely coordinated by the students at OPCA, was very successful.

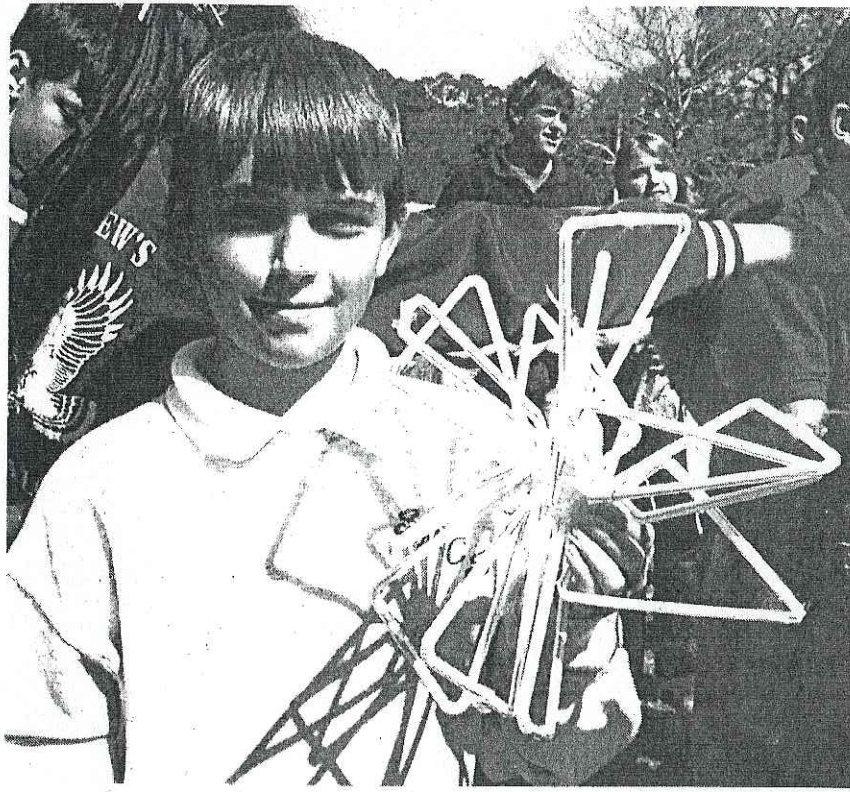
Kids from 6th to 9th grade attended Space Day from 4 private schools: Faith Christian Academy, Pinewood Christian Academy, St. Matthews Catholic and Sacred Heart Catholic school.

Representatives from various groups involving aviation, including NASA were on hand to answer questions and teach students facts about their area of expertise.

Greg Jenkins is a NASA representative who is working closely with OPCA to put OPCA's Bio-reactor (a complicated science experiment built and designed by the students at OPCA that may help the medical field in the future to find a cure for osteoporosis) into space. He said that students who are involved in designing and building the Bio-reactor use mechanical engineering, electrical engineering and software technology that will give them the “confidence that propels them into a career” in their future.

The kids were given the opportunity to view the sun through special telescopes, which were brought and set up by the North East Florida Astronomical Society. The telescopes had special filters, allowing the kids to look at a magnified sun.

The activity that the kids seemed to have to most fun with was a game/science experiment called the egg drop. Each student



— Lori Atkinson/staff

Patrick Murr proudly displays his teams “egg holder” made from straws and tape. The egg is in the middle of the straws. It was dropped from a tall ladder as part of a game / science experiment at OPCA's Space Day. His teammates were Neal Hames, Thebaut Chaffin and Harrison Holmes.

was given a bag of supplies, which included straws and tape and an egg. They were told to use as few of the supplies as possible to make a surrounding for the egg, which would then be dropped off of a ladder. The team with the best design, meaning the egg did not crack and who used the least supplies, won the contest.

State Representative, Cliff Stearns, who helped to line up some of the sponsors for this event said, “Space Day focuses

our attention on the achievements and opportunities in exploring space . . . It also provides students the chance to learn and ask questions about space exploration, technology and aviation while encouraging their interest in science, engineering and math.

Kevin Simmons, the school's science teacher who encouraged the kids to organize Space Day, is a dedicated teacher who strives constantly to teach his students to achieve high goals and to reach for the stars.

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At Clay High School