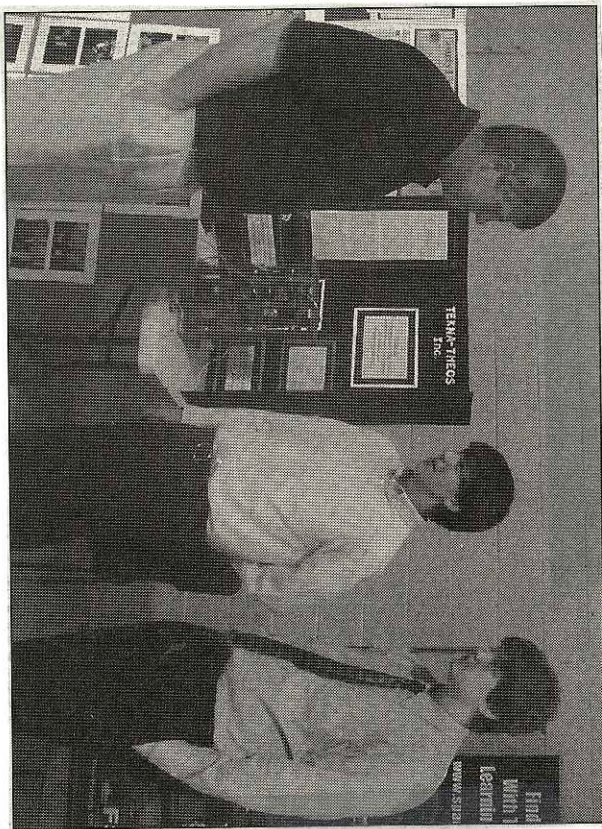


Up, Up and Away, Junior Bird

Jim Kelly/specialt

Greg Jenkins (L) engineer from Moseley Technical Services talks with Alex Benn, a member of the TEKNA-THEOS group for five years. He will remain involved even after he transfers to Eagle View Academy on the Westside next year and E.J. Szegedy who has worked with the group for three years. Both students were instrumental in winning the Army Corps of Engineering water management competition at Lake Okechobee this summer and took away the prestigious science cup from Bishop Kenney who had held the cup for two consecutive years.

Jim Kelly
Correspondent



ORANGE PARK CHRISTIAN ACADEMY- Students from four private schools turned out for a second annual Aerospace Day at Orange Park Christian Academy.

They heard speakers, competed in science experiments, took practical science exams, experimented with balsa wood and paper airplanes, ate lunch, talked one-on-one with student representatives from Tekna-Theos and generally were introduced to the non-static world of Aerospace.

Featured speaker J.B. Renninger, director of Florida Community College of Jacksonville's Aviation College of Excellence, asked a rhetorical question of the students. "Do you think aviation will soon be a thing of the past? That people will stop flying in aircraft? He knew their answer would have to be not only a resounding No! But they would agree that aviation will only get bigger with more people flying farther, faster and to places only imagined today.

Renninger was here to convey that locally, students interested in aviation can find first class training - when they are ready - as close as the Westside of Jacksonville, where FCCJ's Aviation College of Excellence stands ready with state-of-the-art training equipment, cutting edge technology and instruction and access to training equipment only imagined in past years. When he mentioned the possibility of space travel commencing right in these student's back yard at Cecil Field, wild cheers erupted from the classes attending.

"This is what it is all about," said Kevin Simmons Orange Park Christian Academy (OPCA) teacher and president of local company TEKNA-THEOS. "We want to introduce these students to the future and spike an interest in technology through science and mathematics." TEKNA-THEOS is an incorporation of students and teacher to better educate high school students through space related biochemical and engineering research. Greg Jenkins, mechanical engineer at Moseley Technical Services, Inc. near Marshall Space Center in Alabama, a biotechnology company that works closely with NASA, could not agree more.

During the afternoon session, Jenkins told the kids that he was n't very interested in science and especially math until a teacher showed him the practical nature of using math to create flight, to develop experiments benefiting mankind and changing the world for the better.

"Then I was hooked," said Jenkins, "I began to take part in experiments and work on problems that made more sense than just doing a math problem to know the basics of math; it finally had a purpose."

A strong message he wished for the students to take away was that some of the early programs they take part in like the local TEKNA-THEOS company equate to experience down the early road and might well propel a student into an early career with a first company - simply because they have done some of that work themselves.

He says it happened to him. "Out of maybe 9000 applicants, I was picked simply because I showed early interest and some basic experience from doing high school and college experimental programs. I have my teachers to thank for creating the interest in me; for awakening my mathematical curiosity - and it can happen that way for you too."

Zero-G Corporation's Tim Bailey, a flight instructor and intern Dan Florez told students what it feels like to be in Zero Gravity. They know this because Zero-G Company uses a cargo Boeing -727 to take people aloft and create anti-gravity conditions. Formerly based in New Jersey, the company has recently relocated to Kennedy Space Center where they intend to operate at least two flights per month. The Aviation School of Excellence had a booth to tell students and parents about Summer Camp programs at the Cecil Campus this summer. On the other side of the gymnasium, were Dan Lorenzo and Richard Morse, from the NEFAR group of local rocket enthusiasts who launch far from the madding airports in lesser airborne congestion near Bunnell, Fla. The group meets once a month, on the second Saturday, when they have a standing waiver with the Federal Aviation Administration.