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2001 District Science Days

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Visiting the Academy's Website at
http://www.ohiosci.org
6. Garrett Morgan, a black inventor from Cleveland, and his first automatic traffic signal.

7. The cash register, invented by James Ritty of Dayton in 1879.

8. Office copiers, first developed by Battelle of Columbus in the 1950s.

9. The American rectangular survey system, developed in Ohio during the 1700s by Thomas Hutchins.

10. Ohio astronaut Neil Armstrong, who in 1969 became the first person to walk on the moon.

Elfner's list has 35 entries and is drawn from an academy study and county-by-county list at www.ohiosci.org/ohioscience200.htm.

Central Ohio entries, for example, include the development of the tintype method of photography at Kenyon College in Gambier (No. 20), the Cedar Bog Nature Preserve in southern Champaign County (No. 24), John Glenn's first U.S. orbital flight in 1962 (No. 28) and the definition of electrical units ohm, volt and ampere by Ohio State University physicist Thomas Mendenhall in 1893 (No. 31).

"The bicentennial is an opportunity to promote science and technology and bring out of the woodwork those contributions that people don't know about," Elfner said.

But the bicentennial won't just be about the past, said commission Chairman Stephen George. Birthdays, he said, are a time to remember but also to assess one's situation and plan for the future.

George, therefore, challenged the panel not only to celebrate the dead but also to recognize living Ohioans "working to change the world."

It should be a time to get the public (and policy makers) involved in discussions on the vitality of science and technology today in Ohio and the consequences for the future, planners said.

This last part could get a bit sticky, given Ohio's lagging performance in the past in terms of science education and technology development. But that picture is changing. Let's hope Ohio's bicentennial will prove more a party than a midlife crisis.

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REPRINTED, WITH PERMISSION, FROM THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH.
A FIVE-YEAR SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION of a site of a sunken ship on the North Atlantic seafloor, 270 km off Cape Fear, North Carolina at a depth of 2,200 meters, occurred during recovery operations on the nineteenth-century steamship SS Central America which sank in an 1857 hurricane while carrying passengers and cargo—including millions of dollars of gold—on its way to New York from the California gold fields.

Activities in the disciplines of oceanography, marine geology, marine biology, materials science, and undersea archaeology, were undertaken with the tele-directed submersible robot, Nemo. The study included field observations at the site (recorded in over 3,000 hours of videotape and 25,000 still photographs), examination of hundreds of deep ocean specimens and artifacts, and analysis of several experiments deployed on the seafloor.

Resting on a gentle slope of the Blake Ridge, the shipwreck environment was cold, lightless, oxygen-rich, and flushed by moderate currents. The sediments were a foraminiferal-pteropod ooze, deposited at a slow rate (1.7 cm/1,000 years). A diverse community of invertebrates and fishes colonized the shipwreck deriving from it food, cover and a place of attachment. This deep-ocean oasis supported a greater variety and concentration of animal life than did the surrounding ooze habitat. The timbers of the shipwreck were degraded by wood-boring bivalves. The iron machinery was extensively corroded and mobilized into flow structures (rusticles) by iron-oxidizing bacteria.

Passenger luggage recovered from the shipwreck contained artifacts which provided insight about the lifestyles of the voyagers during the Gold Rush. This project demonstrated that a holistic approach to a deep-ocean site of historic importance can provide understandings of the interrelated processes which affect cultural deposits on the abyssal seafloor and the marine life that they foster.