

A young woman with dark hair, smiling, is wearing a dark green BSA uniform shirt with yellow epaulettes and several medals. She is standing on the deck of a boat, with the ocean and a white mast visible in the background. The text 'Amy on Navy Yard Patrol Boat in Annapolis' is in the top right. The main title 'REPORT TO THE NATION' is in large yellow letters across the bottom. The author's name 'By Amy DiFrancesco' is below the title. The bottom section has a green background with white text: 'Delegates from the BSA travel to Washington, D.C.' and '20 AMERICAN SCOUTING DIGEST □ Spring 2006'.

**Amy on Navy Yard  
Patrol Boat in  
Annapolis**

# REPORT TO THE NATION

**By Amy DiFrancesco**

**Delegates from the  
BSA travel to Washington, D.C.**



**Phillip, John, CJ, Curtis, President Bush, Sam, Sean, Amy, Michael**



**Amy at the Korean War Memorial**



**Phillip, Amy,  
Clerk of the  
Supreme Court  
William K. Suter,  
Curtis**

Annually delegates from Boy Scouts of America travel to Washington, D.C. to present the BSA Annual Report to the Nation to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, as mandated by BSA's Congressional Charter. Since 1910, every President of the United States has met with the delegation, learning about BSA's value-based program and its accomplishments during the preceding year.

As National Venturing President I was honored to be one of eight youth to present the 2005 Report to the Nation from March 4–8, 2006. I knew this experience would be a once in a lifetime opportunity – it was that and more.

My expectations were to return with stories about meeting the most powerful leaders in the world and visiting historical sites as well as sites where history is made today. I returned with many such stories, but all seemed to begin with how fortunate I was to be part of this particular contingency. As a 17-year-old, I was overwhelmed and humbled by the accomplishments of my younger delegates. My story begins with them.

Michael Wedekamm (14) from Parkesburg, West Virginia, Allihak Council, received the highest heroism award in BSA, the Honor Medal with Crossed Palms. As fire overtook their residence, Michael rescued his sister from the second floor of their burning home, lowering her from her window, and then himself jumping to safety.

Curtis (9) and Sam (7) Semones of Lewisville, North Carolina, received the

Heroism Medal and Medal of Merit, respectively. They were with their uncle in the woods collecting rocks for a garden when the uncle had a seizure. Curtis instructed Sam to remain with their uncle, keeping him awake, while Curtis drove their ATV back to his uncle's house, located his aunt and arranged for help from 911.

Phillip Barquero (14) from Roseville, California, Golden Empire Council, received the Medal of Merit. Phillip was with his troop when a friend, who was allergic to yellow jackets, was stung after a hive was disturbed. Phillip carried the Scout to safety and medical attention.

Charles (CJ) Suber (11) saved his brother's life by performing the Heimlich maneuver when his brother choked on a mint cookie in his family's kitchen. CJ is from the Greater Saint Louis Council in St. Louis, Missouri.

John Cruz (12) of Toms River led the Jersey Shore Council in food collected for Scouting for Food.

In this auspicious company, I joined Sean Murray (19) National Chief of Order of the Arrow, Terry and Peggy Dunn (our fantastic Scoutmasters for the trip), Bill Steele, Associate Director, Cub Scout Division, Renée Fairrer, Associate National Director of Marketing and Communications, photographers Michael Roytek and Randy Piland, and the parents of the Semones brothers on our trip to Washington, D.C.

Our journey together began on Saturday, March 4th, with a goal of getting to know

our surroundings and each other. We began at the top of the Washington Monument where we were able to see the locations of our future presentations, as we enjoyed the view from the highest structure in Washington, D.C. Our tour of the monument was unique. The walls of the building are lined with 193 memorial stones from each state and many organizations. Due to vandalism, tourists are able to view the stones only from the elevator as they descend the monument. Our delegation was allowed to walk down the stairs, viewing the stones at our leisure, up close. I was delighted to find my beloved Idaho's stone second to the top, just below Alaska.

After learning about the city, it was time to learn about each other and our mission. What better location for this than NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, where several space missions originated? When I was younger, I attended Space Camp, convinced I would become the world's tallest astronaut (even at seven, I dreamt big!). Imagine the thrill of visiting this center! After our tour, we gathered as a group and practiced our presentations.

A mantra in our house is "Go Army, Beat Navy" because my brother, Joe, is a 3rd year cadet at West Point. It was fun to tour the Naval Academy, home of the football team that annually seems to sink West Point. Midshipmen took us around the academy and invited us to dine in their dining hall. We reciprocated by taking some of them out for a seafood dinner that night. While we were in Annapolis, Boatswains First Mate Pedro Obergon taught me how to safely pilot a Navy Yard Patrol Boat for about 50 yards.

Senator Crapo with Amy

Senator Craig with Amy



Our trip to Arlington National Cemetery was somber. Arriving before the public was admitted; we presented a wreath and shared a private ceremony at the Tomb of Unknown Soldiers. A student of history, I was pleased to visit the grave of John F. Kennedy.

The saddest part of the trip for me was visiting the Pentagon's Hall of Honor, constructed after September 11th as a memorial to those who perished both in the building and in the plane. I was overwhelmed as I read the biographies of the victims – learning about the accomplishments of an adult, and turning the page to read of a little child's love of finger-painting. The horror became almost tangible, as I learned the stories of innocents.

Presenting our report to Central Intelligence Agency Director Porter J. Goss was exciting. Despite my dad's 32 ½-year career as a supervisory special agent with the FBI, I have to say, Director Goss is a really neat guy! I was delighted to take the lead in this presentation.

While the purpose of the trip was to present our report to the Speaker of the House, the highlight was to meet President Bush in the Oval Office. I still cannot believe that I stood with the President of the United States saying, "On behalf of the 2005 Report to the Nation delegation, I would like to present you with this memento of our visit. We hope whenever you look at it, you can reflect upon the values Scouting has held dear for nearly a century. Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to meet with us." I must admit, his office is much bigger on the West Wing than it is in real-

ity! The walls are a mayonnaise color and there are portraits of Washington and Lincoln on the walls with pink striped chairs and yellow couches for visitors to sit. We did not stay long enough to occupy one of the seats, but enjoyed every minute of our time with the President.

As we walked near the White House, we toured the Extra Mile – Points of Light Volunteer Pathway, a new national monument. This one mile walking path honors volunteer volunteers. We were excited to find the Bronze Medallion of W. D. Boyce, who brought Scouting to the United States. I thought of the many dedicated volunteers of the Snake River Council as I looked at the giant coin set into the pavement.

When we presented our report to the Clerk of the Supreme Court William K. Suter, we enjoyed an unexpected break – basketball on the highest court in the United States. The Supreme Court has its own basketball court! I did not win the tip off, but scored a free throw and made a good show for Venturing!

On our final day, March 8th, we met with Representative J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, to deliver our report, as mandated by the 1916 charter. I was humbled – a young woman from Idaho standing, as Scouts have stood for decades, reporting to our government the importance and success of Scouting. I was full of pride for our great organization, its dedicated volunteers, awesome youth, visionary professionals and hardworking staff.

My journey was complete as I returned to

my roots, greeting Senator Craig and Senator Crapo of Idaho. Over the past few years, these two youth advocates have encouraged my work in the Congressional Award and Scouting. I was so pleased to let them know how much their support has meant to me.

So much happened in a short amount of time – it is impossible to describe the emotions felt. My respect and gratitude for our mentors – Renée, the Dunns, Bill, Michael and Randy – is enormous. I have neglected to report the great fun we shared as a delegation – night time tours of monuments, ice cream and pizza parties, and a surprise visit with Chris Kerzich, the 2004-2005 National Venturing President. We spent little time on sleep, but focused on the important things in life – developing friendships, learning, laughing (and for our younger members – hitting the gift shops!).

As the National Venturing President, I have had a lifetime of opportunities in the past ten months – from serving as lead youth for the popular Venturing Mine Exhibit at the Jamboree, to greeting Dick Burdick during the Great Race of antique cars. I enjoyed the opportunity to meet with BSA's top volunteers at national meetings. With my advisor and coordinator, I created a successful web site, [www.nationalventuringyouthcabinet.org](http://www.nationalventuringyouthcabinet.org) and hear from Venturers daily. At Philmont and Sea Base, I met with some of our finest Venturing Advisors as I taught Kodiak/Kodiak X. I've traveled around the country, meeting Venturers. But best of all was the opportunity to be part of the troop that delivered the 2005 BSA Report to the Nation.

**Speaker of the House J. Dennis Hastert poses with Amy, Peggy Dunn, Terry Dunn and the other Scouters**



**Boatswains First Mate Pedro Obergon taught Amy to pilot a Navy Yard Patrol Boat in Annapolis**

**Amy at the Capitol**



**Report to the Nation Delegation: Front: Curtis, John, Sam, Sean; Back: Phillip, Michael, Amy, CJ**

