

THE MONK CHRONICLES

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**Suzie Monk, the
Supreme Senior**

Yes, Suzie's a senior. This year, Suzie has been working hard to prepare for college. She is still an over-achiever, just like when she was younger and this attitude is now expressing itself in the selection of universities to which she will be applying: MIT, Columbia, Cornell, etc. Suzie wants to take a double major in college: Civil Engineering and Architecture. That should keep her busy. As I said, she's an over-achiever.

Suzie is taking four AP courses at school. She took two AP courses as a junior and scored '5' on both.

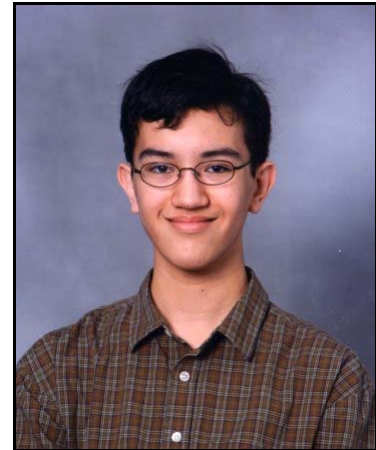
Suzie is turning into a fine young lady and we all agree that our home will be a desolate place when she leaves for college.



**Andy Monk, the
"I'm almost there"
Junior**

Andy is sixteen years old and finds it hard to juggle the different aspects of his life. He's still deeply involved in music but I'll talk about that later. Even besides the music, though, Andy is learning how to schedule his time and his priorities. He is taking one AP class, but he also has three honors classes. Somehow he finds the time to get his homework done while still allowing time to keep up his computer-gaming skills. We wouldn't want him to lose those, would we?

Andy also has several violin students that he teaches every week. It's been good for him to teach and he's doing a fine job.



**Ricky Monk, the
"I'm learning new
things" Freshman**

At fourteen, Ricky is discovering that there's more to life than books. Not much more, but more. Suzie and Andy both started studying Latin in 8th grade, but Ricky surprised us by choosing to study Russian. He's doing well and really seems to enjoy it.

The other surprise is that Ricky is taking Public Speaking. He's one of the top students in the class; he writes his own speeches, often without our knowledge, and the first we know about them is when he brings home the grade or a video recording of the speech.

Ricky hit his growth spurt this year and is now about the same height as Andy. He is quite thin and it looks like he's going to keep growing.



Michelle Monk, the Terrifying Teenager

Yes, we're frightened. Michelle turned thirteen earlier this month. We now have four teenagers. Michelle is much more out-going than any of her siblings. For her birthday party, she invited nine of her girl-

friends over. Five hours of screaming thirteen-year old girls is, indeed, a frightening experience.

Michelle is extremely talented and intelligent and she balances the different aspects of her personality well. She enjoys school, music, friends and church. We look forward to watching her develop over the next few years— provided we can keep the screaming teenagers away!

**Music:
It's what we're about**

As you would expect, all four of the Monk children are deeply involved in various music activities and that means that the Monk parents are deeply involved as well.



Highlights for 2006 include:

- Suzie and Andy were both in Western Regional Orchestra and Connecticut All State Orchestra.
- The Monk String Quartet participated in a one-week long chamber music institute program in August.
- Suzie and Andy are also in a second string quartet, that participated in a second week of the chamber music program. They continue to play with that quartet.
- Suzie was in a quartet competition last spring; they tied for second place, winning a prize of \$500.
- All four Monk children are in their school orchestras.
- They're also in the Norwalk Youth Symphony. Suzie and Andy were in the highest orchestra last year and Ricky joined them this year. Michelle advanced a level as well and is in the second-highest group. She was told that it was her age, not her ability, that kept her out of the highest group.
- The Monk String Quartet continues to perform at weddings and other events. They enjoy playing together but we wonder what will happen when Suzie leaves for college.



**Mom and Dad,
Chauffeurs, Managers,
Bill-Payers, and General
Support Staff**

Our children are our life. Supporting them and helping them with their various activities takes up all our time and we wouldn't have it any other way. They're our most valuable and important asset.

I did manage to finish our family room remodeling project this year. We're also having a new driveway put in since the old one is not only very steep, it's also in extremely poor condition. We have removed about a dozen trees for the new driveway. Our yard will be much bigger when the driveway is done. Ann had a small vegetable garden last year and we expect it will be much larger this year.

Ann is still working at the elementary school. She's doing a lot of sewing and monogramming as well.

I got a new job at work. In July, my job title was changed to "Database and Web Administrator." I'm now responsible for maintenance, upgrades and use of the Vertebrate Zoology specimen database which contains data for about 3.5 million specimens. I also design and build web

pages to enhance collection use and research in the Division of Vertebrate Zoology.

All in all, we'd have to say that we've been very blessed this year. Life has its challenges, its "ups and downs," and our job is to look for the good and be grateful for it while not dwelling on the bad.

As 2006 draws to a close, we wish you, our dear family and friends, Merry Christmas and all the best for 2007.

Love,
Richard, Ann, Suzie, Andy,
Ricky and Michelle

PS: Our web site is operational again. In case you've forgotten, the address is www.MonkFamily.org. Have a look.

