



BON JOUR!

“... and meeting again is certain for those who are friends.”

~Richard Bach



I think I'll paint my house yellow! it's so French!

oui! oui!

< Summer of 1996

left ~ Sophie on carousel

~Sophie and 6 yr. old Robert

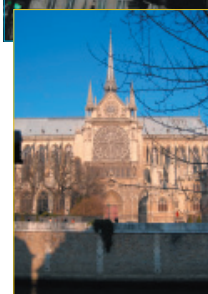
~The Kulisek's on Boardwalk



Our reunion with Sophie at the Airport



Metro over the Seine



Notre Dame Cathedral



I small cup of Espresso was 5 euros! But we didn't mind paying for the caffeine jolt after all the walking we did!



Sophie with her beautiful children from youngest to oldest, Martin, almost 3, Nicholas, 5 and Colombe ("dove") is 6.

## A Reunion IN Paris

JANUARY 9-16 2009

# Fine Art AND Fine Friends

BY DOROTHY KULISEK

Robert was just 6 years old when he finished Miss Daley's kindergarten class at St. Ann's. I had just started a job as a Graphic Designer. Sophie, a 19 yr. old college student from Paris arrived here in Wildwood to live with us that summer and to watch Robert for us.

My childhood summer memories consisted of days spent in the sun enjoying the magical essence of the island, swimming and boating on the back bays, exploring the beach by day, the boardwalk at night. It was my heart's desire that my son enjoy the same easy summertime spirit. So with their bicycles and Morey's Pier passes, Sophie & Rob set out to make the summer of '96 a memorable one. Along the way, we were each happy & free. Sophie became part of our family and it was hard to say goodbye at summer's end.

With the exception of a few Christmas cards, we hadn't much contact with Sophie in 13 years. After confirming our flight for Paris in January '09, I sent a package to her parents' address in France with a letter informing her of the plans to visit along with a few Sun newspapers. A couple of weeks later an email came through from Sophie along with an attached photo of her adorable children.

We discussed our itinerary via emails and made final preparations over the Christmas holiday. Sophie picked us up at the airport and took us to our trendy little hotel in the Latin Quarter section of Paris. We were so very excited to see one another again. I had sent her several pictures of Rob so she wouldn't be so shocked at the little 6 year old she once knew.

She was so excited to speak English again! Ever since she was a little girl she had a strong interest to speak the language and to come to the States. Once we were settled in our room, Sophie left us with a handful of Metro tickets and a street map to make sure we would be independent. We made plans to meet in a couple of days. We met at a park called Place de Vogdes in the Marais section of Paris. There were many people there and I was worried that we would not find each other. But I quickly spotted Sophie waving to us. We all ran to one another and hugged each other at this very special reunion. Sophie's children greeted us in their little French voices. It was such a delight to meet them as well as her husband Frederick. We ventured out onto the cobblestone streets (rues) which were lined endlessly with cafes, novelty shops, antiques, art galleries and many of our favorite sort of vintage clothing shops. Along the way we got a French history lesson from Fred who is well studied in this area. As the sun went down, we all piled into their car, (bigger than the average), for the grand "Evening in Paris" tour alongside the Seine, seeing the Eiffel Tour light show, the Champs Elysses and the Arc de Triumph wit-



The SUN @ the Pompidou Center, Paris, France with the Dorian family.

nessing a re-enactment by French soldiers. We stopped at the Louvre for a typical French 8pm dinner with a toast to our great reunion. We had brought them a package of gifts including Laura's Fudge, toy Tram Cars for the boys and a Wildwood by-the-sea Snowglobe for Colombe. (Toys were from the Wildwood Novelty Co.) They loved them all! The night ended as we were driven back to our hotel saying goodbye once again. But we still had plans to meet with Sophie one more time before we left. When we did, we walked to the Rue Mouffetard near our hotel for dinner. This narrow street is quaintly lined with open markets and cafes. We caught up on 13 years of our lives that night with Soph. We had to say goodbye for good and we embraced, promising to keep in touch more often.

The rest of our week in Paris, we lived out a life long dream of mine by experiencing some of the world's finest art at the Louvre, the D'Orsay and Monet Museum which is considered to be one of Paris' best kept secrets. Being a Fine Arts major in college, I had studied all of the art that I came face to face with. We nearly had an 'art attack!' after walking for an hour trying to find this best kept secret of Paris. (Thanks to Mary & Claude Pottier who loaned us their book on Paris!) We found ourselves the only persons in a circular room surrounded by larger-than-life Monets. It was overwhelming. Similar feelings were felt when meeting up with Van Goghs, Picassos, Rembrandts, Cezannes and Renoirs. We stood in amazement at Leonardo's Mona Lisa and the 2000 yr. old sculpture of Venus de Milo. It doesn't get much finer!

Now, as I write 40,000 ft. in the air, pondering this wonderful winter week, Rob is asleep beside me, we are both dreaming of all the art which so inspired us, the thousands of year old buildings, we are weary from reading street maps and having to find our way through this incredibly detailed and absolutely lovely city of Paris, my feet cry out below me, they are sore from walking over 5 miles a day, but grateful for where they took us. We are both so thankful that God would allow us to see all of these treasures we've read about and studied for so long, to renew our friendship with Sophie and to make new friends in her family, to also be reacquainted with our fine old artist friends... saying goodbye is hard, so we say, until we meet again... au revoir!