

July 31, 2011 Beach!

It is the end of July and thousands of people in Paris, maybe even a million or two, have fled to the beaches or to campgrounds in the country. They are fleeing the heat in Paris and the floods of tourists who invade Paris during the summer months. It turns out that this year summer in Paris is cold, dreary and wet, but they didn't know that when they booked their accommodations months ago, maybe even last year.

The television and Internet is full of images of traffic jams hundreds of kilometers long and waits of 3 hours to get through tunnels. But the people interviewed on TV are saying they are ready for it and it is part of the experience of vacation. The beaches on the Atlantic or the beaches on the Mediterranean are the dream of the workers who look forward to their 6 weeks of vacation each year.

However, not everyone can afford to leave work and go away from the city. So the municipalities and the mayors of the various sections of Paris have arranged entertainment for those "who got left behind."

Last weekend there was a huge sound stage erected in the area in front of the Hôtel de Ville of Paris for free rock concerts on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights.

Then they took down the sound stage and brought in dump trucks full of sand and created a beach in place of the rock venue. Today we walked through a typical Sunday afternoon crowd and stopped at the Hôtel de Ville to watch people playing Beach Volleyball just like on Santa Monica Beach. Only not "just" like it. There were only a few women playing and none were in bikinis.



They couldn't leave out the kiddies so they had a pool about 1 ½ feet deep with the equivalent of bumper cars that were operated by the children turning a handle in the boat to make it move forward or back. Each child had on a life jacket. Heaven forbid one might fall into the "deep" water and drown.



A few weeks ago we noticed that along the Seine there appeared sand and beach chairs and beach umbrellas with long flags posted showing the location of the newly created beach.



Today, Sunday, July 31 this is what we saw at the beach.





Can you imagine our cities in America doing that for people who can't go on vacation?