

# Dutch travelers find Lynden a bit like home

## *Vinks will travel 100,000 miles in the Americas*

**Calvin Bratt**  
*Editor*

LYNDEN -- North America is enormous, and roads go everywhere. Fuel is cheap, and traffic congestion really isn't so bad. Business deals go very quickly to the bottom line -- price. And you can legally carry a gun.

Those are among the dominant impressions Klarin and Carla Vink, a Dutch couple traveling the Americas, shared last Wednesday as they spent a week in the Lynden area.

Carla said they were attracted by

the Dutch names and characteristics of the town, and also by the similarity to her maiden name "van der Linden."

"It gives a feeling of being back home," she said of the cows and cornfields around Lynden.

Klarin said they finally found cheese -- at the Edaleen Dairy -- that suits their sharp Dutch taste. What they have tried elsewhere "tastes like plastic," he said.

With their son Fabian, 7, and daughter Mighalle, 3, the Vinks stayed in their 31-foot Mountaineer travel trailer on the parking lot in front of George Vrieling's GMC Furniture Bed Barn at 6520 Guide Meridian Road.

Vrieling's place is listed as an available stop for members of the Escapees RV Club, which the Vinks joined to help guide their travels around the continent. They bought a Dodge Ram 3500 pickup and the trailer, called a "caravan" in the Netherlands, in Texas last January and

they've been on the road ever since.

They don't plan on returning to Roosendaal, their Dutch home town near the Belgium border, until August 2007.

"It's a choice of life," Klarin said simply of the traveling adventure. "No obligations."

Before having children, he and Carla did two separate half-year explorations, first of Southeast Asia, Indonesia and Australia and then of South America on BMW motorbikes. They loved South America so much they vowed to come back.

They made two quick visits to the United States to make arrangements, and scanned lots of book and internet sites as preparation.

This trip has already taken them 28,000 miles, starting in the Southeast, then up through the American heartland

See **TRAVEL** on 2A

# Travel: Trip has dispelled misconceptions

Continued from 1A

into Alberta, Canada and on to Alaska. They drove as far north as the road would take them, beyond the Arctic Circle to Prudhoe Bay. "It's a really amazing place," Klarin said of the vast northern territory that he avidly photographed and now shows on his desktop computer.

He is also a rockhound, so some detours are to chase after gems and minerals -- such as opals in Vernon, B.C.

Returning through British Columbia, he was startled by the U.S. border inspector's question, "Do you have guns?" Carrying a gun would get him arrested in the Netherlands.

Their route now will be along the Pacific coast to northern California, then a circle east to Salt Lake City and back to Los Angeles. There, they will be joined by Klarin's mother for exploration of Southwestern sites, including the Grand Canyon. They will enter Mexico in January.

They will drive all the way to the southern tip of South America at Tierra del Fuego before backtracking to a relative in Belem, Brazil -- an estimated 100,000 miles in all.

The couple said cars and RV vehicles are much larger in the United States than in the Netherlands, but the traffic congestion is worse in their homeland, the most densely populated nation in the world. Gasoline is over \$6 per gallon.

In most countries they've traveled, there are only a few main roads; in the United States,



Lynden Tribune | CALVIN BRATT

**The Vink family of Roosendaal, the Netherlands, is living for 2 1/2 years in their 31-foot travel trailer as they tour the full length of North and South America. Klarin, his wife Carla, son Fabian and daughter Mighalle were in the Lynden area for a week and enjoyed the brief reminder of Dutch names and countryside.**

good roads are all over.

The trip has corrected misimpressions of the U.S. "It's much more diverse than I thought in its people, too. We tend to think of one guy in his cowboy hat. But it's much more than that," Klarin said.

The Vinks, whose name means "finch" in English, do a

monthly digital newsletter for their followers back home. A story on them is due to appear in a Dutch national newspaper of 2 million readers.

Klarin works as a specialist in computer and information technology for companies. Carla volunteers at a school, but has homeschooled Fabian so far.

They sold their home in Roosendaal and dipped into savings to do this 2 1/2-year adventure.

Carla said that the day will probably come when they weary of seeing another waterfall or historic church, but it hasn't happened yet.

E-mail Calvin Bratt at <editor@lyndentrib.com>.