

By JUDITH BERNE

In the Netherlands, the groom picks his bride up at her home in a horse-drawn carriage and together they drive to the church for their wedding ceremony.

Wilma Vorwerk, who spent the 1971-72 school year as a senior at Farmington High and returned this summer for a two-month visit, to the Glen Mingo family of Farmington, described the picturesque procession which she has seen so often in her native Hertogenbosch--a small town one hour southeast of Amsterdam.

"It is a beautiful sight--the line of carriages traveling down the narrow streets--the groom at the head...Their carriage is decorated inside with beautiful white flowers...He stops at her door, she enters the carriage and the procession continues...The church bells ring and everyone knows who it is for.

"RELIGIOUS WEDDING CEREMONIES almost always take place in the morning in the Netherlands," Wilma continued in a more matter of fact manner. "I don't really know why. Perhaps it is because the couple must also have a short civil ceremony the same day," she speculated. "And they will usually have a reception."

"I think they start early so they can get everything in," she laughed.

Although the religious ceremony is very much the same as in the United States, depending on the denomination, the customs surrounding the ceremony are somewhat different in the Netherlands.

For one thing there are no big dinners or luncheons or formal receptions. According to Wilma there is almost always an afternoon reception where there are drinks and "small things to eat." But it is not usually by invitation. "It is more or less an open house type of thing. If you hear about it, you can go."

"The reception would never be held in the church," she cautioned. "There would be no place to have it. Churches here are so much more social."

"If there is a dinner--because people have to eat--it would be for out-of-town people and maybe the wedding party."

Wilma had never seen rice thrown at the end of the ceremony until she attended a wedding in the United States. "In Holland, we throw real flowers or sometimes paper petals," she explained.

"Here you have what you call 'showers' before the marriage," she went on. "Where I'm from there is no such thing. People usually bring wedding gifts to the reception."

Sometime during the wedding day, the couple must go to the Town Hall for their civil marriage. "Several weeks before, they have gone there to fill out the forms telling that they will be married," Wilma related. "This is called 'under-married'."

THE CIVIL CEREMONY ITSELF is often performed en masse--with several couples participating. "It is cheaper that way, you see," Wilma explained. "Your parents must sign. You do not need the religious ceremony, but you must have the civil to be married in the eyes of the country."

"Yes, there are quite a number of persons who only have the civil ceremony, especially these days," the blonde Wilma said. "They get married in pant suits or short dresses. I just happened to pass the Town Hall one day, and saw a couple in blue jeans get off their bikes and go in. It was obvious from all the excitement surrounding them that they were to be married."

Wilma reported that the act of "engagement" is gaining popularity in the Netherlands, after a long period in which "you didn't hear about getting engaged. There was something really old-fashioned about it; people didn't feel it was necessary anymore."

Now, as more and more young people are studying in different places--both throughout the Netherlands and in other countries--engagement is coming back. "I think that they like the security of knowing they are engaged when they are apart from one another."

Although Amsterdam is famous for its diamond industry, the attractive Dutch girl said that among the people she knows the engagement stone is rarely a diamond. "Quite often the ring has been made by the groom. Or it is a semi-precious stone."

In the United States, the groom often chooses not to wear a wedding band; Wilma notes that in her country the man always wears one.

COUPLES FROM THE NETHERLANDS are just as anxious to take a honeymoon trip as American couples. "Paris is the place to go," Wilma reports, "just like Acapulco is here."

"Almost all the young married people move into apartments--although they are not always their own," she continued. "Young people want to live in the cities...the universities are usually in the center of the city. Apartments are very scarce. They often have to move in with their parents for awhile, until they can locate a vacancy."

For herself, 19-year-old Wilma feels marriage is definitely a thing of the future, although a number of her friends have recently married. "There is an awful large group that does get married young, but more and more people are getting married older."

"Of course there are still those who have to get married. Abortion is available, but they usually don't want it."

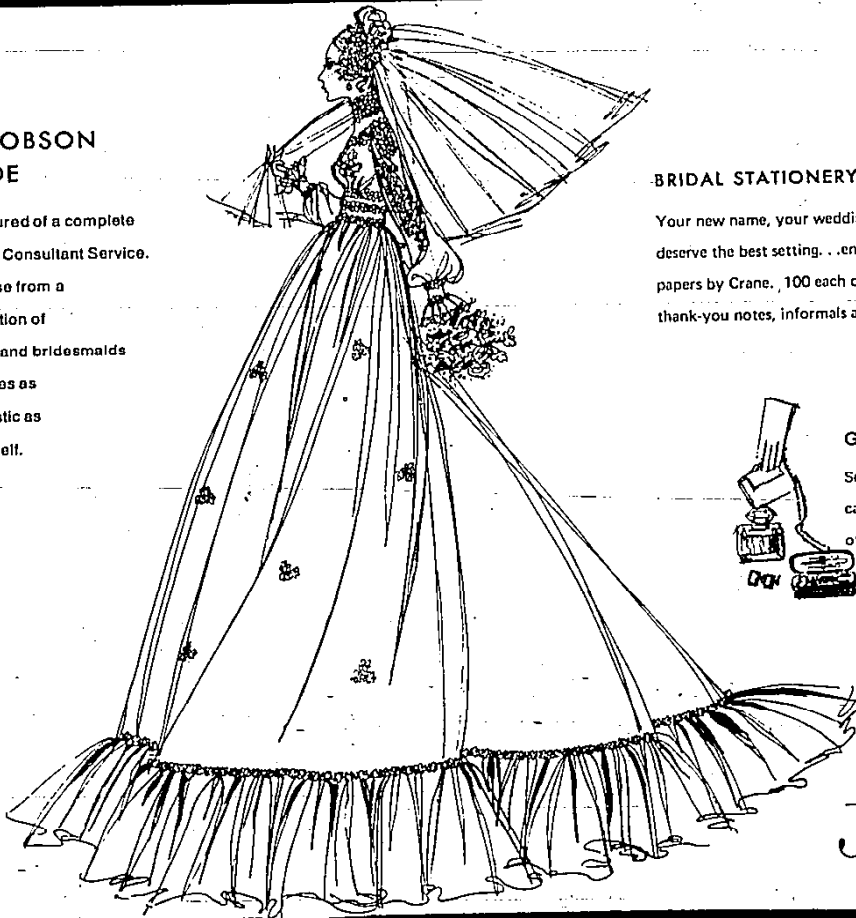
Would she want a large elaborate wedding for herself? "It's not my dream. I would like a lot of people there, and a reception... but it wouldn't have to be done expensively."

"I don't even know if I'd want a long white dress. I don't really like the formality of it."

Of her stay in the United States, "It will definitely influence my life. There are things from here that I'd like to introduce in my country. There are things from my country I'd like to see here. I'd like to combine the good in both."

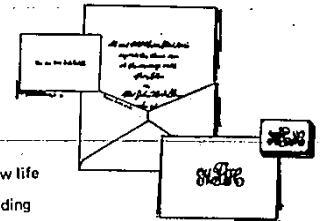
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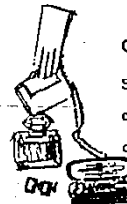
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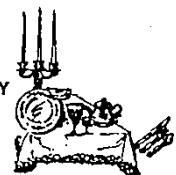
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