

she said.

Degerlund's wanderlust led her to Egypt and to live for a year in a kibbutz in Israel.

She also makes sure she and her son Jason, 5, go back to visit her parents every year. Her older brother also lives there.

Her parents come over to see their daughter and grandson and recently returned home after a month-long visit at Degerlund's Batawa home.

It happened at the time of the airliner scare and the arrests of terrorists at Heathrow airport in England. But her parents were not delayed because they flew from here into Helsinki on a Finnish airliner.

"It's scary now," said the 33-year-old. "It does affect you."

Degerlund said she does not want to fly home aboard an American airline and prefers to avoid that country altogether when in the air.

"I don't really want to fly over the States," she said. "I (will) try to get a route over Iceland or something."

Her earlier travels when she was younger led to a stop in Cyprus, which also led to an encounter with a Canadian soldier on peacekeeping duties there.

That led to Canada and marriage. She has been here for 11 years and speaks excellent English, with only a trace of accent.

Marital bliss turned into a hiss, but she stayed rather than return to her family in Sweden with her son. She felt it wise for her young son to be near his father.

She spends a lot of time with Jason, going for walks in the Batawa area, swimming in their above-ground pool in summer and tobogganing in winter. Degerlund makes sure her son understands Swedish, but admits

it gets harder as he uses English to talk with his friends.

They don't watch much TV ("I'm not a big TV fan") but she rents DVDs.

She loves horseback riding and visits a friend who has a stable of 21 equines in the Algonquin Park area.

"It's difficult to find the time to do everything," Degerlund said.

Her interest in animals is one that was planted in Sweden but flowered in Canada.

She worked in boarding kennels, took an canine obedience course and began to teach it. She has shown German shepherds.

"A lot of fun (but) a lot of politics," she said of the shows.

She was working at the former Holiday Inn in Belleville when the job came up at the Quinte Humane Society. She applied and was hired.

She doesn't show dogs anymore, but she has Nikita, a German cross, and two ragdoll cats, Hayden and Yucky. She laughs at the latter name, picked by her son.

As she talks outside the shelter at a picnic table under a screened gazebo, Degerlund comes to a topic that weighs on her mind.

Her military police boyfriend was posted to Afghanistan earlier this month. She avoids newscasts about the foreign land.

"I try not to listen to it," she admitted.

There is an eight-hour time difference, so he has to get up early to use Microsoft instant messaging to contact Degerlund. They also exchange e-mails.

He is due to return on Boxing Day — missing Christmas by a hair — for a two- or three-week leave.

It will a special homecoming.