SMITH

Originally from Saskatchewan and England, Midge's parents, Alfred and Lucy Oliver, arrived in Ocean Park in 1934 from Port Kells.

When the Oliver's moved into the area, the local school at 24th and Lower Ocean Park Road had only six children instead of the needed eight to be allowed to function. With the arrival of the McLeod family from Manitoba about the same time, Midge Oliver and Margaret McLeod made up the magic number and the little school opened.

Norm Smith met Midge in the army at Hastings Park Army Depot in 1945. Norm remembers that he was waiting for an office appointment when 'this little dame' knocked the papers being carried by an army Padre flying. Norm helped his future 'little dame' pick up the papers and the rest is history. They met in March and were married on December 29th of the same year in a double ceremony with Midge's sister Margaret and Peter Broatch. The weddings took place at the Church of Ascension on McKenzie Avenue in Crescent Beach.

Norm and Midge moved to Ocean Park in 1946, and had four children, Gwenyth, Stanley, Maribeth and Dawn.

In 1946, Norm started work with Jack Manten, founder of Manten's Nurseries and was there for six years. Norm then started Rose Gay Nursery, a smaller nursery, at his home location on 15th Avenue and Olympic View Road at the intersection of what is now known as 15th Avenue and 131st St.

Jack Manten pioneered growing dwarf fruit trees, and shipped orders all over North America. All the dwarf fruit trees sold in North America came from Manten Nurseries. Johnny McGoogan was the foreman when Norm first went to work there. Johnny grew all the Vancouver flowering cherry trees for the Vancouver Parks Board at a location on North Bluff at the east end of Campbell River Park.

Norm later started the Ocean Park Nursery with Val Johnson, who was in the landscape business. Norm was the nurseryman and got the business off the ground with his own nursery stock from his home location nursery. Paul, Val's son, eventually bought out Norm's interest in 1975.

Norm remembers the times when he met Reverend Hughes, the Post Master, going down the beach trail to get the mail bag dropped off by the Great Northern train. His usual greeting was a gruff, "Good Morning, Hughes the name! Reverend Hughes!"

Norm and Midge's house was one of the lucky ones in the 1940s. They had power on two lines coming through the woods to a cluster of three or four houses. However, if someone happened to plug in a toaster, the lights went out. More outdated houses such as the Allanson's, used coal oil lamps.

Norm's final career was as the local Fire Chief. The Firehall was started in March 1954 and it took four years to November 1958 to be completed. Volunteers paid for most of it and built it themselves. It was assessed at \$50,000 and cost the firemen \$10,000. Generally there were 15 or 16 men in the department. Norm joined in 1952. He became Fire Chief in 1962 and remained in that position for 19 years of his 29 years in the department, retiring in 1981.

The Fire Department bought a 1946 Air Force Crash Truck in 1947 which carried two cylinders of CO2 and 300 gallons of water.

Norm recalls the truck grinding up the hill to go to a fire in Ocean Park and realizing the truck had been built for flat runways at the airport! Sometimes they would run out of water at a fire in Ocean Park. This meant they would have to take the truck back to the top of the hill on Crescent Road to refill and then back to the fire in Ocean Park, which by that time "Would be going real good!"

Another time the shed behind the Mary and Webb Hoover's Café (across from the Community Hall) caught fire and to save the cafe, the shed was hooked up to the water truck and pulled away.

Midge and Norm are still living in Ocean Park. They now have 12 grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

- Rob and Lois Allanson

<u>CRESCENT BEACH/OCEAN PARK</u> Volunteer Fire Department

The Fire Department started in Crescent Beach in 1947. It had an elected Fire Chief but no appointed firemen. If there was a fire, it was the chief's responsibility to get the truck to the scene and hope anyone available would turn up. This operation was financed by the taxpayers within the general area. The governing body was designed as 'the ratepayers association', sometimes causing conflicts because the Fire Department was responsible for three ratepayers associations' districts.

In November 1951, a house fire burned to death a woman and her two sons. Colin McFadden became the Fire Chief. He wanted to train a group of 16 firefighters but could only find three, so he went to the high school and recruited 12 high school kids – Derek Uren was one.

In 1954, work commenced on the 128th Street Fire Hall but it wasn't completed until Nov. 1958. Volunteers paid for most of it and built it themselves. Assessed at \$50,000 and cost the firemen \$10,000.

One of the benefits of Derek Uren's involvement with the Fire Department was that the Uren household was one of the first to have a phone installed – in the mid '50s. The Fire Chief wrote a letter to the appropriate authorities to get the phone installed.

Derek retired from the department in 1994 after 42 years of service. Nineteen of those years Derek was the Deputy Chief.

Aubrey Stevens joined the department in 1947 and served as Fire Chief for eight years (1954 - 1962). His resourcefulness and imagination was responsible for the building of the present firehall.

Norm Smith joined the Fire Department in 1952. He served for 19 years as the Fire Chief, from 1962 to his retirement in 1981.

Bob Haining served the department for 21 years and was Fire Chief from 1982-1991. Other Fire Chiefs were: John VanNuland, 1992 -1993; Bryce Thompson, 1994 - 1996; Don Pickerill, 1997 - 1998.

Ian MacMillan is the present day Fire Chief, becoming Chief in 1998. Ian joined the Fire Hall in 1980.

Today there are 25 volunteers in the department.

- Rob and Lois Allanson, Anne Helps, Bob Haining

