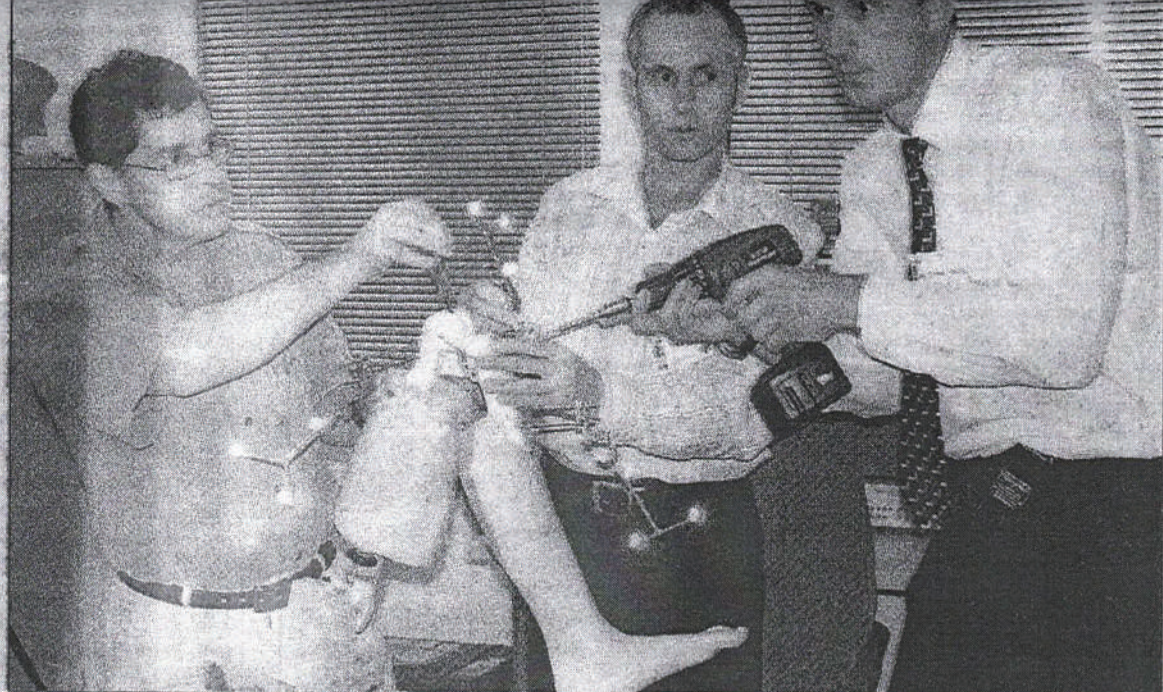




Dr Colin Barlin, Dr Glen Vardi and Chris Regel demonstrate knee replacement surgery.

Local hospital goes high-tech

Alexandra Kayle

Rosebank: The Rosebank hospital's Netcare Centre for Sports Medicine and Orthopaedics launched its digital operating rooms and computer assisted surgery, the first hospital in the country to use the groundbreaking technology.

Computer Assisted Surgery (Cas), through BrainLAB, creates a navigation platform of image-guided surgery, taking the surgeon step by step through the use of fiber optic lenses and digital cameras during orthopaedic procedures. The price tag for the technology comes to over R2-million, but results in accurate surgery and quicker post-operative recovery.

Orthopaedic surgeon Dr Glen Vardi said, "Conventional surgery relies on eye-balling but Cas assists the surgeon by giving accuracy to the exact millimetre and degree. A knee damaged from arthritis can be given an extra 20 years with this technology.

"Cas works like GPS; if your bone is like the road and the surgeon is the driver, Cas takes you to your destination efficiently."

Steve Golubchik, national technical manager for orthomedics, said, "It gives a surgeon more information to enable better clinical judgement." According to him, the system can also store the digital version of the procedure onto disc, from where the surgery can be later reviewed and used to educate new doctors.

"The Cas system allows the surgeon to precisely align the artificial joint with the bone which, ultimately, results in improved alignment of prostheses, faster patient recovery periods and, hopefully, longer-lasting results," said Dr Colin Barlin, orthopaedic surgeon at the



Dr Tamara Wagenhelm, Leonie Steyn and Leigh-Ann Elsmore at Netcare Rosebank hospital's launch of its orthopaedic digital operating room.

Netcare Rosebank hospital.

Trevor Edley, director of Endoscopy Smith and Nephew, said, "Surgery is an art form and the technology assists with effective treatment of the patient. It's less invasive, more efficient and longer-lasting. I definitely think it's way surgery is going to go." Johannesburg hospital is currently performing tests and demonstrations using Cas. Although the technology is not yet available to most South Africans, there are hopes that it will be, one day. Soccer star Lucas Radebe made a guest appearance and lightheartedly spoke about his experience as a South African footballer and Leeds United FC captain. After sustaining a serious knee injury, he received surgery from the centre, he said. "The surgery gave me the tenth year of my soccer career. We have great talent in this country and the World Cup could not have come at a better time. It's going to be an African

World Cup and international players will have an opportunity to have the best treatment in the new operating room.

"The kids at the hospital are an inspiration to me and I hope that we can make this country proud," he added.

Attend Nora's AGM

Norwood: The AGM of the Norwood/Orchards Residents' Association (Nora) will take place on Thursday, April 19 at 7.15pm at the Life Line Centre, cnr Henrietta Road and Grant Avenue. All welcome.

Details: Phone Tony Sparks at 011-728-2340 or 082-451-3371.