

Fifth annual Rosh Hashanah newsletter – September 1986

Roodepoort Florida Hebrew Congregation

Brian Josselowitz introduced his story of the community with quotes from the Roodepoort Florida Hebrew Congregation's fifth annual Rosh Hashana newsletter, RFHC News, issued in September 1986 /4747. He said it was a 24-page edition probably printed on a Roneo, a duplicator that makes copies of typed material and drawings, far removed from the glossy publications that many shuls today produce to commemorate major religious holidays.

On the cover page was a sketch of the Roodepoort shul which former members remember with great affection. [We would love to have this picture if anyone has it] The shul was built in 1905 a year after the congregation was established.

Brian reported that:

In his chairman's report, **Dave Meyerson**, noted that, "Our Erev and Shabbat morning services have been functioning well under of **Rabbi M 'Kay' Kwaitofsky** who was the spiritual leader. Members of the committee were chairman, **D Meyerson**; vice chair and honorary **treasurer B Geffen**; Women's Zionist League, joint chairladies: **S Geffen, J Balabanoff**; nursery school and cheder which was in Florida Park, **Dr L Brom**.

There was a Rosh Hashana message from **Rabbi Kay** and one from Roodepoort's mayor, Leon Smith who paid tribute to the Jewish community 'which dates back to before the turn of the 20th Century'.

Other issues raised in the report was the **nursery school** 'at full strength' with 50 children which was functioning smoothly under the chairmanship of **Les Brom**; bookkeeper, **Barry Geffen** and treasurer, **Boya Jacobson** (neither of whom had children there; **Lorraine Garber** and secretary **Carol Brom**. However, Dr Brom noted the dwindling number of Jewish children at the school and that there weren't enough Jewish parents to form a committee.

A Woman of Valour award (Eshet Chayil) was initiated that year and it was presented to **Boya Jacobson**, who five years earlier found herself suddenly having to take on the role of mother and father to four young children, **Myron, Elise, Shelley and Beth**, and be the sole breadwinner. The award was a certificate for "5 trees in the name of Boya Jacobson to be planted in Israel".

Sandra Geffen and **Shulamit Herson** of the Roodepoort Florida Zionist Society, complained that the monthly meetings had not been well attended with the same few members attending meeting after meeting. 'The good news is that our society will remain in action, as long as we have quality rather than quantity'. They thanked the committee **Jeanette Balabanoff, Ann Meyerson** and **Cynthia Herson**. They also thanked **Minnie Herson** and **Freda Rivkind** for supporting the meetings so regularly.

The League organised a 'sumptuous Purim supper' and there were plans to hold a progressive supper in November.

During the year the unveilings of the tombstones of **Harry Benjas** and **Walter Stoppelman** took place at the Roodepoort cemetery. **Rabbi Orenstein**, former spiritual leader, died in Israel during the year. At home **Mrs C Levin** also passed away as did **Mrs Mickey Shapiro**, one time owner of the Killarney Hotel in Florida.

On a happier note, **Dave Meyerson** reported that the fundraising functions for Simcha Torah and Yom Hatzmaut were successful. There were donations from **George and Matilda Rosowsky** and **Simmy Levin** paid **Barry Kay, Rabbi Kay's** son for his services on Rosh Hashana Yom Kippur.

Bruce Wolpe became head boy of his school (but it doesn't say which one), **Shelley Jacobson** was elected a prefect; **Beverley Traub** became a doctor and **Michael Phillips** a lawyer. **Clyde and Bruce Wolpe** travelled overseas to take part in chess tournaments.

The report carried New Year greetings from 42 families starting with the **Balabanoffs** and ending with the **Melamdowitz** family.