

## Remembering Joanna — the face of bridge in Ashburton

By John Knight



The recent death of Joanna Fechny (16<sup>th</sup> April 2004) brought sadness to all members of the Ashburton Bridge Club. Everybody in the club knew Joanna. Many she had taught to play; many more received follow-up tuition in the groups she ran for many years and many she played with or against.

And she knew everybody. She could tell who was who and where on a scoresheet by the way people wrote numbers.

She was a committee member for almost 30 years, match committee convenor for most of that time, the club's first woman president and a life member. She was also convenor for Thursday night, the club's biggest night, for well over 30 years, a role which often called for tact and diplomacy when dealing with our local prima donnas. The skills she demonstrated were of great value when, in her match committee role, she was involved with the total regrading of the club's membership. In spite of dire predictions, the club lost no members.

She was also a leading player at club and at tournament level. She was always quick to praise an opponent's skill and as a partner was very easy to play with. She was neither judgmental nor critical, frequently shouldering the blame even when it wasn't hers to bear. She brought out the best in her partners, who, win or lose, always enjoyed playing with her.

Bridge may have been good to and for Joanna: there is no doubt she was good for bridge in Ashburton and will be greatly missed.