



For the Love of the Game

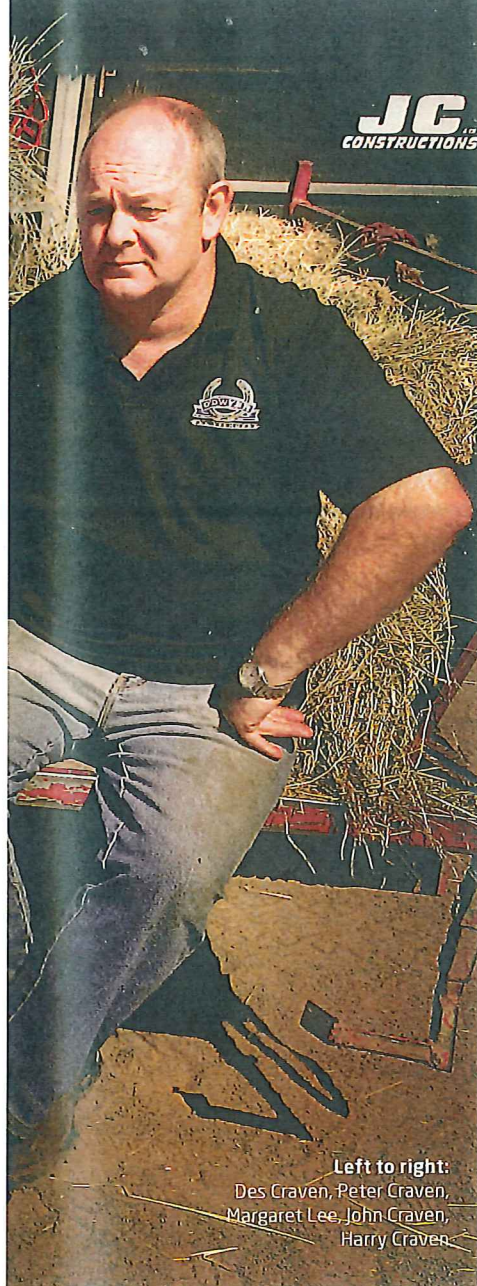
By Lucy McCormick

"Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life". Such is the quote from revered Chinese philosopher Confucius, and it's one that springs to mind in short order when in the company of Marg Lee. There is fame, fortune and kudos to be gained from spending enough time in the winner's stall at the trots, but those things couldn't be further from the mind of the emerging Terang trainer. Quiet, unassuming and self-effacing - "I don't know why anybody would want to do a story on me," she wonders modestly. Harness fans know precisely why; the team of 'Keayang' horses under Marg and her family's care has improved markedly in the past couple of years. In the past two seasons the stakes money earned by the team from Terang have risen markedly, and it's hard not to notice their presence.

Too many in number to mention, at this point in time they are headed by six year old Christian Cullen gelding and Interdominion heat winner Keayang Cullen and five year old Riverboat King USA gelding, the Group Two winner Keayang Steamer.

The Lee family property has grown to approximately 700 acres and is home to a herd of between 420-450 dairy cattle. Milking cows is hard work in anyone's language; milking hundreds of cows in the morning and moving on to work 25 harness horses seems an impossible task. Luckily Marg has an army of support in the form of family and staff and in the green paddocks of the Western District the life of the Lee family seems an idyllic one.

For those interested in the connection between the Lee/Craven families (young,



Left to right:
Des Craven, Peter Craven,
Margaret Lee, John Craven,
Harry Craven

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Chinese philosopher Confucius



Keayang

Keayang is an historic pastoral property well known in the Western District; the Lee family own part of the original land developed around 1909 by Arthur John Staughton and many of the horses bred and owned by the family bear the moniker as part of their race name

hard working and talented drivers Matt and Glen Craven feature regularly driving Keayang horses), Marg was born with the maiden name Craven; one of six children of local harness stalwarts Harold and Alice Craven. Harold used to be the mobile starter at the local track, and was a member of the Terang Committee. The kids were bundled into the car to watch the family horses race, and, when old enough, Marg and brother Peter teamed up to train a couple of horses. Marg met Damien Lee, nephew of another celebrated harness stalwart, Dick Lee (trainer/driver of local hero Rufus Young Blood), the two married, and the die was cast for the future.

Now with the aforementioned 25 horses in work, 14 stables and the property with its own track built in, it's full steam ahead.

Marg has three sons evenly divided in

their loyalties between horses, trucks and sprint cars but nevertheless gets plenty of help from them. Husband Damien is more interested in sprint cars and trucks than horsepower; so is Jack, 22. The younger two, Jason and Paddy, lean towards the Standardbred. Jason, 18, is a talented young driver and uncle Dick Lee takes a great deal of pleasure in following his career. Paddy, 17, is doing a course in horse training at the Bendigo training centre and it remains to be seen whether he will turn his hand to driving or training. Marg's brothers and sisters are involved in the breeding and ownership of the horses, and any 'Jilliby' named horses are related to the Craven side of the family (Marg spent a lot of formative time learning her trade from legendary Great Western trainer Peter Manning, himself no stranger to the training of Jilliby horses, and credits him



A Poddy Calf at Marg Lee's property



Dick and Jason Lee



Left to right: Paddy, Margaret, Jason and Glen

with many of the training practices she employs today). Workers Casey Farrer, Josh Cornelissen and Jason Camilleri complete the team along with Marg's brother Des, who has the harness track prepared and ready for when the team leave the cows to start working on the horses.

When asked about plans for the future, Marg seems nonplussed. The highlight of her training career thus far is winning the local cup in front of friends and family. She supposes that it would be

an achievement to one day win an Oaks or Sires Stakes. More importantly, she just wants to make sure her boys are happy and doing well. It appears that so content and focused is she on the life she leads right now surrounded by those she loves the most there is no time to be wondering about what could happen in the future. And what a fantastic way to be. The consistently pleasant Margaret Lee is firm about only one subject. She gently puts her hand on my arm and tells me "I really do prefer to be called Marg."

