

Stolen Horse International, Inc.
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STOLEN HORSE INTERNATIONAL (SHI) ANNOUNCES SIX HORSES RECOVERED IN ONE WEEK!

SHELBY, NORTH CAROLINA – Horse owners from all disciplines – trailriders to international competitors – share a bond when it comes to the loss of a horse. This loss is often the result of circumstances beyond our control. It is those circumstances that Stolen Horse International works with daily.

Each of the six successful recovery stories that occurred this past week is individual in its own right. The beginning and endings are the same – horse disappears ... horse is recovered. The difference is what happens in between those two time periods and the lessons that other horse owners can learn from each set of circumstances so that every successful theft is followed by a successful recovery.

Horse owners know that horse theft has been around longer than Stolen Horse International. It was a crime long before Idaho was stolen and recovered and long before Debi founded SHI. Many think of horse theft as the criminal act of a stranger, but 'civil' theft is growing rapidly through sales or lease agreements or simply unscrupulous people. Through Metcalfe's dedication and SHI's voice in the horse community, horse owners are receiving education and awareness about the prevalence of horse theft that only Metcalfe and SHI can bring them.

While Stolen Horse International (SHI) cannot take all the credit for these recoveries, in each situation SHI was there for the victim. Debi Metcalfe and SHI's volunteers processed the reports, created webpages and flyers, and sent Idaho Alerts out to hundreds of groups and thousands of individuals, many of whom are members of its NetPosse network. With every email sent, phone call made and flyer posted, stolen and missing horses, like these six, are that much closer to finding their way home. The network is working!

SHI is excited about the New Year as it started off with a bang! This past week has brought jubilation and hope to all the victims still searching for their stolen and missing horses. The good news this month began with the recovery of Possum (Washington). This bay Arab gelding had been missing since September 9, 2005, when he spooked during a trail ride. His owners, including a 9-year-old girl, searched the area fruitlessly, placed ads wherever possible and did everything a horse owner should. While not stolen, Possum would not have been the first horse that spooked on a trail and was picked up by a stranger. Read more about Possum's struggle to survive alone at Netposse.com.

Friday, January 6th a North Carolina horse owner, stunned to learn that her horse had been stolen, called Metcalfe for assistance. She was bewildered to discover that the unreported 'theft' was just a ruse to cover up the truth, as Metcalfe suggested. After enduring personal tragedy, this horse owner had trusted a friend to care for her Arabian, Proud Piper, while paying for his full board and care. Once Piper's owner was able to take a more active role in his care, the caretaker spun a tale that quickly unraveled. With advice from Metcalfe, a dedicated law enforcement officer and a private investigator, Piper was tracked to South Carolina and recovered. At this time the owner is still reeling from the shock of her friend's betrayal and the fact that the parties involved may not be charged.

That same day came the devastating report out of Georgia. Carol Lane Tresan frantically sought SHI's help when local law enforcement put forth little effort into finding the horse she knew had been stolen. Her APHA Tobiano paint mare, Scout, would never have left the property, and *she* certainly didn't cut the wire fencing. Tresan's ordeal lasted just over 48 hours. During that time, NetPosse members joined Tresan by inundating the Internet with emails and flyers, pleading for Scout's return.

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Late Sunday afternoon, Metcalfe received the phone call from an exuberant Tresan that Scout was home! Someone brought her to the door during Metcalfe and Tresan's email conversation. Scout was sweaty and skinnier. Her beautiful mane had been cut off, and it appeared someone had been covering her white marks with black shoe polish when she broke loose onto the highway and attempted to find her way home. See pictures of Scout before and after and learn more about her harrowing experience on the website.

That same evening, a Welsh cross gelding that had been sold in New Jersey by a potential buyer, who had Bug and a stablemate on a trial basis, was brought home. After a month of searching, his owner, Karen Burrows, made contacts through NetPosse members and enlisted the cooperation of several auction houses in order to be reunited with Bug. Her TB mare that disappeared with Bug was found colicking at an auction facility and later died. This case is all too common when sales agreements and leases are violated. The horse becomes nothing more to the potential buyer than a monetary asset, and the owner winds up with no money and no horse, while the horse is sometimes subjected to abuse, neglect and sales auctions.

To round out a wonderful week, Metcalfe received a call from Florida on Tuesday, Jan. 10, from the owner of Murph and Sunday, a Haflinger pony and Quarter Horse gelding that were stolen in December after the pasture fence was cut. The two horses were led onto Interstate 75 before vanishing. When recovered approximately 90 miles from home, Murph was in good shape, and it appears he was being prepared for sale. Unfortunately, the stress took its toll on Sunday, and he will need time to gain weight and fully recover. The details of this particular success story cannot be released at this time pending further investigation, but suffice it to say, that Murph and Sunday's discovery provides a great deal of hope to other Florida horse owners. Since Dec. 2004, four other pairs of horses have been stolen in Florida. Their reports are available under NetPosse's stolen horse listings.

While SHI celebrates these recoveries, it implores others in the horse community to continue searching for those yet to be recovered. The New Year has started out on a roll for victims of horse theft. Let's keep that momentum moving forward. Never underestimate the power of one because it may only take one phone call, one email or one flyer to bring another horse home. And keep in mind that horse theft knows no boundaries. It affects every breed and discipline.

There are many stories on NetPosse that don't yet have happy endings and many more that will come in 2006. Support SHI and its victims by joining the NetPosse, or providing public education or seminars. Metcalfe is available to write articles or give seminars tailored to your specific needs. You may also support SHI through your tax-deductible donation.

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