

## The Power of One's Self

THE DAWN OF SEPTEMBER 26, 1997 forever etched into the Metcalfes' memories. Even eight years after Idaho's recovery, Debi can hardly recall the events without choking on the words. Discovering that her husband's horse, Idaho, was missing was hard enough. But when the truth was uncovered, it brought them to their knees in despair and grief. While Harold searched the pastures and roads for some clue as to where Idaho could be, Debi was on the telephone contacting every person that could possibly know where their horse was. Eventually, she called local law enforcement to report the unthinkable - Idaho had been stolen.

Like many horse owners, Debi and Harold believed that once the sheriff's department was given the details and a report filed, action would be taken and

search for Idaho herself. Once the family knew that Idaho wasn't going to be found wandering down the road a few miles from home, Debi decided to expand her search, so she turned to the Internet.

At the time, Debi did not have any idea about the power to be found in a few keystrokes. Once she logged onto the Internet, her search expanded from a few-mile radius of



As a horse owner, you need to be aware that the grass isn't always greener. How safe are your horses from theft?

Debi discovered power within herself that she never knew existed, **all due to the love for one horse.**

Idaho would be found in a short period of time. Unfortunately, horse theft is not a part of most training academies so the deputies were as lost as the Metcalfes as to what to do next.

Realizing she and her family could depend on no one else, Debi began to

her own home, into homes thousands of miles away. But that was 1997, and the Internet was still wet behind the ears. There were no resources there about horse theft to turn to for help.

Horse theft existed as a silent transgression in the equine world.

People didn't talk about it much because it was somewhat accepted as a slim possibility. And if it did happen to that one unfortunate horse owner, there was little reason to report the theft, as there was an even smaller chance of the horse being recovered. Horse owners were just expected to move on and forget about the animal.

But try telling that to Debi. It was years later before Debi truly realized what had fueled her fight to find Idaho. While the

horse had worked its way into Debi's heart, she was driven more by the pain of loving a heartbroken man. Harold's grief pushed her onward even on the days that she was ready to give up. Debi refused to listen to those who told her that their horse was gone and to just go home.

As Debi gained momentum by working through her fears, frustration, and mistrust, she began an unexpected quest that eventually would lead to her breaking the silence about horse theft and tearing down the barriers so more horses could be recovered. Every free moment was spent sending e-mails, posting flyers, talking to strangers, and delving into a criminal world where few would dare to trespass. These shady people quickly learned who Debi was and why she was there. This unassuming small-town schoolteacher faced drug addicts and unscrupulous criminals without batting an eye. Through her yearlong journey, Debi discovered a power within herself that she never knew existed, all due to her family's love of one horse.

## The Heart of the Matter

THIS PAST SUMMER, I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY to spend a few days with Debi and her family in their friendly hometown located at the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains in North Carolina. I already knew Debi and Harold, and was eager to meet Idaho.



Harold and Debi Metcalfe lead Idaho down the same road that her thieves traveled the day their crime shattered the Metcalfe's lives.