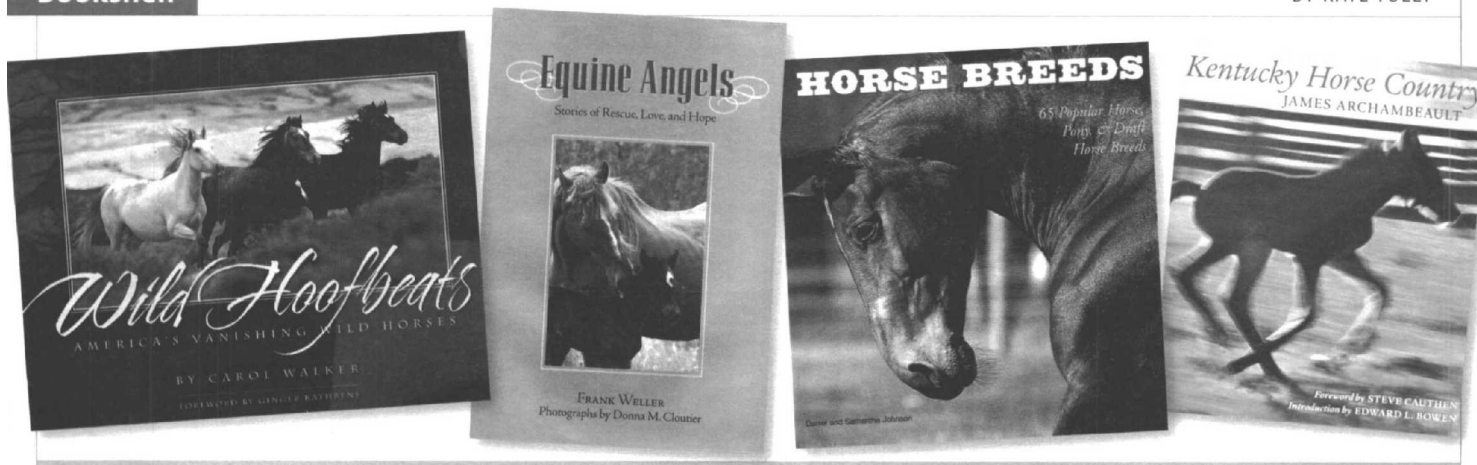


Bookshelf

BY KATE TULLY



★★★★ WILD HOOFBEATS: AMERICA'S VANISHING WILD HORSES, by Carol Walker. 160 pages, Painted Hills Publishing (www.wildhoofbeats.com), 2008, \$29.95.

Photographer Carol Walker brings us images of a very different kind of equine — wild horses. She spent years taking photographs of the horses of the Adobe Town herd in Wyoming's Red Desert, and this book is the end product. The characters of this true story are the wild horses, and the plot revolves around their companionship, their battles and brawls, and their struggle to survive the elements and the threat of extinction thanks to humans.

Wild Hoofbeats is not only a book, but also a cry for help. Walker seems to give these horses a "voice," an ability to connect with the reader, and hopefully move the reader to help save them from total disappearance. Alongside the pictures of specific horses, Walker tells the story of what was happening when she took those particular photos. Since the vast majority of us will never see these incredible equines in the flesh,

Wild Hoofbeats can bring us closer to the wild horses so that we understand their joys and their pain. But you might be surprised how these horses seem perfectly happy to brave the elements; they have round bellies and contented expressions. Though they face difficult lives, they're healthy and full of exuberance. And you'll be heartbroken, maybe angry, to see how they are rounded up and put into pens, where they await an unknown but certainly unpleasant fate.

BOTTOM LINE: A moving tribute to truly beautiful creatures.

★★★★ EQUINE ANGELS: STORIES OF RESCUE, LOVE, AND HOPE, by Frank Weller. 192 pages, hardcover, The Lyons Press (www.horsecity.com/www.foalrescue.com), 2008, \$24.95.

Equine Angels breathes new life into the topic of PMU foal rescue. Author Frank Weller is the founder of the Equine Rescue Sanctuary, which saves horses from slaughter, so you know that this is a book backed by serious dedication, knowledge, and love for unlucky equines. This book contains sixteen personal

stories from those who have rescued horses, particularly PMU foals. Alongside the stories are 130 full-color photos of the horses and their adopted families.

Frank Weller has thoughtfully chosen to focus on the brighter side of equine rescue. His message is one of hope amidst the obvious darkness that the majority of PMU foals face. The book simultaneously informs, educates, and inspires. Each chapter is a poignant success story written by the owner of a rescued PMU foal. Weller's words in the beginning will bring tears of sadness to your eyes, soon to be followed by tears of joy when you read about how these PMU foals began as nothing more than a number but went on to become a successful competitor or cherished lifelong companion. In one chapter, the author tells the story of Tally Ho, a rescued foal who became nationally ranked in eventing; later, another horse lover recalls how her life was transformed after she adopted three foals, who opened her eyes to a more meaningful life. Each story is unique, but you'll notice the common theme, which echoes the amazing way that rescuing a horse rescues us, as well.



As you might hope and expect, some of the profits of books sales will go to Equine Angels Rescue Sanctuary. All the more reason to pick it up!

BOTTOM LINE: A heart-touching read for all horse lovers.

★★ HORSE BREEDS: 65 POPULAR HORSE, PONY, & DRAFT HORSE BREEDS, by Samantha and Daniel Johnson. 400 pages, hardcover, Voyageur Press (www.voyageurpress.com), 2008, \$20.00.

As the name implies, readers of this compact book will learn about 65 different breeds of equines. The ratio of pages to picture is pretty impressive, with a whopping 262 color photos within the 400 pages. Alongside the photos is text describing the breeds.

The one thing that first struck me was the lack of organization throughout this book. Being a Quarter Horse lover, I immediately wanted to find the section on my favorite breed. No such luck. There is a section for "ponies," "light horses" and more, but after those general divisions, you're on your own. The only way to find specific breed information is to thumb through an entire section or look in the index. Pictures and breed descriptions don't always match up on facing pages. (A picture of a Quarter Horse is next to a description of Trakehners.) But, in defense of the book, there are several times where one page equals one breed, complete with bold, clear pictures of the mentioned breed. But it's just not consistent, and there are not even any headings to help guide you. If you can deal with meandering through the pages, you'll enjoy

learning about a lot of breeds, both common and not-so-common, and you'll enjoy the eye-catching photos on every page.

BOTTOM LINE: Lots of great information, but poorly organized.

★★★★ KENTUCKY HORSE COUNTRY: IMAGES OF THE BLUEGRASS, by James Archambeault. 184 pages, cloth hardcover, The University Press of Kentucky (www.kentuckypress.com), 2008, \$45.00.

Kentucky is called "horse country" for a reason. The horse embodies Kentucky's spirit and culture, and this quiet state generates a lot of revenue by hosting international equestrian competitions ranging from racing to jumping. Photographer James Archambeault has been taking photos in all things Kentucky for thirty years, and now with his sixth book, he focuses on the four-legged livelihood of the bluegrass state.

This book might seem expensive, but that's possibly because you're paying by the pound. With nearly 200 11 x 12.5 pages, this book makes quite a statement. Each expansive page contains one colorful photograph and a description of the photo (along with interesting pieces of Kentucky culture and history). The pages include photos of racehorses, eventers, horses at rest, foals at play, picturesque stables, and more. Vibrantly colored and crisp, Archambeault's photos will please horse lovers, Kentucky lovers, or simply photography lovers.

BOTTOM LINE: Get the best of Bluegrass Kentucky without leaving home.

KEY: ★★★★★ = Best in Show ★★★★ = Excellent ★★★ = Good ★★ = Fair ★ = Poor