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Hitchhiker: Stories from the Kentucky Homefront

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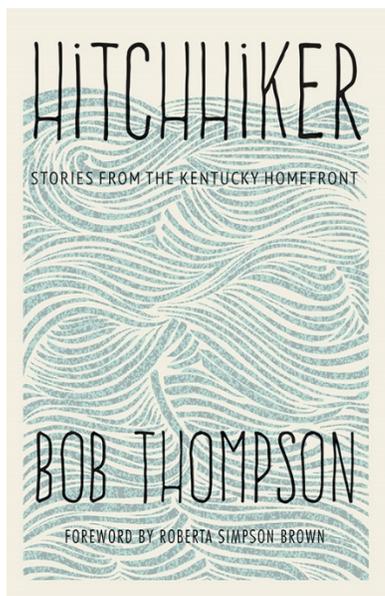
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Hitchhiker: Stories from the Kentucky Homefront. Bob Thompson. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2017. ISBN 978-0-8131-7428-0 (cloth); 978-0-8131-7429-7 (web pdf); 978-0-8131-7430-3 (epub). \$29. 166 p.



This is a book of stories! For all who love a book that ties chapter after chapter together while offering different settings, different characters, and different endings that surprise and startle, this is the book for you! Author Bob Thompson is presented to us as a storyteller “who never tells the same story twice and doesn’t tell other people’s stories” (p vii). As a raving fan of Ron Rash, my favorite writer of Western North Carolina fiction, I began to scan Bob Thompson’s book with doubts I’d be able to find the writing and storytelling of comparable interest.

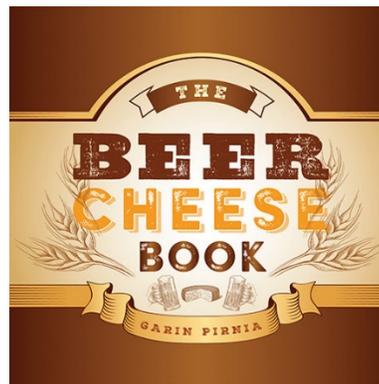
However, Thompson’s background as a “professional engineer, storyteller, writer, event producer, Kentucky Colonel, Self-appointed “Commissioner of Kentucky Front Porches, and Resident Front Porch Philosopher on his National Public Radio Show” (p.vii) enticed me flipped through the pages and try out one story! After “Tommy” and “Turtles” and “Fox” and “Hal and George”, I was hooked! I returned to his “Introduction” and sped from story to story. The delightful gallery of black and white photos of his family and his adventures enlivened my experiences with the stories.

Can I say that Bob Thompson’s story telling is as enjoyable as Ron Rash’s “Burning Bright” and “Chemistry and Other Stories”? Yes, I can without hesitation recommend the stories in “Hitchhiker—Stories from the Kentucky Homefront”. I will leave the comparisons to you! Enjoy!

Recommend for public libraries and liberal arts course material for faculty and students in colleges and universities.

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The Beer Cheese Book. Garin Pirnia. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2017. ISBN 978-0-8131-7466-2 (hardcover: acid-free paper). \$24.95. 197 p.



This terrific read takes you on a journey to the world of beer cheese that started in Winchester, Kentucky. The author Garin Pirnia has lived in Covington, Kentucky since 2011. Ms. Pirnia has been a contestant and a judge in the Winchester Kentucky Beer Cheese Festival. Two pictures of the Beer Cheese Festival in Winchester, Kentucky are shared. The Beer Cheese Festival has music, crafts, wine selling, jewelry selling, and other product selling. The writing style is clear and catches the reader’s attention. The book gives great details on where to obtain the delicious beer cheese and how to prepare the tasty beer cheese. The charming contents include Contents, Introduction, 1. History, 2. Recipes, 3. The Trail, 4. The Festival and the Contest, 5. Restaurants and Bars, 6. Makers and Brands, Retail and Restaurant Guide, Acknowledgments, and Index.

The fifteen good quality black and white photographs are expressive and engage the readers in the fascinating discussion of beer cheese and yummy beer cheese recipes. Delectable sounding concoctions pictured are the beer cheese cupcake, beer cheese on French fries or potato chips, beer cheese with pickles, crackers, celery, and pretzels, and beer cheese in a biscuit, a burger, and a cheese ball. The detailed narration of beer cheese supplies twenty-one beer cheese recipes and nine short beer cheese recipes such as grilled (beer) cheese sandwich and beer cheese pizza using beer cheese rather than tomato paste. The text is supported by a map of Winchester, Kentucky’s Winchester’s Beer Cheese Trail covering eight locations with names, addresses, and phone numbers offering beer cheese such as Cairn Coffee House, Hall’s on the River, Waterfront Grille & Gathering, JK’s at Forest Grove, Full Circle market, Woody’s Sports Bar & Grill, Gaunce’s Deli & Café, and DJ’s Bar and Grill. A marvelous Retail and Restaurant Guide lists names of producers of beer cheese, the cities they are established, and websites. Twelve spots to buy beer cheese and their addresses and websites are furnished. Eateries that deal in beer cheese, their addresses, and phone numbers are mentioned including the following. Two restaurants are noted in Harrodsburg and Danville of Kentucky and Ohio. Eleven eating places are mentioned in Lexington. Thirteen eating locales are documented in