

The Questover Chronicles

A FARMSTEAD JOURNEY... PAST, PRESENT and FUTURE



APRIL 2025 #01

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Welcome One and All to The Questover Chronicles, a rural lifestyle and variety magazine for you!

Join us twice each month as we follow the "waking up" of the Questover Farm, a sleepy seventy-acre farmstead located right here in the upper great plains of America.

This very unique piece of God's beautiful earth has been home to the Athey family for over a half century. Pre-1974 it was known as the Questover Fruit Farm, owned by the Johnson's, who offered raspberries, strawberries, apples, rhubarb, etc to their patrons.

After purchasing the farm, Elmer and Charlotte moved in along with the first two of five children that would be raised there. The farm has seen its fair share of bustling activity that comes with any large family making their way in the world.

As any family grows, children look outward and yearn to leave to create their own lives, relationships, and families. After many decades, it was down to just Elmer and Charlotte, empty nesters for the first time! (but busy grandparents of five and great-grandparents of two!)

continued on page 2

The Farmall 560. The main workhorse on the Questover Farm since 1979.



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Hello All!
Sean & Lynette here... your friendly neighborhood Tidbits of the Lake Area publishers... for the past thirteen years! **THANK YOU!**
We appreciate you taking the time to read our new high-quality "flip-book" magazine that brings you both *Tidbits of the Lake Area* and our new rural life-style and variety offering, *The Questover Chronicles*!
Recently, as some of you know, we both became severely ill, at the same time, for the first time. Sever enough to have to pause publication of *Tidbits*. But, in a "silver lining" way, it gave us time to look

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The Questover Chronicles will bring you along for all the ups and downs in each and every episode. There is equipment to restore, shop to set up, garden plans to be made, projects to share, stories and historic facts about the property to bring you... **PLUS** interesting places and people around the area to tell you about... **AND** all of that interspersed with humor, fun and information from great area businesses!
You never know what you will find on the pages of *The Questover Chronicles*!

one works and you know how it goes... that project is at the bottom of the list. Towards the top though is a major undertaking. The o-rings or flange seal on the steering bolster up front is leaking. That's quite a tear down, so look for that fun project in future episodes.

at some enhancements we have wanted to implement for a while. It has been difficult due to the demands and rigors of the weekly schedule.
If anyone remembers, there was an article called "Publisher's Corner" in *Tidbits*, many years back. Those recollections were from times growing up on the Questover Farm.
The Questover Chronicles is a combination of not only the nostalgic stories, it will bring you along on the journey to make new ones!
The road won't be easy... it hasn't been for thirteen years... but, as a wise person once said, "Easy Don't Build Character"... and, I guess we got a lot of character.
Speaking of characters, a few will be familiar and many will be new!
We are very honored to introduce one of those new ones. Charlotte Athey

ALL-NEW READER CONTEST IS IN THE WORKS!!

NEXT EPISODE: #02 QUESTOVER FLOODS!

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is the matriarch of the Questover Farm, and *Questover Chronicles* content contributor, (see page 6).

Hello, Everyone! Thank you so much for taking time to read...
The Questover Chronicles
feedback@questoverchronicles.com

STUMPED BY THE PUMP TRIVIA

PHONES OFF... BRAINS ON!!

- **TV:** In the comedy, Parks and Recreation, the character Andy Dwyer (Chris Pratt), has an alternate FBI identity. Is it *Curt Carlson*, *Burt Macklin* or *Agent Mouserat*?
- **MOVIES:** What was Harrison Ford's first movie appearance in 1966? (non accredited, non speaking role) *Dead Heat on a Merry-Go-Round*, *Ride In The Whirlwind* or *Walk, Don't Run*?
- **ON THE MAP:** How many miles from Fargo, ND to Sioux Falls, SD? 218, 243 or 297?
- **ANIMALS:** In years, what is the average lifespan of a giraffe in the wild? 25, 45 or 60?
- **KITCHEN STUFF:** When a recipe calls for "scoring", (meat, fish or bread). The knife only needs to go about how far into the surface? 1/4" inch, 1" inch, or only graze the surface?
- **SHOP TALK:** Carroll Shelby introduced the Shelby Cobra at the New York Auto Show in what year? 1962, 1965 or 1969?

- answers below

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LET'S MAKE SOMETHING!

SINGLE LOG BIRDHOUSE

by Sean Athey

*Hello and welcome to the first
installment of our series
"Let's Make Something!"*

Today we are doing a project I have seen done quite a few times. The interesting part is that the end result is always a little different. That makes this a perfect project to use your own creative thoughts on.

This is going to be a run down of the way I did this project. That's why I call anything I do here on "Let's Make Something", an "HIDI Project", and HIDI stands for "How I Did It". Please use common sense and follow all applicable safety rules when you are doing any hands-on project.

With that said, *let's get in to it!*

First, I needed a log to work with, so off to the woods with the chainsaw. I used a downed pine tree and made the four cuts required right there. Two cuts to make the 45 degree angles that will make the roof line, then a straight



cut to separate the main piece and a final straight cut approximately 1.25" thick to make the bottom plate. Be sure to mark these pieces so they go together in the same way later.

Back in the shop I marked out the edge of the hole that will be hollowed out from the bottom. I used to a 1.5" spade bit on a heavy duty drill and that worked well, although it was a bit hard to control. After a while, I grabbed the chisel and hammer and trimmed out a nice little nook. This part is the most demanding depending on the type of wood you are using. Hardwoods will be more difficult.

After the bird's home area was ready, I drilled the access hole in the front with the 1.5" spade bit. Next, I attached the bottom piece with screws.

There are many ways to do a roof on this style of project, but I used scrap lathe boards left from another project. After cutting them all to length, I fastened them to the roof angles with finish nails, leaving a small overhang in the front.

Finally, I added and small "runway" stick for the birds. I used a natural stick instead of a dowel so it had a little more rustic feel.

At this point it's basically done and ready to use, or... this is the time to get creative with paints and accessories... *the sky is the limit!!*



AFTERTHOUGHTS

- Even after mentioning to mark both pieces, I managed to get the base attached slightly off center!
- I didn't include any measurements, because there were none! It's more of a concept project determined by the size of the original log.
- It was tough drilling the hole with that spade bit. In a smaller, hardwood version, I would probably make a bunch of 1/2" holes with a drill bit and chip it out.
- The next one will have some sort of a hinge and hook to secure the base. It would make it easier to clean out from time to time.
- Probably going to use a dark stain on the log and paint the roof slates green to get that Lincoln Log feel. Update with photo in a later episode!

— sean@questoverchronicles.com

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TRIVIA ANSWERS • TV: Burt Macklin. • MOVIES: Dead Heat on a Merry-Go-Round. • ON THE MAP: 243. • ANIMALS: 25. • KITCHEN STUFF: 1/4". • SHOP TALK: 1962.

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One, Potato, Two Potato... What The Heck?!?!



Howdy, everybody! So... this goes to show you never really know what's going on underground in the garden!

These two anomalies showed up while harvesting potatoes in the 2024 garden.

The funny part?... we never planted potatoes in 2024. These two "things" came from seventeen volunteer plants that just appeared on their own.

The previous year I had planted Purple Majesty potatoes and they did sorta ok. There were a lot of small ones and I am sure I just missed a bunch during harvest.

Since I didn't know how far in the ground they were, I spent the summer adding grass clippings for mulch from the push-mower. The result was very bountiful 2 1/2 five gallon buckets worth, with many of them right at the surface, but protected under the mulch.

Well, I oughta tell ya, I sent an electronic picture like the one above to my Ma, and she replied... "It looks like a boy potato looking for a girl potato." To which I replied "MA, NO! Inappropriate!... but I sorta see what yer sayin'."

The most interesting point (besides that photo above) is the "Potato Balls" that showed up at the end of the year on the plants. I came to find out that those are potato seed pods. (Quick side note: they are poisonous, do not ingest). I did find out you can harvest them by breaking them up into a water glass and letting them separate from the seed pod medium.

From there, you just dry and store like any other seed. They are very small, carrot-like seeds. We will be planting some of these this spring to see what happens and let you know!

Thanks for readin'! - Hayseed
Next episode... Crazy Carrots!



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Taters with several seed pods. I've been told each pod can contain hundreds of seeds.



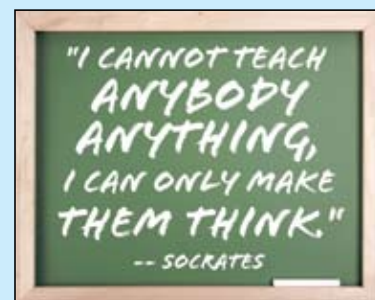
Rake up your grass clippings! It makes great mulch to protect surface potatoes.

EASY "FANCY-LIKE" POTATOES

- 4-8 Russet Potatoes of Similar Size
- Garlic (granules, powder or sliced)
- Olive oil, Butter or Lard
- 1-2 cups Chicken or Vegetable Stock
- Herbs - Your choice (sage, thyme, rosemary, etc.) fresh preferred, but dried OK
- Butter

Peel potatoes, cut off the ends so they "stand up" (roughly the same height). Bring a skillet with oil up to medium heat. With pan up to temperature, place potatoes (ends down). Add salt to season, and sear for 3 to 5 minutes. Edges should be browned. Flip potatoes and sear opposite side, adding salt to season, for another 3 to 5 minutes. Lower heat and add butter, garlic and herbs. Use the melted butter from pan to baste for an additional 3 to 5 minutes so potatoes may brown more. If you are using an oven proof skillet like cast iron you can finish the dish in that pan. If you seared them in a non oven rated pan you can transfer potatoes and left over liquid to a medium casserole dish and proceed. Be careful, the potatoes may be semi-soft. Next, pour in your stock, add salt and pepper and herbs. Cook for 25 to 30 minutes in oven. Potatoes should be brown with tender centers. Serve with additional herbs as garnish.

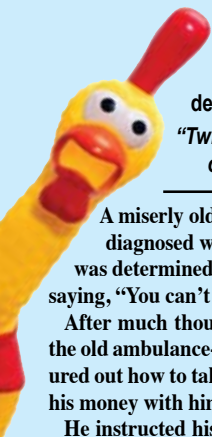
Lynette's Favorites Fondant Potatoes



Approx. 18" long. Two circular metal pieces on each end. Rubberized strap material between.

The Questover Chronicles
What Is It? GAME

Answer below



A frustrated wife told me the other day her definition of retirement: "Twice as much husband on half as much pay."

A miserly old lawyer who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness was determined to prove wrong the old saying, "You can't take it with you."

After much thought and consideration, the old ambulance-chaser finally figured out how to take at least some of his money with him when he died.

He instructed his wife to go to the bank and withdraw enough money to fill two pillowcases. He then directed her to take the bags of money to the attic and leave them directly above his bed.

His plan: When he passed away, he would reach out and grab the

bags on his way to heaven. Several weeks after the funeral, the deceased lawyer's wife was up in the attic cleaning and came upon the two forgotten pillowcases stuffed with cash.

"Oh, that old fool," she said. "I knew he should have had me put the money in the basement."

Two atoms were walking down the street. "I think I just lost an electron," says one. "Are you sure?" asked the other? "I'm positive."



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A: An older top-post battery carrier. The metal holes were different sizes at the ends to fit the negative (smaller) and positive (larger) battery posts. Friction held them on as you lifted.

Lynette's Favorite Pico de Gallo

BRING BACK THE TASTE OF SUMMERTIME!

Recipe yields 12 servings

- 6 roma (plum) tomatoes, diced
- ½ red onion, minced
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- ½ jalapeño pepper, seeded and minced, (more/less depending on your spice tolerance level)
- ½ lime, juiced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 pinch garlic powder
- 1 pinch ground cumin, or to taste
- salt and ground black pepper to taste

Stir the tomatoes, onion, cilantro, jalapeño pepper, lime juice, garlic, garlic powder, cumin, salt, and pepper together in a bowl. Refrigerate for at least 3 hours before serving. Serve with tortilla chips, warm tortillas or whatever you fancy.

You can try it on a salad instead of dressing.

*Optional, I like to add a little bit of chopped avocado, just because I love it. - Lynette

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Marjorie McNeely Conservatory at Como Zoo.

It was a nice change from the cold weather we were having at the time, although going in the door from the freezing air into the tropics was a bit of a shock. I was way over dressed for traipsing through the jungle. But we survived.

There were some amazing purple orchids the size of my hand, a beautiful yellow hibiscus with a reddish pink center, and some red flowers that, as a group, looked

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SLOTH FACTS

- Speed when threatened - .17 MPH
- Sleep duration totaling 15-18 hours/day
- The majority of their lives are spent in trees
- Ironically, Sloths are very adept swimmers

like a swarm of red butterflies.

There were also assorted snapdragons and groups of pink and white flowers, and many more. There was also an area where there were birds. Some were hard to see in the jungle foliage, but there were some bright yellow birds that stood out easily. Interestingly, there was also a sloth in a tree. When it opened its eyes and moved its head, some people (who I think were probably regular visitors to the Gardens) were really excited. He was situated in such a way it was hard to get a good photo, but I got a shot for you.

*Until next time, hang in there -
spring is just about here! - Charlie*



"SCENE" Around 



Beautiful sunset looking west between Wilmot, SD and Corona, SD.

Hi! This is Charlie, and I am excited to be contributing an assortment of articles to

The Questover Chronicles on a wide variety of topics and subjects. Anything from bees to unicorns, acrobats to violins. Whatever I may see, hear or find, that strikes me as interesting, informative, or maybe just fun!

Have something you think others would find interesting? Send it over to chatter@questoverchronicles.com so I can take a look!



"Charlie", 1975

(Charlotte Athey)

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