Getting Lost in a Maze of Maize

By John Burton

HOLMDEL – The corn maze visitors try to maneuver each fall at Casola Farms is actually planned much earlier in the year.

The 30-acre Casola Farms, located at 178 Route 34, has been doing the annual maze for the last 15 years, according to manager Joe Casola.

The maze is cut through “a beautiful crop of corn that is 12-feet high,” covering a 5-acre area just south of the main farm property, Casola said.

The planning begins with the actual planting. Casola said, with the corn planted in square blocks, “in perfect lines.”

Casola’s twin brother, Christopher, undertakes the design, using graph paper, with each square on the paper representing a plant.

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The maze is now open for visitors and will be available through Halloween.

to the public from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekends and Columbus Day until the end of October. Admission is $5 per person.

When visitors make their way out, the participants find themselves at the farm’s pumpkin patch, where they can pick and purchase, Casola said.

There are other attractions available including a Wild West show, pony rides, petting zoo, a haunted hayride, a variety of plants and fruits and vegetables grown on site for sale, and “pretty much all of your fall decorating needs,” Casola said.

Casola Farms has been conducting its Halloween Festival for 30 years. Joe Casola’s father, Antonio Casola, started the business of allowing the public to pick their own pumpkins about 37 years ago when he was just 16 and was the first in the area to do so, according to Casola.

The Casolas have had a long history in farming in the Holmdel area. The family came from Italy in the early 1900s and went into the business. Joe’s mother’s family, the Weigand family, has had a more than 200-year heritage of farming in Holmdel. So it’s no real surprise that Joe found his way into the family business. “I’ve been here my whole life and I enjoy working with my family and enjoy raising crops,” he said.

Casola Farms and Greenhouse is open seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.