

A - MAZE - ING FALL FUN

Corn: It's not just for eating

BY GINA GOODMAN
Record-Eagle staff writer

If a plane flew over Bolt's farm market near Ellsworth right now, its passengers would most likely notice a giant replica of this year's new Michigan quarter carved into a large cornfield below.

Yet the pattern is not simply for aerial viewing pleasure. On the ground, the design provides a vast and complicated maze for those who step between the 17-foot high stalks.

"We just wanted to have something else on the farm to draw customers," said Russell Bolt, who owns the farm with his wife, Cindy. "Now that I do, I'm going to continue to do it because I just like it."

Whether it's during a crisp autumn day or on an eerie fall night, corn mazes have become a popular outdoor adventure for people of all ages. Mazes have served as entertainment for centuries, in art work and architecture, and later, in formal European gardens. But a new fad in mazes has emerged in the form of cutting paths through cornfields.

This fall is the fourth the Bolts have constructed a maze in their field. The 20-acre Michigan quarter is their largest yet.

"It can be challenging, and I think it's something to do," said Cindy Bolt. "And you can do it with people of all ages. It's a good walk."

The Bolts run a farm market, having about 150 acres of sweet corn, winter squash, asparagus, strawberries and perennial flowers. Along with selling their produce, the Bolts hire a professional company, The MAiZE, to design the labyrinth and cut it into the cornfield.

"We give them an idea of what to put for a design, and we work it out together," Russ Bolt said. "Then they come in with their crew and cut it."

Howard Taylor, owner of Wellington Farm Park in Grayling, also recently decided to include a corn maze as an added attraction. Last year's maze was the first, and it didn't get a whole lot of attention, he said. This year, he is more



Record-Eagle/Lara Neel

Taylor Hartley and Margy Bolt relax in a pumpkin patch at Bolt's Farm near Ellsworth.

prepared.

"Last year we had never done a maze before, and had no idea how to do it, so it was a very simple maze," Taylor said. "But it was great for little kids. They had a lot of fun."

Taylor cuts the mazes into the cornfield himself with help from employee Charles Hughes, 15. This year the two planned a maze in the

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Haunting good times ahead

BY MELANIE BOLTHOUSE
Special to the Record-Eagle

GRAYLING — As the month of October progresses, strange things can be seen around the region — black cats, eerie faces on jack-o-lanterns, cornfields turned into mazes and ghosts and goblins floating from trees.

Trick-or-treaters of all ages will enjoy Spookfest at Hanson Hills Recreational Area in Grayling. The event, which has been a tradition at Hanson Hills for over six years, will be held Oct. 23.

A haunted house will be the highlight of Spookfest for older kids, ages 10-13, said Leigh McDougall, assistant director at Hanson Hills.

Younger kids can tour the house in addition to participating in a variety of games including bobbing for apples and pin the wart on the witch. All will receive gift bags filled with candy and a chance to win prizes throughout the day. The event will conclude with a dance for middle schoolers at 9 p.m.

Older Halloween enthusiasts can find thrills at Kurt & Burt's House of Horror in Wolverine. Set in an old schoolhouse, co-founder Kurt Zimmerle has created a chilling storyline: a mad doctor marries his true

love, who tragically dies early in the relationship; his attempts at bringing her back to life have "pushed him into his madness," according to Zimmerle.

The house of horror spreads through four rooms: the doctor's dining room, library, laboratory and the "freaky, foggy crypt." The yard is a cemetery with dead trees and a hearse parked in the front.

Zimmerle and an anonymous partner known only as Burt have been haunting the location in Wolverine for three years. His goal is to give older children a spooky experience.

"I keep wondering if it's scary enough, but people tell me it is scary," he said. "It has a really nice eerie feel."

The haunt is open Oct. 15 and 16; Oct. 21-23; and Oct. 25-31, all from 7 to 11 p.m. It's located two miles north of Wolverine on Haakwood Road off Old 27; watch for signs.

It's aimed at children 12 and older and not recommended for little kids. Admission is \$8 a person.

For information on the Wolverine haunted house, call 525-9365 during daytime hours.

To reach Hanson Hills, call (888) 876-2196 or (989) 348-9266.

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