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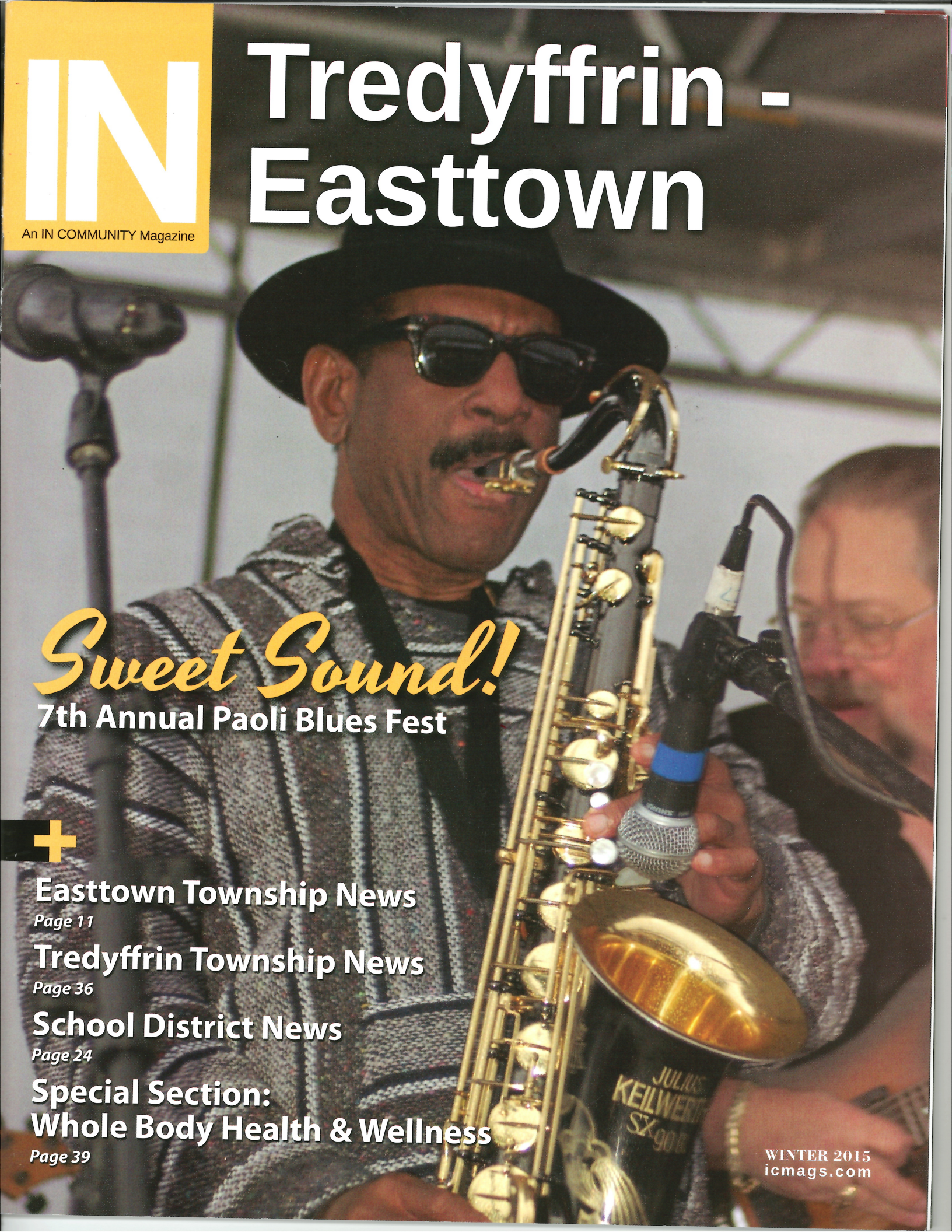
Tredyffrin - Easttown



Sweet Sound!

7th Annual Paoli Blues Fest

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The new Veterans Memorial at the flagpole in Wilson Farm Park pays tribute to every Tredyffrin and Easttown resident who served in the armed forces dating from the French and Indian War to the present day. The list was compiled by students at Conestoga High School.

U.S. Navy Captain Louis Cavaliere presents the Legion of Honor Award to Bill DeHaven on behalf of the Chapel of the Four Chaplains.

Bill DeHaven:

A lifetime of service to T/E honors veterans.

Story and Photos by Bob Byrne

Bill DeHaven will be the first to tell you that building a monument that honors every service man and woman from Tredyffrin and Easttown was a team effort.

The monument, which now stands in Wilson Farm Park, lists the name of every person from the two townships who has served in the armed services dating back to the French and Indian War.

DeHaven along with his late wife Pat (who died in 2010) were among the founders of the Berwyn Veterans Memorial, which first built a memorial at the Berwyn Train Station (dedicated in 2004) and now the memorial in Wilson Farm Park. Both monuments were built under the umbrella of the nonprofit Veterans Association of Easttown and Tredyffrin Townships (which many simply call the Berwyn Veterans).

In October, the Chapel of the Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation of Philadelphia honored DeHaven with a prestigious Legion of Honor award for his lifetime of service to his community and to veterans.

The Legion of Honor award program "publicly recognizes and honors outstanding members of society whose lives model the giving spirit and unconditional service to community, nation and humanity... To be considered, the selfless and transformative achievement(s) must be above and beyond that of a professional resume or organizational position."

Born and raised in Berwyn, Bill and Pat met in grade school at St. Monica's School. He was drafted into the Army in 1968 and served two years as an MP at West Point before coming home to serve 30 years as a Tredyffrin Township police officer. After retiring from the force, he served two terms on the Tredyffrin Township Board of Supervisors.

Fellow Veterans Memorial board member and current Easttown supervisor Jim Oram was among those cheering for DeHaven.

"Bill is one of the founding fathers of our organization, he and his (late) wife Pat. He has been a lifelong member of the community doing a lot of different

> Everybody seems to like the military now. They weren't liked so much at the end of Vietnam. There's not enough being done for the military, not then and not now.

things as a police officer, as a Tredyffrin township supervisor, and of course his military service. He's sort of the godfather of our organization and in fact probably of Tredyffrin Township — that's why we're so pleased he's being honored by the Chapel of the Four Chaplains," says Oram.

"[Bill] was instrumental in all the planning for [the memorial]. It's been in the works forever. We started with a solitary flagpole with a Garrison flag, and we moved from that to some hardscaping and landscaping and then to the kiosks actually honoring the Tredyffrin and Easttown vets who served since the French and Indian War," he adds.

For his part, DeHaven is quick to credit the other members of the memorial board, especially his late wife plus Anita Biondi and Nancy Ward, who are not veterans but were instrumental in seeing the project through from idea to reality.

"You can't imagine how rewarding it is, especially to have my wife with me the whole way through, because none of this would be here if it weren't for her and the two other women I mentioned who aren't even military: Nancy Ward, who worked for Lyman Perry, the architect who designed [the memorial], and Anita Biondi, who was the manager of the Berwyn Malvern Federal Bank. She's the one who suggested him to me," says DeHaven.

"I was looking for someone to draw a plot plan for the memorial, which was nothing like what it turned out to be, and she said that Lyman Perry had graduated from the Naval Academy with her brother. She and Lyman and his staff were nothing but helpful all the way through," he says.

"There are so many people who helped, just so many," DeHaven adds. "I stand up here and accept an award but I'm looking around, looking for somebody to give it to."

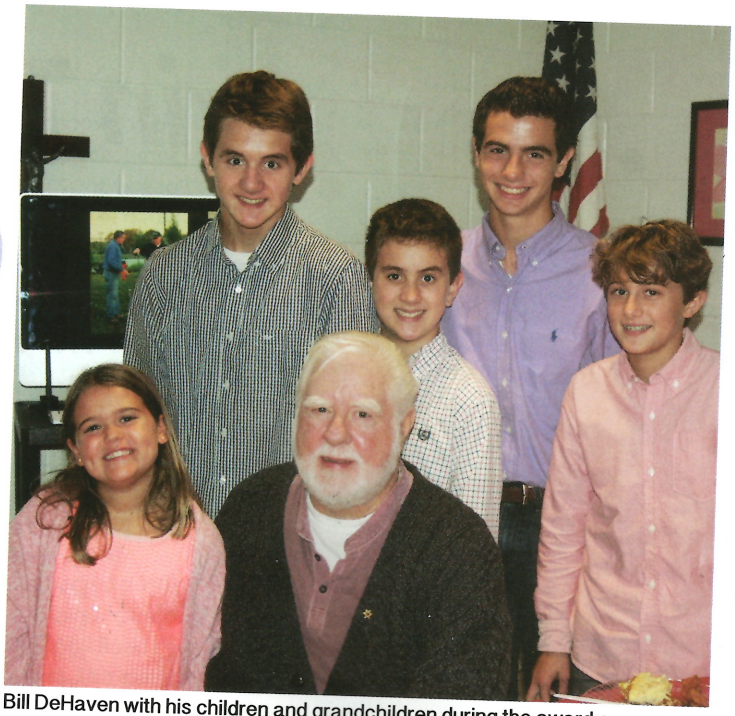
DeHaven served in the Army during the Vietnam era and says that while things have changed, more needs to be done for veterans.

"Everybody seems to like the military now. They weren't liked so much at the end of Vietnam. There's not enough being done for the military, not then and not now," says DeHaven.

His time serving at West Point had a profound impact on him. "It was at West Point that I was moved to work for veterans. You can't get by knowing people at West Point without having it rub off. That duty, honor, country... it just rubs off."

That dedication is behind the mission of the Veterans Association of Easttown and Tredyffrin Townships, which is "to visually honor those individuals of the Tredyffrin-Easttown community who served in the armed services; in particular, those 'who gave their last full measure of devotion' in the service of their country."

Additionally, the providing of benefits and assistance for the area programs falls under the general heading of fostering fraternity among veterans. This may include providing for individual veterans and their families based on need as long as the effort does not have a dramatic impact on the funding of the organization.



Bill DeHaven with his children and grandchildren during the award ceremony and lunch at St. Monica's Church in early October.

The Veterans Association of Easttown and Tredyffrin Townships is not part of any national organization and has no political ties; time and effort are donated, with all revenue going 100% to the mission. There are no dues, nor salaries or compensation of any kind.

DeHaven says that being involved and leading the efforts for the memorials "was very moving for my wife and me. We can read a lot of those names. I was a paperboy in World War II when I was a kid. You'd go by and see the gold stars hanging in the windows, and (as a kid) you see that stuff and you don't know what it's about. Then you get a little older, maybe even a lot older, and you realize the sacrifices these people went through, and nobody remembers them. Nobody knows them. So I was fortunate in being able to know their families and that's another big thing."

The Four Chaplains award reflects more than just Bill DeHaven's dedication to honoring and serving veterans. In addition to three decades serving the community as a Tredyffrin police officer, his service on the Tredyffrin Board of Supervisors was at the request of friends in the Town Watch organization who asked him to run for office during his retirement. He was a supervisor from January 2002 to 2009.

"As a supervisor, the best thing that I had a part in was making sure that Berwyn Fire Company kept medics. That was a big bone of contention because there were a lot of politics involved. Other supervisors eventually felt the same and we kept them here," says DeHaven. "If anybody's ever been in a life-threatening situation, and especially if your family member has a heart attack, there's not a better feeling than to have those medics come through the door. Many times I was happy to see those folks come through," he recalls. DeHaven was also instrumental in getting sidewalks for the school district. "I don't know why they didn't put them in 60 years ago when they built Conestoga, but they didn't. Being with the people and arguing for what you want and getting it done — seeing something happen — that's very rewarding!"

To learn more about the Veterans Association of Easttown and Tredyffrin Townships, visit BerwynVeterans.com.

To learn more about the Chapel of the Four Chaplains at the Philadelphia Navy Yard, visit FourChaplains.org. ■