

Celebrate Holliston September 21

## Civics Sunday: Celebrate Holliston Honors 2019 Citizens of the Year

by Yvette Cain  
September 15, 2019



Celebrate Holliston, a town fund-raising non-profit organization established in 1991, honors volunteers **Bea Hait** and **Ken Henderson** as its Citizens of the Year.

It seems only logical since Celebrate Holliston donates its time, energy, and financial support to worthwhile town projects that it would seek out those among us who volunteer their time and energies to make our community a better place to live.



As a Holliston volunteer, **Bea Hait** enjoys getting to meet new people, learn new things. “I feel a sense of accomplishment,” says Hait, “in supporting others and other organizations.” And the payoff? “I have enhanced my organizational leadership, and computer skills by undertaking diverse assignments.” Sounds like a win-win relationship!

Among the diverse assignments included in Hait’s repertoire, Holliston in Bloom thrives a bit more with her efforts. Working to beautify the town since 2014, Hait helped plan, plant, weed, prepare for the judges’ visit and reception, and plan the program. Presently she can be found tending to the plantings on Gooch’s Corner.

Hait’s time with the Holliston Historical Society goes back to the mid-1990’s, during her first stint with 18th Century Days. During this time, she took over the program, learning and passing the knowledge onto visiting 3rd graders. Additional work on the program included being a seamstress, sewing skirts and blouses for the costumes for other volunteers.

Other various busy Historical Society events have had Hait’s assistance: A Taste of Holliston (2009–17), Oktoberfest (2015–present), and the Harvest Fair (2017–present) where she is Chair.

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Do any of you remember the Volkssporting event on the Holliston Rail Trail this past spring? Hait is an active member and walk coordinator since 1993, scheduling 11 walks through Holliston over the years.

When examining how Hait made decisions about where to donate her free time, she found that “things kind of came to me, depending on the evolving phases of my life and the ‘free time’ I had available.” Early volunteer efforts began in 1983, while a new mom living in NJ. Hait became a leader in the La Leche League, an effort she continued through moves to Framingham (1984), Pennsylvania (1989), and Holliston (1992).

**Ken Henderson**, whose parents moved to Holliston in 1963, bought his own piece of heaven in 1967, with his bride Carolynn by his side. As a Natick Middle School teacher and young dad, Ken was consumed with family and career responsibilities, yet he carved out time to serve as an official for high school sports for over 20 years. He often refereed soccer, basketball, and track events, served on the Board of Special Olympics, and found every opportunity to spread good sportsmanship.



Henderson enjoys being a part of something bigger than himself. Volunteering is “a way to be connected.” He claims, “Giving is a part of my DNA!” Enjoying being a small contributor to a larger experience, it only seems logical that he’s lent his voice to the choir of the First Congregational Church in Holliston for 40 years.

As a deacon “a few times” at the Church, Henderson was part of a group that supported the minister. Utilizing a natural link to his career, he taught confirmation classes and served as an interim youth group leader, utilizing his burgeoning tool kit of teaching skills and strategies.

Presently, as retirement has taken hold, more time allows him to find a variety of volunteer experiences. Henderson says, “An opportunity comes to you more than I went to it. It happens: church life, town life...It’s something to do.”

For the past 5 years, Henderson picks up bread in Milford to deliver weekly to the Holliston Pantry Shelf. He’s also volunteered at various times over the last few years for Holliston in Bloom. By far, his favorite role was the time he acted as a costumed tour guide for the National Convention visitors in 2017.

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Henderson is an active and enthusiastic member of the Holliston Trails Committee. His interest began with a curiosity; soon he advanced to an associate on the Committee, to which he has been a member for several years. Frequently he puts together “work details” to clear debris, fell trees, and “monitor” the trail conditions on the group's golf cart.

Together with his wife, Henderson completed several trips to Haiti, where their daughter Julie served as a missionary, and where the Henderson established a library of some 60–70 volumes in an orphanage. At this children’s home, the concept of a lending library was non-existent prior to the arrival of the trunk containing books the Hendersons had collected and delivered to share.

Most recently, Henderson has spent some time as a novice journalist for the Holliston Reporter. You may have read some of his pieces that highlight valued segments of our community, such as the “mini-series” he completed on the EMS/Fire Department. (We look forward to more efforts on this front!)

When informed of the honor of Citizen of the Year, both recipients were taken aback. “I was flabbergasted,” Hait said. “Knowing some of the past recipients of this honor and their vast and positive impact on the community of Holliston, I do not consider myself on the same tier as these august honorees.” Henderson echoed the thought: “I was pleasantly surprised. What did I do that got noticed?” He continued his reflection that Citizen of the Year “celebrates the spirit of volunteering.”

When asked what they might say to encourage others to volunteer, Henderson replied, “It’s the collected sum of all those small contributions that add up to make the town able to respond to town needs.” Hait agreed, “There are lots of opportunities to make a difference. Some are one-shot deals, and others are longer-term commitments. Do what you can at this point in your life and be open to how things evolve. Have fun—meet new people. Carpe diem.”

Congratulations, Bea and Ken! Your dedication to Holliston has benefitted us as a community. Your efforts to share your time and talents bring back lyrics from a favorite childhood show:

*“I have always wanted to have a neighbor just like you  
I’ve always wanted to live in a neighborhood with you...”\**

Thanks for being our neighbors!

\*Lyrics from “It’s a Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood,” Fred Rogers, 1968.

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the Rail Trail. Thank you both.

- Robert Weidknecht | 9/16/19 8:32 AM

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Congratulations to both of you! It was always a pleasure working with you Bea on HIB! Well deserved!

- Deb & John Moore | 9/15/19 9:15 PM

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Hear, hear! Thank you and congratulations to Bea and Ken!

- Mary Curran | 9/15/19 3:12 PM

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Holliston is a better place for these volunteer efforts. Congratulations to Bea & ken.

- JEAN MORRISSEY | 9/15/19 9:27 AM

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Congratulations Bea and Ken. Thank you for all you do.

- Steve Bradford | 9/15/19 8:34 AM

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Dear Bea, & Ken, The town of Holliston can't thank you enough for all that you do for our very special Town !! The two of you exemplify the spirit of volunteerism in Holliston. Our town has been given prestigious National awards because of residents like you that make Holliston stand out !! Congratulations, Mark Ahronian

- Mark Ahronian | 9/15/19 8:22 AM

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Congratulations Bea and Ken!!! Thank you for all that you do for our community!!

Stacey

- Stacey Raffi | 9/15/19 7:42 AM

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Congratulations Bea and Ken!!! Well deserved!!!! Thank you for all you do for our wonderful town!!

- Kathy shore | 9/15/19 7:30 AM

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