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Congregational Church of North Stonington celebrates 300th anniversary



The Congregational Church of North Stonington celebrated its 300th anniversary on Sunday. (Melina Khan/The Day)
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Melina Khan

North Stonington – A traditional colonial-style service was held Sunday at the Congregational Church of North Stonington to celebrate its 300th anniversary.

The service reflected the practices in place when the church began in 1721. Men and women sat on opposite sides of the house of worship and musical instruments were not used throughout the proceedings. Attendees also dressed in colonial-style attire to recognize the period.

Parishioner Brian Hager served as a tithingman, a position used in 18th-century churches to keep worshippers awake during services. He carried a pole tipped on one end with a brass knocker and a feather on the other. The brass knocker was used to nudge sleeping men, whereas the feather served as a gentler form of waking sleeping women.

The Rev. Sue Latourette's sermon encouraged attendees to practice integrity, a message applicable in 1721 or 2021.

The program also included a welcoming of new members Jamie Towle-Weicksel, Steven Weicksel and their daughter Violet. The North Stonington residents began attending the church prior to COVID-19 but were welcomed in honor of the coinciding of the anniversary proceedings and the church's resuming of in-person services.

Towle-Weicksel said the family was first attracted to the church because of its accepting nature and legacy in the community.

"When I talk to people that we've joined the church, a lot of people know how much good they do for the community," Towle-Weicksel said. "I think that legacy has been around for a long time."

The congregation's 300-year legacy is evident by its dedicated parishioners, such as Mary Jane Bliven.

A lifelong member of the church, Bliven and her husband, in addition to her own parents and several of her children, were married in the church. All of Bliven's children, including Elaine Ricci and Julie Clow who attended the anniversary service, were also baptized at the church. The family remains active members today, and they say it's because the congregation feels like "home."

"It's very special to be a part of something that's been around for so long," Ricci said. "No matter where you are in life, when you come back here it reminds you of home."

STORIES THAT MAY INTEREST YOU

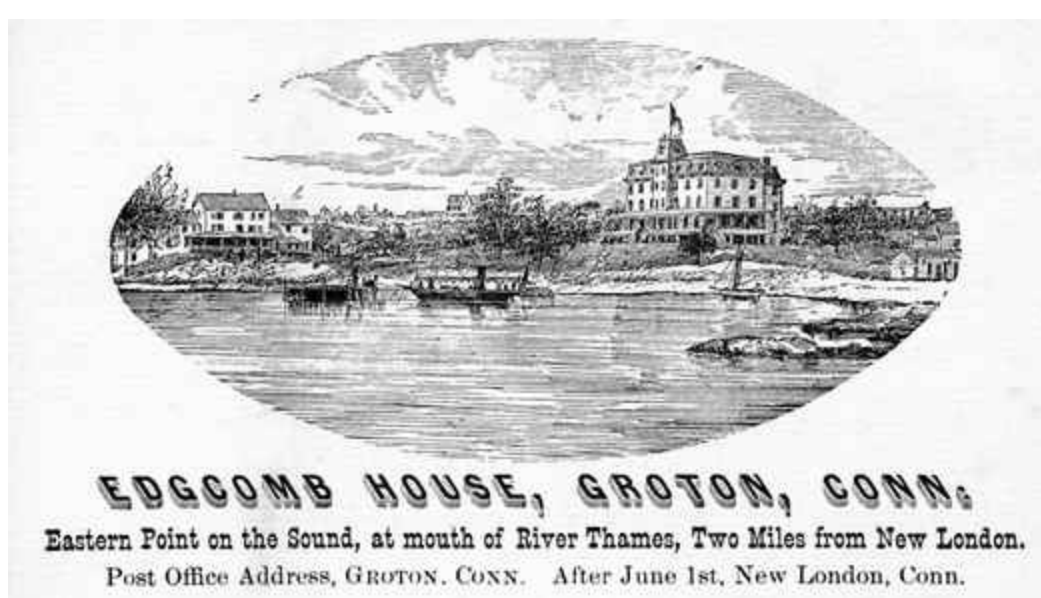
Ledyard voters approve school roofing projects (/local-news/20220223/ledyard-voters-approve-school-roofing-projects)

As heavy rain fell during the late afternoon and evening, Ledyard voters Tuesday approved a \$6.725 million bond to replace leaking roofs at the Juliet W. Long and Gales Ferry Elementary Schools.



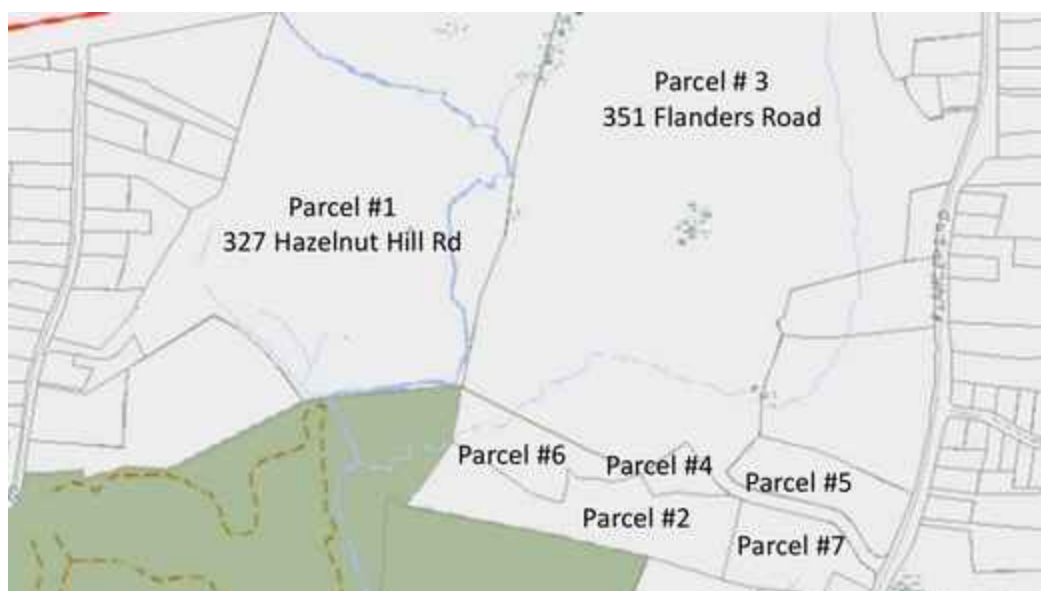
Dancing your way to love during the bleak midwinter (/local-news/20220223/dancing-your-way-to-love-during-bleak-midwinter)

Imagine, before the COVID vaccines were developed, people were afraid to be near others or shake hands — never mind kiss. While some people still feel that way, some are venturing out to socialize and date.



History Revisited: Case closed on alleged murder by poison (/local-news/20220223/history-revisited-case-closed-on-alleged-murder-by-poison)

This is the third of a three-part series.



Data center agreement proposed for land south of I-95 in Groton (/local-news/20220222/data-center-agreement-proposed-for-land-south-of-i-95-in-groton)

A proposed data center agreement for land south of Interstate 95 between Hazelnut Hill and Flanders Roads will be presented to the public on Thursday.