

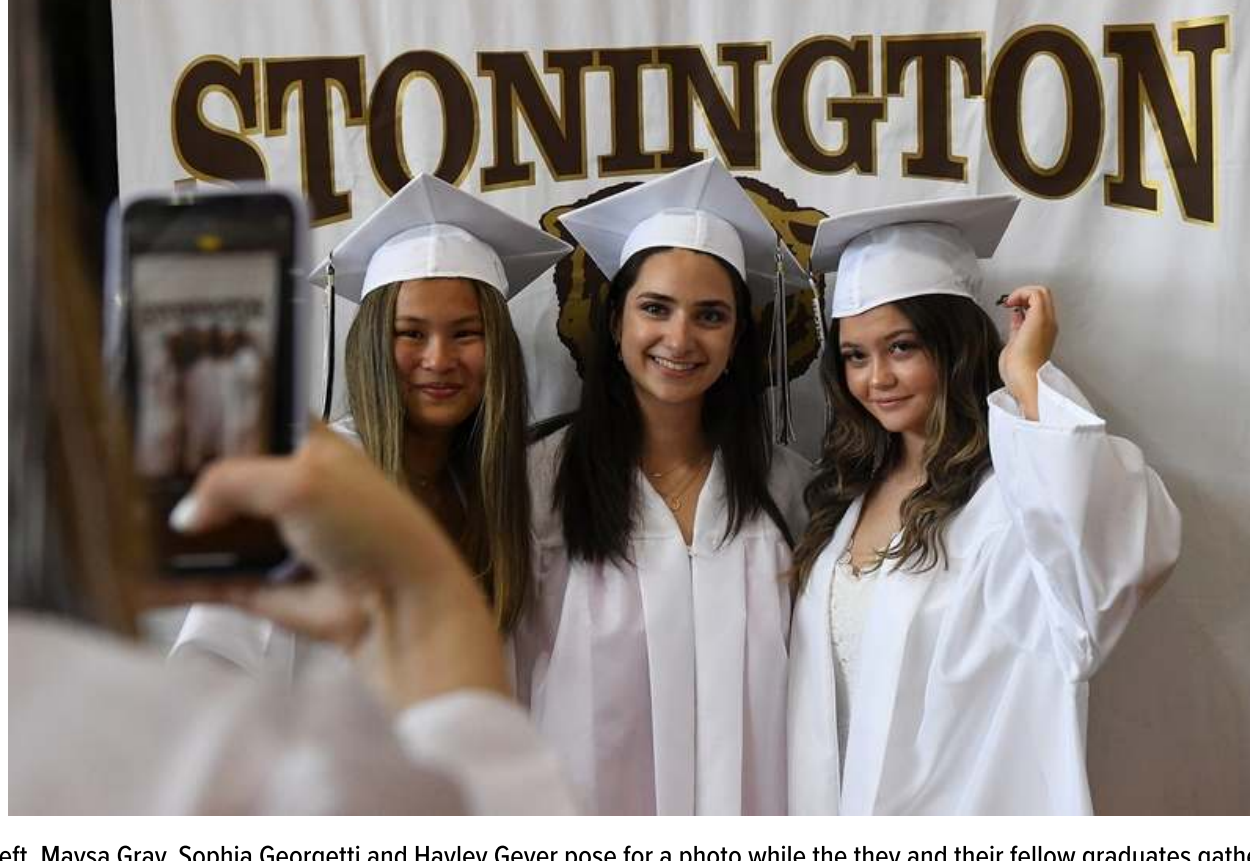
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## Stonington High Class of 2021 ready to make history



From left, Maysa Gray, Sophia Georgetti and Hayley Geyer pose for a photo while they and their fellow graduates gather in the gymnasium before the graduation ceremony Friday, June 18, 2021, at Stonington High School. (Dana Jensen/The Day)

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**Melina Khan, Special to The Day**

Stonington — Spilled milk, WikiHow and cellular respiration were among the notable anecdotes shared Friday at Stonington High School's commencement for the Class of 2021.

Valedictorian Taylor Donovan elected to address her classmates with clichés, after a stint with writer's block led her to a Google search turning up a WikiHow article on "How to write a graduation speech."

"Step two: Avoid clichés," Donovan recalled. "... Why should I avoid clichés, and why can't they be inspiring?"

In a time of unpredictability, clichés offer stability and deeper meaning, she went on to explain.

Don't cry over spilled milk. Everything happens for a reason. The rest is history. These were Donovan's messages to her 168 fellow graduates Friday evening, which she said represented the past, present and future.

Spilled milk was a reminder of freshman year biology, she said, where cellular respiration was a key theme. The process requires energy to begin and results in a net gain of energy in the body.

"This reminded me that although you might spill a glass of milk, it's likely that you still have an entire milk jug sitting in your fridge," Donovan said. "A small spill can be easily cleaned up, and a new glass of milk can be easily poured."

As for the present, she said even failure has a reason — that is, to serve as motivation to improve and an opportunity to grow.

Lastly, everything that's yet to come will become history one day.

"We don't know exactly how our lives will proceed, but we can decide to lead lives that are meaningful enough to find their way into an AP U.S. History class," Donovan said.

In addition, the class salutatorian, Rachel Sabbadini, reflected on the class's growth over the past four years. Persevering through challenges like distance learning and new safety requirements have brought them together, she said.

"The obstacles we have been presented with, especially in these past two years, have made us more resilient and connected than ever," Sabbadini said. "Together we have learned how to conquer unfamiliar territory and are therefore now more prepared for the next chapter of our life."

Also among the commencement exercises was the presentation of the class gift, a media backdrop for photos, and a reading from graduate and poet laureate Joanna Chomowicz.

Health teacher Dane Lewis gave the commencement address, fielding laughter from the crowd of graduates and loved ones. Lewis is a 1977 graduate of Stonington High and has been teaching at the school for 26 years. He is retiring with the conclusion of the school year.

Between jokes, Lewis shared advice for the graduates as they embark on their future.

"No generation has been better prepared to face the difficult challenges that lie ahead," he said. "I'll be enjoying bingo and Jell-O and you'll be saving the planet."



Hannah Turner, right, and Katya Torruella hug as they find each other while they and their fellow graduates begin to gather in the gymnasium before their graduation ceremony Friday, June 18, 2021, at Stonington High School. (Dana Jensen/The Day)

### Photo gallery

For a gallery of more photos from the graduation ceremony, [click here \(https://bit.ly/stgrad2021\)](https://bit.ly/stgrad2021).

## 2021 Stonington High School Graduates

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LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE NAME
Abely	Nicholas	David
Adamson	Zach	Alexander
Allen-Fernandez	Ethan	
Allik*	Hazel	Mae
Ballelli	Darren	Michael
Bell	Sophia	Mae
Benjamin*	Vanessa	Cameron
Bolduc	Kaleigh	Grace
Bostick	Sean	Alexander
Breault	Daisey	Charlene
Butler	Jennifer	Lynn
Cannon	Marley	
Cano	Fernando	Benito
Caron*	Amelia	Marie
Champagne	Andrew	Scott
Cheetham*	Matthew	Kenneth
Chomowicz	Joanna	Lucille
Clark	Jonathan	Andrews
Collins	Tiari	Jahzir
Connelly	Margaret	Elizabeth

\* Stonington Scholar

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## 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.



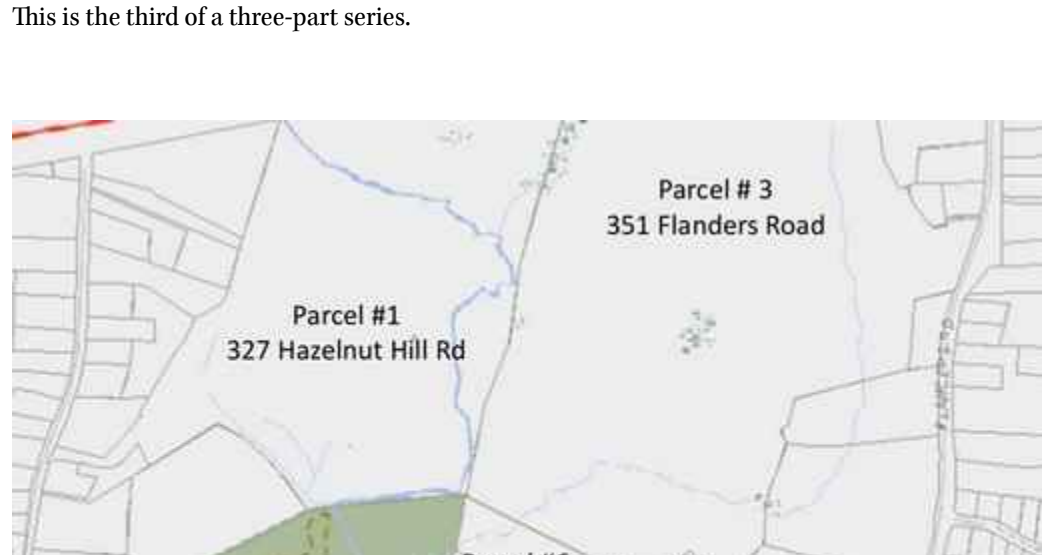
### Dancing your way to love during the bleak midwinter (/local-news/20220223/dancing-your-way-to-love-during-bleak-midwinter)

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.