

# An old-style haven in Westport, Conn.

By Necee Regis

GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

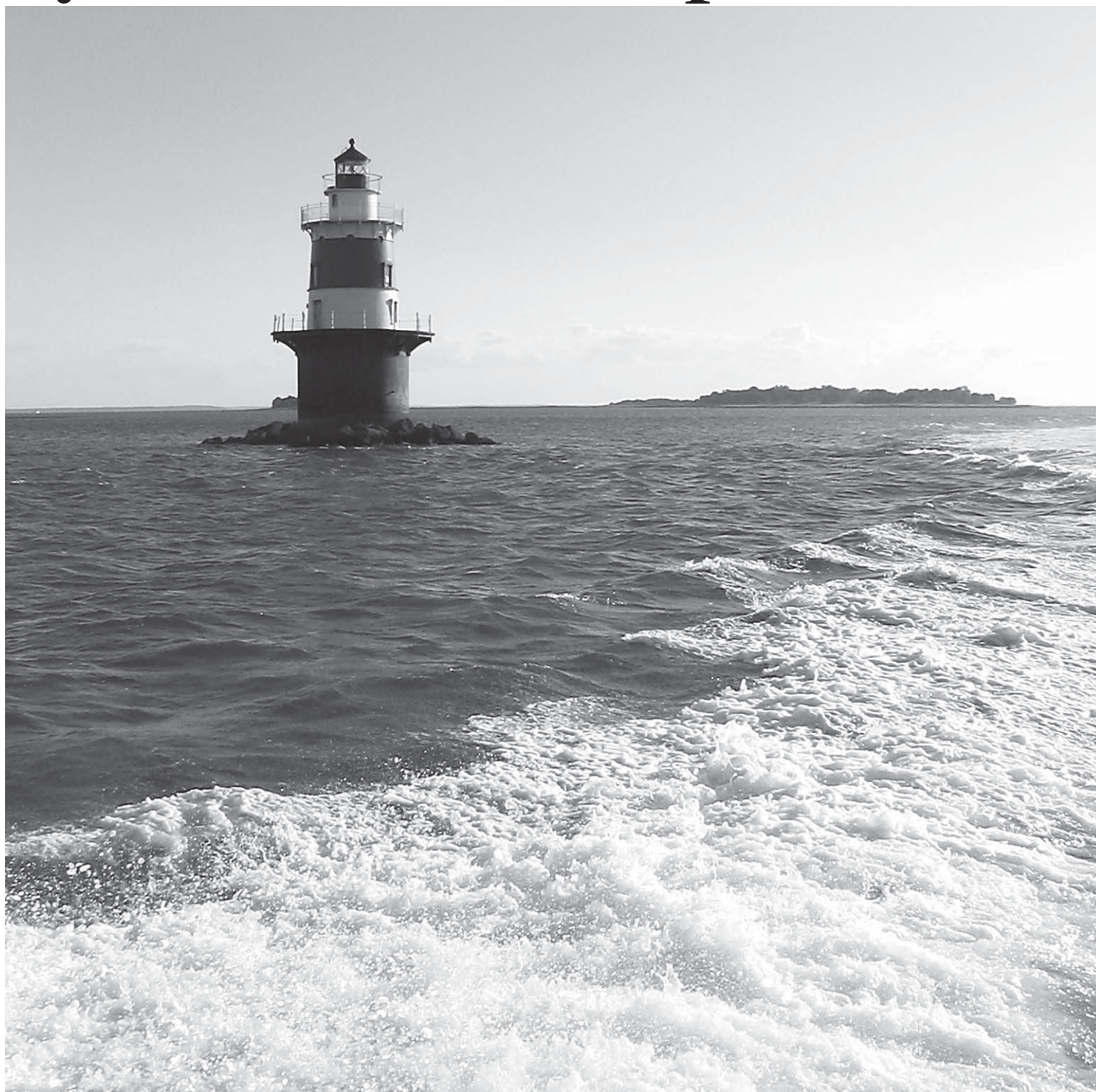
**W**ESTPORT, Conn. — It's all about good old-fashioned fun in this low-key and upscale commuter town 50 miles east along the coast from Manhattan. That's why families love it. State and town-owned parks along Long Island Sound offer great spots to swim, hike, picnic, sail, fly kites, and star gaze. Here, it's perfectly acceptable to leave your towels and chairs on the beach when you leave for lunch; they'll be there when you return. In the small downtown shopping district, with name-brand shops and upscale boutiques, it's easy to stroll and window shop while enjoying an ice cream cone.

## Stay

The kids might never want to leave the **Westport Inn** (1595 Post Road, 203-259-5236; 800-446-8997, [www.westportinn.com](http://www.westportinn.com), \$129-\$209) with its heated indoor pool and ping-pong table, though you can entice them out on local trails with mountain bikes on loan from the inn. The **Inn at Longshore** (260 Compo Road South, 203-226-3316, [www.innatlongshore.com](http://www.innatlongshore.com), \$160-\$215) is located on the grounds of the 169-acre Longshore Club Park, where for an additional fee families can swim in the outdoor community pool, take sailing lessons, golf or play tennis. The hotel is within walking distance to a town-owned beach favored by the locals, Compo Beach, where the daily parking fee for nonresidents is \$40. Besides the wide scallop of beach staffed by lifeguards, there's a playground and concession stand serving burgers, chicken, and shakes.

## Dine

A tasty and affordable place to feed a hungry family is the **Westport Pizzeria** (107 Main St., 203-226-4094, [www.westportpizzeria.com](http://www.westportpizzeria.com), \$8-\$20). Located in the heart of the charming downtown shopping district, this tiny shop has served locals since the late 1960s. Known for its thin-crust pies with a variety of toppings, including hot cherry peppers and clams, you can also order traditional Italian meals such as eggplant Parmesan, manicotti, and baked ziti. Another dining spot that's convenient and family-friendly is the **Sherwood Diner** (901 Post Road East, 203-226-5535, \$5-\$20).



NECEE REGIS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Boating, swimming, and lolling on the beach along Long Island Sound are popular activities in Westport, Conn.

Open 24/7, this restaurant serves typical diner fare with a smile. Breakfast includes eggs any style, pancakes and waffles. For lunch or dinner, the Greek salad, burgers, rib-eye steak, and turkey dinners are recommended favorites.

## During the day

On the wide sandy shoreline of Long Island Sound, **Sherwood Island State Park** (exit 18 off Interstate 95, 203-226-6983, parking \$15 weekends, \$5 after 4 p.m.) is a great pick for swimming, hiking, picnicking, bird

watching, or simply soaking up the sun. Connecticut's oldest state park, covering 234 acres of beach, wetlands, and woodlands, boasts a new Nature Center with activities such as birding and nature trail walks, arts and crafts, and informative talks about marine biology and avian ecology. To enjoy the sound in a kayak, canoe, sailboat, or in a catamaran that holds five passengers, check out rentals at the **Longshore Sailing School** (Longshore Park, 260 Compo Road South, 203-226-4646, [www.longshoresailingschool.com](http://www.longshoresailingschool.com), \$18-\$46 per hour).

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## After dark

Bring a blanket, beach chairs, and picnic supper to **The Levitt Pavilion for the Performing Arts** (40 Jesup Road, 203-221-2153, [www.levittpavilion.com](http://www.levittpavilion.com)) for an open-air summer festival with free performances almost every night from late June through the end of August. Wednesdays focus on entertainment specifically for kids. On other nights, the younger generation can learn to enjoy jazz, classical, cabaret, rock, blues, and folk. A Westport vaca-

tion can be a low-key affair. Many families bring a take-out supper to the Compo Beach picnic tables to watch the sun set and the stars come out. Do what the locals do and take an après-dinner stroll downtown for dessert at **Ben & Jerry's** (14 Post Road East, 203-221-7443, [www.benjerry.com](http://www.benjerry.com)) or **Baskin Robbins** (180 Post Road East, 203-226-4601, [www.baskinrobbins.com](http://www.baskinrobbins.com)).

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