South Williamstown Community Association

Promoting community, historical preservation and neighborhood building for Williamstown and surrounding locales.

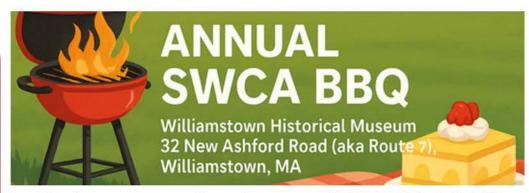
August 2025

Volume 2025, No. 2

NEWS FROM South Williamstown

IN THIS ISSUE

Annual SWCA BBQ1
Roundabout 2
Roundabout plans4
Jazz at Museum Barn5
Sweetwood Events 5
Valerie Kennedy 6
Front Porch Forum 6
Paper Shredding 6
Bulky Waste 6
Art of British Women 7
Green River Cleanup 7
View from White Oaks 8
Store receives CPA grant 8
Dustin Griffin's Book9
Reading Program10
SWCA Membership11
Upcoming Events12
Va.



Join us at the Annual SWCA BBQ Monday August 11th - 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

When...Monday, August 11th, 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM (rain date: August 12)

Where...New Location! Williamstown Historical Museum, 32 New Ashford Road (aka Route 7), Williamstown, MA

What can you bring...A side dish to share – appetizer, salad, casserole, watermelon and other fruit, dessert, etc.

What we'll be serving...Hot dogs, hamburgers/cheeseburgers, veggie burgers...all with buns and condiments.

Drinks...No (cash) bar; feel free to BYOB. We'll provide plenty of water and iced tea.

Remember this is a potluck meal

If you are able, please bring a side dish to share – appetizer, salad, casserole, watermelon and other fruit, dessert, etc.

However, you are welcome to attend even if you are unable to bring anything besides your smile.

What we need: Volunteers! Please see where we still need help: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0549A8A92AA3FDC07-57343555-swca#/

What's new this year... A CAKE RAFFLE so bring cash to buy RAFFLE TICKETS...we'll have 10 cakes and pies. Raffle will be held at 6:30; winners must be present. Proceeds from the raffle will be split between SWCA and the Williamstown Food Pantry.

What else? Live music by Rosin the Beaux, games, and community – come see old friends and make some new ones!

News From South Williamstown Volume 2025, No. 2 August 2025

SOUTH WILLIAMSTOWN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION P.O. Box 432

Williamstown, MA 01267 **E-Mail**

info@southwilliamstown.org **Website:**

http://southwilliamstown.org

SWCA Newsletter is distributed quarterly, mostly by email.

Editor: Tamanika Terry Steward Layout: Matthew Baya

SWCA Board:

Matthew Baya
Karen Charbonneau
Heleny Cook
Kaare Francis
Paul Jennings
Nadia Jensen
Barry Meneghelli
Tamanika Terry Steward

Contribute to the next SWCA Newletter, due by October 15, 2025. Email suggestions or articles to info@southwilliamstown.org

Find SWCA on Facebook:

Scan this QR code



or visit https://facebook.com/southwilliamstown

Roundabout seeing progress at Five Corners

BY STEN SPINELLA - The Berkshire Eagle Reprinted with permission

WILLIAMSTOWN — Construction of a roundabout at the Five Corners intersection is in full swing, and though it's slowed traffic considerably, that may be a good thing.

The Five Corners, where routes 7 and 43 cross, was known as a dangerous intersection well before the Massachusetts Department of Transportation announced plans for a roundabout in 2021.

A MassDOT spokesperson said the goal of replacing the current stop signs with a roundabout is to improve traffic operations and safety. "This intersection was identified several years ago by MassDOT's Traffic Safety as having an above-average crash rate for an unsignalized intersection," spokesman John Goggin said in an email. "More recent crash data indicated that almost 60 percent of crashes at the intersection were angle-type crashes, for which a roundabout is a highly effective and proven safety improvement," Goggin said.

Traffic will continue during construction.

MassDOT last performed significant work at the Five Corners intersection in 2014, modifying the traffic islands to improve intersection approaches and safety.

Current construction work has been more pronounced in recent weeks, with the project's completion expected by fall of 2026. The permitting process began in April 2024, and the design cost of \$900,000 and was paid for by MassDOT.



Roundabout (continued from page 2)

Goggin said MassDOT presented this concept to town officials, and the project received additional support at a public hearing in June 2021.

The specific safety issues a roundabout at the intersection would address include speed, visibility and difficulty making large vehicle movements. Before construction began, officials estimated that with a roundabout, crashes at Five Corners would fall by 71 percent, and fatal and serious injury crashes would decrease by 87 percent, due to slower vehicle speeds and the elimination of "T-bone" crashes.

According to MassDOT data, from 2013 to 2017 the intersection saw 20 traffic accidents, including a head-on crash, resulting in three injuries and a fatality.

The crash rate at Five Corners is triple the statewide average crash rate at intersections without traffic signals, according to MassDOT. There have been two recent fatal crashes, in 2018 and in 2022.









Williamstown Town Manager Robert Menicocci told The Eagle last week that "the town believes that this is an important project to improve the safety of the intersection of routes 7 and 43."

The total cost for construction is \$4.3 million, programmed by the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization, run by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Of that grant funding, 80 percent is paid for with federal dollars and 20 percent with state money.

Sten Spinella can be reached at sspinella@berkshireeagle.com or 860-853-0085.

Reminder:
The Store at Five Corners
remains open during this
construction. Please stop in!







PLATE

Jazz at the Barn Friday August 8th, 7-9 PM

Questions? Call Janice at (413)458-8371

Join us at the Williamstown Historical Museum's Barn for an upcoming night of music with The Flatbed Jazz Band, Friday, August 8th, celebrating WHM's Dancing in the Barn!

Bring a picnic blanket and the entire family to enjoy New Orleans-style jazz right here in Williamstown.32 New Ashford Road, Williamstown (next to the Store at Five Corners)

Food and beverages will be available for purchase from 6 PM onward, with live music from 7-9 PM.

Suggested donations are \$10 per person and \$25 per family. We can't wait to see you there!

Get a ticket early for a chance to win a prize in the raffle! https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/jazz-inthe-barn-at-the-whm

More events at the Museum coming soon:

August 16th, Saturday, II AM - Fashion History August 22nd, Friday, 7-9 PM - Five Pound Horse Band September 28th, Sunday - Harvest Fair

Our Tree's Too Tall We're Pining for a New One!

SWCA has decided that the tree we use for the Tree Lighting event has gotten so tall it is no longer feasible to decorate it. At 46 feet high, it is too dangerous & unwieldy to use. We're hoping that a SWCA member may be willing to donate a 15-20 foot evergreen tree for the event. We will display it behind the Store or on the deck.

We'll handle the cutting and transport. E-mail us at info@southwilliamstown.org if you'd like to nominate your tree for consideration.

Thank you for your consideration!



front porch forum®

Williamstown's Front Porch Forum is 5 years old!

Did you know...

- About 22% of neighboring households participate..
- Williamstown's FPF Email Forum reached local inboxes 7,620 times over the past month.
- Williamstown's FPF launched more than 5 years ago.
- Neighbors have added 337 events to the Williamstown Area Community Calendar. See it at

https://frontporchforum.com/williamstown -ma/calendar

You can access the forum at https://frontporchforum.com to stay informed and engaged.

2025 Disposal Events



FOR RESIDENTS OF
Adams Cheshire Clarksburg
Dalton Florida Hancock
Hinsdale Lanesborough Monroe
New Ashford Peru Savoy
Williamstown Windsor
LCernik@nbswmd. com 413743-8208

Scrap Metal fees donated to the Adams COA

Saturday, September 6 . 9am - 11am

CONFIDENTIAL PAPER SHREDDING WITH PRO-SHRED

40 Field St. . Council on Aging lot . Dalton, MA

Suggested donation \$5 per box which is split between NBSWMD recycling fundsand the Dalton COA.

Saturday, September 20.8am - 12pm

BULKY WASTE, ELECTRONICS & SCRAPMETAL DPW Yard . 10 Maple Ct. . Lanesboro, MA . Fees Apply Scrap Metal fees donated to the Lanesboro COA

Saturday, October 11.8am - 12pm

BULKY WASTE, ELECTRONICS & SCRAPMETAL

714 West Cross Rd. . Clarksburg, MA . Fees Apply Scrap Metal fees donated to the Clarksburg COA More event information can be added throughout

More event information can be added throughout the year. Visit www.nbswmd.com to see general price list

Obituary- Valerie Kennedy

Submitted by Barbara Winslow



Valerie Kennedy, a well loved and respected resident of South Williamstown for over 30 years and SWCA member, died peacefully on July 7, 2025. She served on the board of the Williamstown Theater Festival, the Williamstown Art Conservation Center as well as the Norman Rockwell Museum. She was 82.

For more information about Valerie's life, please visit the website:

https://www.donnellanfuneral.com/obituaries/Valerie-Putis-Kennedy?obId=43563378

Claiming Space: The Radical Art of British Women, 1875–1945

The Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute is always a visual "food for thought" in its galleries and exhibitions. This year, the summer exhibit A Room of Her Own: Women Artist-Activists in Britain, 1875-1945, curated by Alexis Goodin, associate curator at the Clark, celebrates both Virginia Woolf's groundbreaking and now canonic essay A Room of One's Own, as well as introducing us to twenty-five British women artists. In her essay, Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) argued that for women to write fiction, they needed physical space of their own in which to think and work, as well as a sufficient income. She exhorted women to pursue their passions—writing, painting, embroidery, music—the arts. Goodin celebrates twenty-five women artists who struggled to establish themselves in a male-dominated world. They challenged English patriarchy, becoming teachers, lecturers, writers, joining women's organizations, and campaigning for the vote.

While most of the paintings were very much a product of English academic painting or the Arts and Crafts movement, one stood out for me for its modernism: Winifred Knights, The Deluge - The Deluge is clearly a reaction to the horrors of WWI, blending the images of death, suffering, modern dance, and the horrors of World War I.

My only critique of the exhibit as a historian of the period and as the biographer of an English suffragette and painter-who has two paintings up in the National Portrait Gallery in London-is that I wish Goodin had included suffragette artists. However, my picky point should not deter folks from visiting the exhibit and learning about these twenty-five artists. Their backstories are as fascinating as their artworks. You might even be inspired to read (or reread) Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own.

I include a few examples of the activist, intellectual artists:

- **DESIGN for an embroidered stool** Vanessa Bell, the sister of Virginia Woolf, an artist and interior designer, was well represented in the exhibit.
- May Morris, Tudor Rose panel May Morris, artisan, jeweler, embroiderer, was born into artistic activism; she was the daughter of the socialist and founder of the English Arts and Crafts movement, William Morris.
- Gwen Raverat, The Baths Gwen Raverat, the granddaughter of Charles Darwin and a member of the poet Rupert Brooke's Neo-Pagan group, is considered the first modernist wood engraver.

SWCA and HooRWA Team to Clean the Green River

On a beautiful day in July, the South Williamstown Community Association (SWCA) in partnership with Hoosic River Watershed Association (HooRWA), teamed together for the Annual Green River Cleanup: an effort to remove debris from the Green River closest to an area that was once used as Williamstown's dumping ground. Recent heavy rains have washed a larger amount of trash from the site downriver so there was plenty for volunteers to do. Among the broken glass and bottles of all types, were interesting objects that offer a history of use and consumption of residents long ago. Volunteers spent a few hours filling bags with hopes to put a larger dent into a long-term cleanup project. This ongoing environmental commitment from SWCA and HooRWA is an effort of residents coming together to care for the Green River so that it can be a place that is free from debris!



THE VIEW FROM WHITE OAKS

Lauren R. Stevens is a regular environmental columnist

What's out of sight for now can't be out of mind forever

It's hard to get rid of what we no longer want. Most Berkshire municipalities have numerous inactive landfills — essentially holes into which we dumped our trash — officially listed by the state's Department of Environmental Protection. For instance, North Adams, Great Barrington and Stockbridge have four each, including some that are privately owned, mostly by businesses. One of Stockbridge's belongs to the Department of Transportation. Pittsfield has nine. Some have been capped, but most haven't, and all are subject to disturbance.

Although people made do and reused in the past, the amount we throw away has increased since the Industrial Revolution, substantially since World War II and exponentially in the age of plastics. Still, since prehistoric days of the kitchen midden, we have had to get rid of waste from excrement to animal bones. Further, industrial waste, sometimes toxic, was apparently the ineluctable byproduct of our economy. Rivers or dumps near rivers have often been the default solution to the problems, whether for liquid or solid waste.

The dyeworks in North Adams colored the Hoosic River. Residents were warned not to leave household waste on its frozen surface, which means they were accustomed to doing so. A river seemed to carry away waste harmlessly, and the land near rivers was regarded as wasteland. Of the seven dumps listed in Williamstown, one is labeled "unconfirmed," and two labels refer to the same one. Yet, as is true in every Berkshire town, there were and are certainly many others. A few years ago, several of us spent a day at an unlisted one on a tributary to the West Branch of the Green River, digging bottles and rusted cans out of the duff until we realized that they were holding the bank together. If we continued, the river would erode the bank.

An annual event has sent members of the South Williamstown Community Association and Hoosic River Watershed Association tippy-toeing into the Green near the Five Corners to pick up shards of glass from a dump listed as first used in 1948. As the river moves, it digs into the trash. The first step the town took to remediate it was the remove a Volkswagen Beetle perched above the river.

The most recent landfill, now covered with solar panels like others in Berkshire, was in the gravel pits at a bend of the Hoosic. It has been converted into a transfer station, as have others in Berkshire. Our trash, minus the recyclable content, is now buried in another landfill probably by a river somewhere else. That falls short of being a solution.

The Cole Avenue landfill, also listed as the Cole Field landfill, was on Hoosic riverside land made available by Williams College and adjacent to its athletic fields. I remember driving past soccer matches to deposit my bags when I first arrived in town in 1963. The dump was closed in 1973, when the one under the panels was opened. Wells were sunk to check for toxicity, and the trash was covered.

But rivers, while handy, have a way of exposing what was thought to be out-of-sight and out-of-mind. A storm last summer dropped a tree and its root ball into the river just where the geotextile cloth protection ended. Since then, a bit of my old trash has been washing into Pownal and Petersburgh in Vermont, I suppose. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is coming up with a fix.

It is hard to get rid of what we no longer want. Maybe it would be easier to want less. At least, that's how it looks from the White Oaks.

Update From the Store at Five Corners Stewardship Association.

We are thrilled to announce that the voters of Williamstown recently approved a Community Preservation Act grant to the Store at Five Corners Stewardship Association.

With these funds, we were able to replace 22 double-hung windows with historically accurate, energy-efficient, durable windows. This renovation was completed in June. In addition, we hope to have the exterior painted this fall, funded by generous individual donations.

Please remember that the Store will be open throughout the rotary construction project. The entrance on the south end of the building remains open for entry and exit.



Thank you to the residents of Williamstown for supporting our mission to preserve the 258-year-old Store at Five Corners in perpetuity. We couldn't do it without you! See you at the Store!

South Williamstown Featured in a New Publication about Williamstown

Contributed by Dustin Griffin å

Local historian Dustin Griffin has published another volume in his series of books on Williamstown and Williams College. This one, "Volume IV," includes two essays that should be of particular interest to members of the South Williamstown Community Association.

One is "The History of South Williamstown," tracing the development of "the South Part" from the 18th century to the present. Griffin notes that there have been significant changes throughout its history, beginning with names. Many people know that "Five Corners" used to be called "Steele's Corners," but nobody alive is old enough to remember when it was called "Four Corners," "Sabin's Corners," and just "The Center." Roads have changed too. Cold Spring Road was not widened and paved until 1933. Old Mill Road used to go through to the New Ashford Road. Potter Road, formerly called East Street, used to go south all the way to Route 7.

There were once three schools – not only the South Center School (Little Red), but also the Sherwood School on Hancock Road and the South School on New Ashford Road. There was once a strong proposal to extend a rail line through South Williamstown. The "South Part" used to be the site for a surprising amount of commerce, with small mills, factories, and stores.

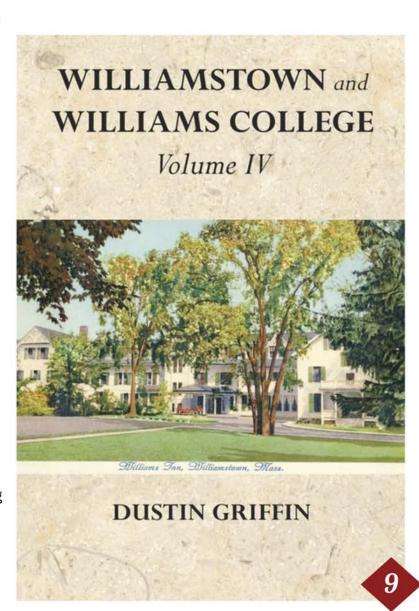
In the past, South Williamstown has considered itself somewhat separate from "the North Part." This led to serious thoughts of secession. In 1908, the lack of town services induced a number of South Williamstown residents to propose that the "South Part" be annexed to New Ashford, so that the residents of South Williamstown would not be obliged to pay Williamstown property taxes for improvements that the North Part enjoyed – town water and sewer, sidewalks, street lights – but that were of no direct benefit to residents of the South Part. Five years later, in 1913, more than half the residents of South Williamstown signed a petition asking that the South Part withdraw from the North Part and incorporate itself separately.

A second essay, "A Guide to Cold Spring Road, Then and Now," describes in detail what can be seen on the left and right of the road as you drive the five miles south from Field Park to Five Corners, drawing attention to the oldest of the houses and the many changes over time – including the building of Sweetwood and the high school (Mt. Greylock Regional School).

The book also includes eleven other essays on topics in the history of the town, including the history of the Williams Inn and the Clark Art Institute. There is also history about Williams College, including the history of the president's house.

Griffin's book is available for purchase (\$34.95) at the Williamstown Historical Museum, The Store at Five Corners, the bookstore on Spring Street, and on Amazon.

Before turning to local history, Griffin was a professor of English Literature at New York University, and is the author of numerous scholarly books on 18th-century English literature. He has served as a trustee of Williams College. He and his wife moved to Williamstown in 2003.



Jill Pompi - Summer Reading Tutoring Summary

Thanks to the generosity of the South Williamstown Community Association (SWCA), nine elementary students were given the opportunity to continue their targeted reading instruction during the summer of 2024. I had the pleasure of meeting with each of these students in person to reinforce the decoding, encoding, and comprehension skills and strategies introduced during the school year. We enjoyed a variety of games, activities, and short stories. In addition, materials were sent home for families who requested them, so learning could be reinforced at home.

Parents of all students were very grateful for the opportunity and shared that their children enjoyed coming. Without a doubt, these children benefited from their participation in the reading intervention program funded by SWCA this summer. As in the past, the children showed up with a smile, worked hard, and expressed excitement and enthusiasm for reading. What more could we ask for? Thank you so much for the opportunity to work with these students over the summer!

Your Gift Helps Kids Read with Confidence

For several years leading up to 2017, SWCA partnered with the Reading Institute, located in Williamstown. During those years, the effort was to provide intensive reading tutoring for students in grades 6–8. With guidance from the Institute's director, we identified students with both academic and financial need and supported them with two to three sessions per week for several months. The program was effective and well-received, but when the Institute closed, we knew we needed a new model.

In 2016, SWCA proposed a shift in focus toward even earlier intervention—at the elementary level. That dea took shape in 2018, when we launched a summer reading support program at Williamstown Elementary School. Since then, a local reading specialist, Jill Pompi, has worked each summer with selected students to reinforce the decoding, comprehension, and fluency strategies introduced during the school year. In summer 2024, nine elementary students received targeted instruction in a supportive, engaging environment—including games, short stories, and take-home materials—to extend learning at home. The program is running again this summer. It invites students throughout Williamstown to receive support with the intent to continue to build young readers' skills and confidence.

This initiative has become one of the most meaningful—and costly—parts of SWCA's annual budget. If you believe in the importance of early reading support, please visit <u>southwilliamstown.org/donate</u> or scan the QR code below, and earmark your donation for reading support. Whether your gift is big, little, or in the middle, every dollar helps a local child become a stronger, more confident reader.

Thank you for helping us continue this legacy.











Get Involved in SWCA

Here are some ways you can do it. Would you like to:

- · Work on helping organize a community event
- Write about Williamstown history or other surrounding area histories
- Write about interesting local activities and/ or events
- Fix things at our Repair Cafés
- Track local land use issues or other topics of interest
- Represent SWCA at community events like the Farmer's Market
- Post posters about our events around the region
- Tell your local friends and family about SWCA and point them to our website at https://southwilliamstown.org/
- Share news about our events with your friends or via e-mail, Facebook, etc.

Or maybe you have a good idea to suggest for something the South Williamstown Community Association should be doing as a 501 (c) 3 organization devoted to promoting community, historical preservation and documentation, and neighborhood building for Williamstown and surrounding locales.

Email us at info@southwilliamstown.org. Visit our website at https://southwilliamstown.org/

South Williamstown Community Association Membership Form

Promoting community, historical preservation and neighborhood building for Williamstown and surrounding locales.

Print and mail this form or join online at https://southwilliamstown.org/membership
You don't have to live in South Williamstown to join SWCA

Suggested dues are: \$35/individual OR \$50/Family Additional donation Total enclosed	\$ \$	SWCA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Your dues and donations are tax deductible and your cancelled check or email confirmation will be your receipt.
Address		
Phone		
Email	(E-mail only used for SWCA communications & newsletters
What's the best way to co		Email [] Phone (Txt) [] Phone (Voice) for an event or committee

Mail to SWCA, PO Box 432, Williamstown, MA 01267 Email us at info@southwilliamstown.org

Upcoming Events

	opeoning reente
August 7 7 pm - 8:30 pm	"OK Chorale" - 1st Thursday of each month. See bit.ly/music5c for more info The Store at Five Corners, 4 New Ashford Rd, Williamstown, MA
August 8 7 pm - 9 pm	"The Flatbed Jazz Band" - Live music in the barn. See page 5 Williamstown Historical Museum, 32 New Ashford Rd, Williamstown, MA
August 11	SWCA Summer BBQ, Potluck and Cake Raffle - See page 1
5:30 - 7:30 PM	Williamstown Historical Museum, 32 New Ashford Rd, Williamstown, MA
August 14	Song Swap - 2nd Thursday of each month. See <u>bit.ly/music5c</u> for more info
7 pm - 8:30 pm.	The Store at Five Corners, 4 New Ashford Rd, Williamstown, MA
August 16 11 am	"Fashion History" at the Williamstown Historical Museum Williamstown Historical Museum, 32 New Ashford Rd, Williamstown, MA
August 17 1 pm - 3 pm	Traditional Tune Jam - 3rd Sunday of each month. See See <u>bit.ly/music5c</u> The Store at Five Corners, 4 New Ashford Rd, Williamstown, MA
August 22	"Five Pound Horse" - Live music in the barn.
7 pm - 9 pm	Williamstown Historical Museum, 32 New Ashford Rd, Williamstown, MA
August 27 2 pm - 3 pm	"Music from the Golden Age of Radio" - Pianist Sue Waterson. See page 5 Sweetwood, 1611 Cold Spring Rd, Williamstown, MA
September 4 7 pm - 8:30 pm	"OK Chorale" - 1st Thursday of each month. See bit.ly/music5c for more info The Store at Five Corners, 4 New Ashford Rd, Williamstown, MA
September 6	Community Paper Shredding - See page 6
9 am - 11 am	40 Field St Council on Aging lot . Dalton, MA
September 7 .	Plate Decorating Workshop - See page 5
2 pm - 4 pm	Sweetwood, 1611 Cold Spring Rd, Williamstown, MA
September 11	Song Swap - 2nd Thursday of each month. See <u>bit.ly/music5c</u> for more info
7 pm - 8:30 pm.	The Store at Five Corners, 4 New Ashford Rd, Williamstown, MA
September 21	Traditional Tune Jam - 3rd Sunday of each month. See <u>bit.ly/music5c</u>
1 pm - 3 pm	The Store at Five Corners, 4 New Ashford Rd, Williamstown, MA
September 20.	Bulky waste, Electronics and Scrap Metal collection - See page 6
8 am - 12 pm	DPW Yard . 10 Maple Ct Lanesboro, MA . Fees Apply
September 28.	. Harvest Fair
TBD	Williamstown Historical Museum, 32 New Ashford Rd, Williamstown, MA
October 11 8 am - 12 pm	. Bulky waste, Electronics and Scrap Metal collection - See page 6 DPW Yard . 10 Maple Ct Lanesboro, MA . Fees Apply

October 11.

10 am - 3 pm

Sweetwood Fall Festival

Sweetwood, 1611 Cold Spring Rd, Williamstown, MA