



August-September 2009 [www.iffp.net](http://www.iffp.net) P.O. Box 5413, Takoma Park, MD 20913 (301) 270-6337

## FROM THE BOARD

JEN LIEBREICH

Dear IFFP Families,

The summer is flying by! Soon we'll be back at Einstein, swapping summer stories with our friends and sending our children down the halls to their new IFFP class. The staff is busy ramping up for the new year, and the board has a few announcements -- which you'll see in action your first week back.

Our best news: after a comprehensive search for a permanent Director of Religious Education (DRE), we made the unanimous decision to hire our interim DRE, Rev. Beth McCracken-Harness. Rev. Beth wowed our staff, search, and hiring committees with her dedication, passion and experience. She has impressed the board with her professionalism and continues to organize our curriculum for publishing. Please take a moment to welcome Beth into her new position this Fall.



In other news, the board has out-sourced our post-Gathering snacks to the Bagelry (see the full article below) which will likely be a relief to all of us!

Finally, the board has discussed all the comments/suggestions received at the Spring membership meeting and has assigned relevant duties so that we can implement changes and continue to make IFFP the best it can be. We encourage you to send us feedback anytime:

Hope you are making great summer memories. See you at the snack table!

--Jennifer Liebreich  
IFFP Board Chair

## FROM THE RABBI – A ROSH HASHANAH MESSAGE



Rosh Hashanah is actually the second New Year in the Jewish calendar. The first commences in the spring during the Hebrew month of Nisan when Passover occurs. Passover is the beginning of the civil year and marked occasions such as the coronation of the kings of ancient Israel. Rosh Hashanah marks the beginning of the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar which is Tishri. It commences the religious New Year and celebrates the act of Creation in the Book of Genesis. It is in this sense the "birthday of the world".

Why did Hebrew Scripture insist upon two New Years, one secular and the other religious? One explanation could be that it is in keeping with the tradition of the separation of church and state that is prevalent in Biblical history. Another possibility is that this is a reflection of the belief

## A ROSH HASHANAH MESSAGE

RABBI WHITE

that Genesis was not a creation *ex nihilo*, a creation of something out of nothing. Many biblical commentators believe that the world was pre-existent in a state of chaos. Nisan may have been the beginning of the physical world, but Rosh Hashanah celebrates the spiritual act of Creation when the Divine transforms the chaos into order. Rosh Hashanah is an invitation to perform the act of Teshuvah, translated as “transformation”. Rosh Hashanah reminds us that creativity is not the art of the magician who brings a rabbit out of a hat. It is rather our ability to transform chaos into order. The shofar, the ram’s horn, is a wake up call to the possibility that we are all capable of being agents of transformation, both internally and externally.

I seldom refer to Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur as the High Holy Days. This is a mis-translation of the Hebrew “Yomim Noraiim” or “Days of Awe”. I am always impressed by the fact that the spiritual New Year occurs at the end, rather than the beginning, of the agricultural cycle in ancient Israel. This is contrary to the notion that the beginning is always better than the end, youth to be preferred over old age. I am indebted to my teacher Abraham Joshua Heschel for introducing me to the concept of awe as “radical amazement”. The existence of two New Years rather than one, make Rosh Hashanah all the more awesome.

## FUNDRAISING & DONATIONS

DAVID QUIGLEY

Keep in mind IFFP is an eligible charity in the Federal Government's Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). The CFC is a program in which the Federal Government encourages its employees to donate money to one or more pre-approved charities. We thank the many members who were very generous with their CFC donations last year.

For those who are Federal employees, please remember IFFP as you make your CFC contribution decisions this year. Also, please let all your friends and family members know about IFFP's participation in this program. This is a great opportunity for IFFP fundraising, so let's get the word out! **IFFP's CFC number is 27138.**

### DONATIONS IN HONOR OF TEACHERS

Making a donation in honor of a teacher is a very welcome new way to honor your children's teachers and to support IFFP. Many thanks to the following individuals and families:

**The Iverson/Kane family** donated in honor of Eli's 6th grade teachers, **Fredie Adelman & Steve Brescia.**

**The Liebrech's** made a donation to honor Joseph's Pre-K 3's teachers, **Andy Herman, Lisa Henderson & Julia Lewis.**

**The Henderson/Mathis family** gave a donation in honor of 5th grade teachers, **Diane Ives & Phillip Bregstone** and COA Prep teachers, **Jessica Stevens & Bob Schwartz.**

## IFFP CALENDAR

SUSAN RYDER

### AUGUST

**August 22 – COA Parent Meeting**

**August 29 – Teacher Training**

**August 29th - COAers and IFFP Teens  
White Water Rafting 7 A.M. - 7 P.M.**

**August 30 – Welcoming Gathering:**  
Welcome Home: What is our Spiritual Home? As part of our Gathering theme of welcoming, we will be celebrating and welcoming our new DRE, Beth McCracken-Harness.  
Potluck Brunch (details in article below)

### SEPTEMBER

**September 13 – Gathering:** Stories of beginning anew, as we approach Rosh Hashanah  
“**Back to School Sunday**” (see article below – at least one parent must attend per student)  
Small Adult Group  
Sunday School – Session 1  
Takoma Park Folk Festival

**September 26 – Board Retreat and Training**

**September 27 – Gathering:** Yom Kippur  
Adult Group  
Open House  
Sunday School – Session 2

Yoga  
Sunday School Class Picnic-Grades 4 & 5

**September 28 – Yom Kippur Service & Break the Fast**  
Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church

### OCTOBER

**October 4 – Sukkot and Gleaning**  
Gleaning field location TBA

**October 10 – COA Prep class trip to FLOC**  
(for a ropes course)

**October 18 – Gathering:** with Fr. Dennis  
Adult Group with Fr. Dennis  
Sunday school  
Yoga  
Sunday School class picnics- Grades Pre-K & K

**October 25 – Gathering**  
Adult Group-Interfaith 101 Part 1  
Sunday School  
Yoga  
Sunday School Class Picnics-Grades 1, 2 & 3

**Member sources of information about events:**  
Our website, [www.iffp.net](http://www.iffp.net), has a listing of events and dates on the home page as well as a more detailed calendar of events, in calendar format, ([http://www.iffp.net/events/user\\_calendar.php](http://www.iffp.net/events/user_calendar.php)) that members can access at any time. IFFP also has a Facebook page.

## ADULT GROUP THEMES FOR SEPTEMBER

LARRY BOSTIAN

September 13: Why are we here? Let's think about why are we here in Einstein HS cafeteria on a beautiful fall Sunday morning? Why are we here as an interfaith community? Why aren't we in church or temple? Why are we here in adult group? We might even begin to look into the bigger context, why are we here at all, i.e., what is religion for?

September 27: Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur  
From bondage to freedom...we will explore the Biblical stories in which God leads God's people from slavery to freedom. How might those stories have been heard by their original audiences? How do people read them now? In what ways do we still live in bondage, and how might we find ways within the stories of our traditions to escape from those bonds?

## **IFFP EVENT DETAILS: AUGUST & SEPTEMBER** SUSAN RYDER

### **WELCOMING GATHERING & POTLUCK AUGUST 30**

Please join us at this lovely event as we come together again as a community to visit with each other and say goodbye to summer! Rev. Julia & Rabbi White will lead our first Gathering of the 2009-2010 year, followed by a festive potluck brunch. This is a great time for adults and children to reconnect focus on all the wonderful programs and events that IFFP offers, and welcome new families and individuals.

IFFP will provide paper goods and beverages. As usual, the food assignments are based on your family's last name (use the female head of your household if the adults have different last names). Please bring enough for 10 to 15 people.

- ◆ Last names A-J: Please bring a side dish or salad.
- ◆ Last names K-Z: Please bring a main dish (cold cuts for sandwiches with the fixings, quiches, chicken, casseroles, etc.)
- ◆ Board Members: Please bring dessert

### **IFFP AT THE TAKOMA PARK FOLK FESTIVAL, SEPTEMBER 13**

The Takoma Park Folk Festival is a fun, festive event that draws thousands of people. It's a wonderful place to advertise IFFP. Please Volunteer on September 13 from 11-6:30, and help spread the word about IFFP. IFFP will have an information table at the Festival, and we need several volunteers – including teens – to help staff the table for one-hour shifts handing out flyers, IFFP pens, origami peace cranes, showing photos and answering questions. It's fun to be a part of the festival and to tell people about our wonderful community!

### **FALL OPEN HOUSE, SEPTEMBER 27 – HELP SPREAD THE WORD!**

Just as all of you are happy to have found a supportive interfaith community, there are 100's or more families in the DC that would also like to know about IFFP! Please help us spread the word about our Fall Open House, September 27<sup>th</sup>. **Please invite friends and family, post Open House flyers on list serves and school bulletin boards and help spread the word!**

Visiting families will attend the Yom Kippur Gathering, refreshments and social time and then attend an orientation with board and staff where they can learn more about IFFP programs and activities.

### **HIGH HOLY DAYS SERVICES AT GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, SEPTEMBER 18 & 19, 27 & 28**

Rabbi White's will once again be leading services on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur at **Georgetown University!** They are free and open to the public. These popular services do fill up, however, so the Rabbi advises IFFP families to arrive at least 20 minutes before the start of each service. Childcare is available for pre-school aged children. Times and locations for all services are available on the Campus Ministry Information Hotline, 202-687-1882. Rosh Hashanah begins at sunset September 18 and Yom Kippur at sunset September 27.

## **YOM KIPPUR REFLECTION & BREAK THE FAST, SEPTEMBER 28**

Our Yom Kippur Service & Break-the-Fast potluck will be held this year on **Monday evening, September 28**, 5:30-7:30 pm at the **Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church** near Silver Spring, 3215 Powder Mill Road, Adelphi, Maryland. Our teen group, directed by **Rob Liebreich**, will again lead this lovely, family friendly service in the Meeting Room (sanctuary). Very young children are welcome to attend, however we do not provide childcare.

The service will begin at 5:30 and our Break-the-Fast potluck meal will follow in the foyer of the Meeting Room and in the Meeting Room from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Those of you who will wait until sunset may want to save a plate of food until then. We have the space until 8:00 p.m.

Please bring one or more of the following for the potluck: egg/tuna/chicken salads, cold cuts with rolls or bread; challah/butter, bagels/cream cheese, fruit and desserts (bring enough to serve 10 people). Please leave the food that you bring on the tables in the foyer. IFFP will supply paper goods and drinks.

### **Directions**

<b>From Takoma Park:</b> Follow Carroll to Ethan Allen/MD 410 Cont. to follow MD 410 .6 mi  Turn LT onto MD 650 N/New Hampshire 3.4 mi Turn RT onto Powder Mill Rd .6 mi  Turn LT onto Riggs Rd/MD 212. Cont. to follow MD 212 .9 mi <b>From DC</b> MD 185 N/Connecticut Merge onto 495 toward Baltimore/SS Merge onto MD 650 N/New Hampshire Follow above directions from New Hampshire	<b>From Gaithersburg:</b> 270 S to 495 E Merge onto MD 650 N/New Hampshire Ave, exit 28A toward White Oak Turn RT onto Powder Mill Turn LT onto Riggs Rd/MD 212. Cont. to follow MD 212 End at 3215 Powder Mill
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## **IFFP EVENT DETAILS: OCTOBER (PARTIAL)**

SUSAN RYDER

### **SUKKOT AND GLEANING, OCTOBER 4**

One of our most popular and beloved IFFP traditions, gleaning to celebrate Sukkot, the joyous Jewish feast of gathering will be October 4th. We will meet at a nearby farm (TBA) where we will "glean" produce to be given to a local food bank. Members of all ages can participate in this joyous event, share in the joy of the fall season, and celebrate nature's bounty while providing for needy members of our community. We hope you can join us this year for this fun event!

We will meet for a gathering at the farm at the usual time of 10 a.m. and then glean crops until noon. **Watch the List-Serve for the exact location and directions to the gleaning site and for more details. Every family is asked to please bring their own snack.** The location is dependent on weather conditions that week.

# Sunday School & Teens

## NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Goodbye late mornings, inner tubes, and sunscreen! Hello, chalk dust, and colorful falling leaves! It is time for Sunday School to start back up again.

This summer, I took some time off and then got busy tying up loose ends from last year and preparing for the 2009-10 school year. I have been recruiting and meeting with teachers, preparing for their training, preparing for "Back to School Sunday", and working on the curriculum with the teachers and curriculum committee.



The only substantive curriculum change we have made is in the class description of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade class (The Life and Times of Jesus). Previously, teachers taught some of the history of Israel, but the class description only required a review of the last 300 years before the birth of Jesus. The curriculum committee and I agreed that it would be more effective to include an overview of the Tanak/Old Testament and the history of the Jewish people up until the time of Jesus. This links Jesus' life more directly to his Jewish history. The newly written curriculum does this review through role plays, so it will be fun for the kids and will engage all their senses in learning.

Another thing that I have been doing this summer is getting feedback from you. You have probably received some email surveys from me. If you have not had time to fill them out yet, please do. They are not long, but provide some valuable feedback to us so we can plan for next year. If you have no idea what I am talking about and would like to take a survey, please email me and I will send you one.

Thanks and welcome back!

-- Rev. Beth

## NEW RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM ASSISTANT

We welcome Kerri Mullins-Levine to our IFFP staff. She is a special education teacher who modified IFFP's Sunday School Curriculum to teach the mixed grade Sunday School class for three years. Kerri continues to lead the mixed grade teen group and is now replacing our very efficient Karen Jackler as Religious Education Program Assistant. Please welcome her to her new role in the religious education team.

## CHEERS FOR THE KINDERGARTEN CLASS

SUSAN RYDER

Kindergarten class raised \$40 to donate to the "Send a Kid to Camp" fund sponsored by the Washington Post.

## IFFP SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS ❖ 2009-2010

Our outstanding team of IFFP teachers is ready to teach your children in the IFFP Sunday School this year! **Rev. Beth** and the teachers will hold a Teacher Training Day on August 29 to prepare them for the new Sunday School year. (The first gathering is on August 30<sup>th</sup>, and the first Sunday School session begins on September 13.) Please welcome our teaching staff:

**Pre K 3s-** Andrea Herman and Cheryl Leanza (co-teachers)

**Pre K 4s-** Jenni BenBasset and Mary Melrod (co-teachers) with Aimee Miller (teen assistant)

**Kindergarten-** Amy Richard and Lora Dunne (co-teachers)

**1<sup>st</sup> grade-** Kathy Flitter (lead teacher), Scott and Kim Kelberg (rotating teaching assistants), Eve Weisberg, Don and Marla Hughes, Karen Jackler (rotating teaching assistants)

**2<sup>nd</sup> grade-** Anita Iverson and Maureen Jaffe (co-teachers)

**3<sup>rd</sup> grade-** Cindy Pohoryles and Josh Herman (co-teachers) with Ruthie and Julia Lewis (rotating teen teaching assistants)

**4<sup>th</sup> grade-** Lisa Dominguez and Christine Tatelbaum (co-teachers)

**5<sup>th</sup> grade-** Adam Korengold and Melissa Golding (co-teachers)

**6<sup>th</sup> grade-** Fredie Adelman (lead teacher), Deborah Schaumberg (teaching assistant)

**Coming of Age Prep-** Sarah Gamble (lead teacher) and Bob Schwartz (co-teacher)

**Coming of Age-** Rob Liebreich (lead teacher) and Joan Bellsey (co-teacher)

**Music-** Eric Maring, Marci and Rich Shegogue (teachers)

**Hebrew-** Michael Rosenman (lead teacher) and Renee Wasco (teen teaching assistant)

## “BACK TO SCHOOL SUNDAY”

REV. BETH

What do your kids do while you discuss interfaith issues in Adult Group or drink Starbucks coffee in the hallway? Come find out!

Please join us for a Sunday School orientation in Adult Group on September 13; we're calling this event "Back to School Sunday". Both Kerri Mullins-Levine and I will be meeting with all parents of Sunday School students at the start of the Adult Group time for approximately 20 minutes; following this group discussion, Sunday School parents will go to their child's class to meet with the teachers for a more individualized discussion inside the respective classrooms; this more individualized discussion will also last approximately 20 minutes. Those parents who have more than one child can then go and meet with the teachers of the second child. Teachers are planning two of these individual class sessions, each lasting 20 minutes, to accommodate families with more than one child.

**Please note that it is mandatory for at least one parent from each family to attend Back to School Sunday.** If you cannot attend, please call or email me so we can arrange for an individual orientation or coordinate an alternate date for a few families to attend.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL FORMS

REV. BETH

The Sunday School forms are very important for the safety of your children, for IFFP and for maximizing your children's Sunday School experiences.

**Last year we spent a lot of time running after people, trying to get their forms. So this year, we are requiring all children, teachers and hall helpers to turn in their forms before they can begin Sunday School. PLEASE FILL OUT AND RETURN THE REGISTRATION FORMS BY MAIL RIGHT AWAY.**

We have been simplifying the process and the forms so that it is easy for you to do that. We will send them to you ahead of time on the IFFP list serve and a hard-copy mailing should already be in your hands by the time of the publication of this newsletter. Look for your forms in the mail. You can fill them out and mail them in or scan them into the computer and email them as attachments. In the "Back to School Sunday" Adult Group, you will have another chance to fill out your children's forms. We would like to get all the forms in before the first day of Sunday School, but if you have not completed the forms, your child's teachers will have them in the classrooms for you to fill out. No children can stay in the classrooms until their teachers have all their forms.

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS PICNICS**

SUSAN RYDER

Sunday School Picnics provide the perfect opportunity for parents to speak to their children's teachers, observe who their children like to spend time with (for play dates), and meet other parents. Please join us.

**Grades 4 & 5 – September 27; Pre-K & K – October 18; Grades 1, 2 & 3 – October 25**

The picnics will take place after Sunday School in the park across the parking lot. In case of inclement weather, we will use the cafeteria. (The 6<sup>th</sup> Grade will be having lunches after field trips.) Teachers will send notices with specifics and will provide nametags.

Each family is asked to bring its own food and drinks (unless the teacher chooses to organize a potluck), a blanket to sit on, frisbees, balls for the park, and any necessary paper or plastic goods.

Use this time to speak with your child's teacher, arrange play dates for your kids, or get-togethers with other families. Children are much more likely to want to come to Sunday School and skip off down the hallway when they know they'll see their buddies there.

## **TEEN GROUP LEADER!**

REV. JULIA/SUSAN RYDER

We are thrilled to announce that we're hiring a great young man, Ben Foote (just back from Turkey) to be a Teen Group Leader! We're also hoping to hire a great gal, but are waiting for her to return from Israel. That would give us two young, energetic, cool teen group leaders who love to travel the world, are in their mid-20's, have lots of interfaith experience, a love for teens and fun ideas.

Ben has extensive academic and programming experience in Judaism and Christianity having graduated from Tufts with a degree in Spanish Language Literature and Comparative Religion (magna cum laude!). He also received a Master's of Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity School in Judaism and Christianity, Religious Studies and Education Program in Religious Studies and Education. In his academic work – both at the undergraduate and graduate levels – he has explored the depth and variety of interactions between Jews and Christians, as well as the similarities and differences between the two traditions. He also has experience planning and leading religious – and especially multi-religious – programming, including worship services, meditation retreats, commencement events, panels, and chaplaincy work. He has worked as a high school English teacher, writing instructor at a college admissions office, and camp counselor.

Ben is funny, grew up in a Jewish/Catholic family (though the focus was on Judaism); has an interfaith girlfriend, speaks Spanish fluently, Hebrew reasonably well, and some Arabic. He was a Judaics teacher at Temple Sinai; is an ultimate Frisbee coach, plays and referees soccer, has extensive choral experience, plays piano, and likes to have fun! He "gets" interfaith kids and believes they're more honest about their identities than others and have a great advantage.

So far his plans include gleaning for apples, midnight disco bowling, ultimate Frisbee and he's contacting a Jewish Justice Community Service group for service activities.

This should be a great year for the IFFP teen group! Please share our excitement with your teens!

## COA PREP AND COA TEACHERS

REV. BETH

I will be supervising the COA Prep and COA programs this year, and I am excited about the staff we have--and the fun we have planned.

COA Prep will be led by Sarah Gamble. She came to our community last year with her fiancé Jonathan Erdman. She has a master's degree in museum education and works as an Associate Teacher at the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center. She is energetic and full of great ideas. Sarah, Bob Schwartz (our esteemed COA Prep veteran) and I met extensively to plan for the year. As is the COA Prep tradition, the class will go to FLOC for a ropes course (October 10) just a bit later than usual due to the High Holidays in September. They are planning to integrate community service into the class. Please join me and Bob in a warm welcome to Sarah!

COA will be led by Rob Liebreich again this year. (He is back by popular demand!) Joan Bellsey will be joining his team. Like Sarah, Joan came to IFFP with her son Liam last year. She is a clinical social worker by trade and offers a lot of energy and enthusiasm to the COA program. We are excited to welcome her as well. There will be a COA parent meeting with Rob, Joan and Beth, August 22.

## COA PREP AND COA NEW MEETING DATES/TIMES

J. LIEBREICH

In an effort to address member feedback, the board has moved the majority of COA and COA Prep meeting times to Sunday mornings. In past years the COA teacher was not available on Sunday mornings, but our new teachers are available and looking forward to it. The board is attempting to address concerns about cost and keeping families connected to IFFP once children are in older grades. Attending IFFP both on Sunday mornings and evenings made for a long day for a lot of people in past years. There was a cost for rental space outside of Einstein, and the confusing logistics of meeting at different locations. The board hopes the decision to hold more COA and COA Prep classes at Einstein this year will prove less burdensome for families, plus we can all look forward to seeing more COA families at more Gatherings! COA Prep will have 4 evening events, the Ropes Course and two field trips. COA will have 3 evening events, a field trip and a spring Wilderness Retreat. When they have evening events, the groups will not have classes in the morning. Schedules will be sent to all the COA Prep and COA parents shortly.

## IFFP REFRESHMENTS ALTERNATE FORMAT

DAVID QUIGLEY

As you know, between the Gathering and Sunday School each week we enjoy bagels, fruit, cheese, and juice in the auditorium so that our children can recharge before going off to their classes and the adults can “nosh.” The snacks appear every week, seemingly effortlessly, but the truth is a lot goes in to those tasty treats. Sign-up sheets go out at the beginning of the year (and the week after that, and the week after that, and in some years nearly every week after that until they are completed) asking us to volunteer to bring one of the items. And while we never fail to fill out the sheets (although we would have come close last year but for the generosity of some members who pulled “double-shifts”), the work does not end there. Our staff spends an inordinate amount of time (that otherwise could be spent on the administration of IFFP) circulating the volunteer form (and re-circulating the form), putting appeals in the bulletins and on the list serve, sending weekly reminders, and often assisting our refreshments committee (thank you Lisa Beaudet) setting up the refreshments, to make sure we have enough to eat.

This year, we would like to try an alternative format. After much shopping around, we have entered into a contract with the Bagelry, a local and family-owned business, to provide our feast. The Bagelry will set up the food for us, pre-sliced and plated, with little to no involvement on our part. They actually will supply the bagels/cream cheese, cubed cheese, grapes, and juice!! (Still need volunteers to do the coffee/tea- a bit too costly to cater). **This service will add approximately twenty (\$20) dollars to each family's tax deductible Membership Fees, less than \$1.00 per family per Gathering.** Please know that the Board worked hard to keep this amount as low as possible, and have not included any other increase in the membership dues this year. Additionally, the many families out there that graciously have purchased these items in past years may actually realize a savings over what they paid in the past.

Of course, we recognize that some families enjoy providing food to the community, particularly in recognition of a family milestone, child's achievement, or other event. We would love for families to continue to “sponsor” gathering snacks by either bringing or arranging for additional foods, coffee, or whatever the specialty of the house might be. Please contact Susan to arrange for such a tribute, which we will be delighted to highlight in the newsletter.

## ODDS AND ENDS

SUSAN RYDER

### **BE INCLUDED IN THE IFFP DIRECTORY**

Our directory is scheduled to come out in October. Please send in your registration forms by September 1 so we can have accurate information for our directory, personal listings, and class listings.

### **GET A NAMETAG**

We're starting a new year and want our members to have nametags in good condition. We will make replacement nametags for all members by the end of September. If you know that your nametag is lost, incorrect, or broken and need a new one, email Susan.