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**Drive Carefully - School Starts Soon**

If you have kids, you're probably immersed in the dubious pleasure of back-to-school shopping and dreaming up new and exciting items to pack in that lunch box ... 180 times. If you don't, you might just be wondering when school starts so you can avoid getting stuck at the end of the long line of cars waiting to drop off students. Whichever population you fall into - be sure to slow down, Lamorinda; school starts soon!

**Moraga School District:** First day of school is **Monday, Aug. 25.**  
Elementary schools: The school day starts at 8:25 a.m. and ends at 3:05 p.m. except on Wednesdays, when students are dismissed at 1:50 p.m. Younger students have shorter schedules. Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School: School starts at 7:50 a.m. and ends at 2:24 p.m. for most students; seventh graders taking an extra period are released at 3:13 p.m.

**Lafayette School District:** First day of school is **Tuesday, Aug. 26.**  
Elementary schools: There is a small schedule change for Lafayette's elementary schools this year to allow time for staff collaboration on Wednesday afternoons. The school day starts at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 2:42 p.m. except on Wednesdays, when students are dismissed at 1:42 p.m. Younger students have shorter schedules. Stanley Middle School: School starts at 8:15 a.m. except on Wednesdays, when the first class begins at 9 a.m. Dismissal time is 2:53 p.m.

**Orinda Union School District:** First day of school is **Tuesday, Aug. 26.**  
Elementary schools: The school day starts at 8 a.m. and ends at 2:50 p.m. except on Mondays, when students are dismissed at 1:55 p.m. Younger students have shorter schedules. Orinda Intermediate School: School starts at 8:45 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m. except on Mondays, when students are dismissed at 2:45 p.m.

**Acalanes Union High School District:** First day of school is **Monday, Aug. 25.**  
Most high school students attend classes from 8 a.m. to 3:05 p.m.  
*Note: The schedules above are for regular school days. "Minimum Day" schedules will be different. Many schools have detailed schedules posted on their websites, which are accessible from the district sites:*  
www.district.moraga.k12.ca.us, www.lafsd.k12.ca.us, www.orindaschools.org, www.acalanes.k12.ca.us.  
- Compiled from various school websites by L. Borrowman

**From Front Page**

**Don't Fence Them In**

... continued from page A1

"They don't know what to call me," said firefighter Julie Mulliken. "Wow! You're a fire lady!" Or, "You're tall. You could pull me out of a building." Mulliken, who grew up in Moraga, faces a unique challenge in her dealings with the public. "My biggest fear is that the next emergency call could involve the mother of one of my friends," she said.

McMahon talked about an incident from her days as a firefighter in Southern California. "I was in San Diego, getting a physical, and the nurse asked me why I was there," she said. "She did not believe that women should be doing this job."

"A patient may say, 'You're too cute to be a firefighter.' Or, 'Are you strong enough to carry that gurney?'" said Katy Himsel, firefighter-paramedic and the 2004 Carondelet High School Athlete of the Year. Firefighter-paramedic Kelly Nichols, Mulliken's sister, recalled a scene in the Moraga Safeway parking lot. "I was with Katy, and people were giv-

ing her a hard time about how tiny she was."

Brandi-Roult resents the thinking that she was given an entry break because of her gender. "That's offensive," she said. "People think I have to take a lighter test? Do you want females to be less capable than men? I trained for this myself. Community college and a gym are available to anyone."

"I never think about being a girl in the fire service," said McMahon. "Being a female has nothing to do with it. We've all met the physical requirements, and the emotional ones. We're not doing this job to prove a point."

Each firefighter said that she is doing the job so that she can help others, and they all said they feel fulfilled by the work that they are doing. Besides Leonard only Nichols, out on disability from the 2012 Highway 24 accident, expressed any interest in leaving the front line and moving into management. "Before I was even done with my probation, I was taking

chief officer classes," she said.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that women make up 3.4 percent of the nation's firefighters. MOFD ranks at nearly three times that national average, of which Himsel said she felt proud. "It can be very empowering to see moms with their kids, saying 'Oh look, there's a girl driving the fire engine!'" she said.

A year ago MOFD captain Mark DeWeese brought his 3-year-old daughter Dylan to visit fire station 41. While he met with the fire chief, Dylan toured the station with Himsel, and afterward DeWeese asked his daughter, "So, would you like to grow up and be a firefighter like daddy?"

"Daddy," she said. "I want to be a firefighter like Katy."

*Note: Lamorinda's other fire agency, the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, also employs female firefighters at a higher rate than the national average. However, none are currently assigned to either Lafayette station.*

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