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Wendy Scheck and furry companion Amberite recently enjoyed a midday hike on the Briones-to-Mt. Diablo Regional Trail.

Photo Andy Scheck

Walking in Sunshine

Lafayette trail maps get thoughtful upgrade just in time for spring

By Cathy Tyson

The hills are popping with poppies! Precious late-winter rains turned Lamorinda green, at least for a little while, as spring arrives in full bloom. If you're in the mood to take it all in you'll be glad to know that taking a hike just got easier, or rather, more informative,

thanks to Lafayette's trail maps project.

Looking to avoid steep hills? Then these new and improved maps are your friends – that crucial information, along with trail length, surface, terrain and parking information is now a click away via the city's website; printed maps are available at the Parks

and Recreation office at the Lafayette Community Center and other locations noted below. Updated trail maps range from the challenging, yet scenic, Walter Costa Trail (a steep, more than two-mile trek) to the much more moderate Silver Springs Trail to the flat, one-mile Hidden Oaks Trail. ... continued on page A12

Quote of the Week:

"As much as we love our sports, the arts are so important in defining and building a community." Read The Broad Shoulders of a Volunteer, page A6.

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Risky Business

By Nick Marnell

The politics and the dangers of the firefighting industry collided at the March 20 meeting of the Lafayette Emergency Services Task Force.

The initial focus of the meeting was the status of fire station 46, the proposed joint venture between the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District and the Moraga-Orinda Fire District. ConFire chief Jeff Carman, who spent most of his day involved with a three-alarm brush fire in Pittsburg, reported that he and chief Stephen Healy of MOFD were closer than they have ever been to an agreement on the station. But he needed to know the position of the task force.

"Do you get behind 46 and support it? Or, are you still going to seek detachment? I need to decide where to put our emphasis," he said. Carman did not want to present a station 46 plan to the Board of Supervisors and have it be simultaneously reported that the Lafayette task force was still looking at detachment

from ConFire.

"The chief has a point here," said Steven Falk, city manager. "If there's a risk that Lafayette will detach, why invest \$1 million?" He proposed that detachment efforts could be put on hold until Carman received an answer from his board. Co-chair Traci Reilly agreed, saying that she'd be in favor of "hitting the pause button. We're in charge of how we pace this process," she said.

Task force member Peter Clark did not agree. He said that station 46 will not be a cure-all, and that the committee should continue to explore all options for providing fire service to the city. "The ConFire model is not sustainable, with an intractable financial problem," added committee member Rich Cunningham.

As Cunningham spoke, an obviously preoccupied Carman ran across the room and ushered Falk out of the meeting. An ashen Falk returned to his seat while Carman grabbed his assistant chief and two ConFire captains and shot out of

the room. "One of our chiefs has been in an accident," said Carman.

The station 46 discussion ceased. And in one of the many ironies of the evening, Pat Frost of Contra Costa Emergency Medical Services began her presentation on the state of the county's EMS system.

ConFire captain Chris Leimpeter returned to the meeting and relayed that the injured firefighter had been rushed from Pittsburg to John Muir Hospital, where his condition was improving.

"It's the worst thing that can happen in your career," said Carman, who discussed his initial reaction to the emergency call. "It pains you ... it's an out of control feeling, for someone who is used to always being in control."

The politics of the firefighting business – as discussed by those at the task force meeting – continue to be wrought with delay and frustration. The dangers of the firefighting business – impressed upon those at the task force meeting – resulted that day in a near tragedy.

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Jellyfish Art

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First Pitch

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