

# Don't get under desk!

Harvey Brockmeyer, Bakersfield Californian, 3-31-10

## Letter to the editor

Recently, I received an e-mail about a man who had been on hundreds of earthquake rescue missions who said that they were teaching people wrong actions to take if an earthquake were to strike.

When I taught school, we told students to get under their desks when an earthquake started. This rescuer states that in a severe earthquake, the rubble forces the desk to collapse and become part of the terrible crushing death of the individual. On several rescue attempts in schools, there were no survivors, because the children had done exactly what they were told -- to get under the desks.

"Get beside the desk" or some sturdier furniture is the proper procedure; the space beside the crushed desk becomes an empty space, instead of the instrument of death.

Our last "moderate" earthquake was over half a century ago. I remember it well; I sat spellbound looking out the window of a restaurant in Rosedale and watched as wave followed wave in a ripening wheat field, but the wind was not blowing!

With the rash of quakes around the world, a "big one" is due in Bakersfield any time now and we need to change our strategy to "get beside the desk."