

## **Daily Breeze**

page A14, Sunday, October 04, 2009

### **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

#### **Truth about ham radio**

Unfortunately, the information about amateur radio contained in the disaster preparedness insert (Monday) is a misleading exaggeration of the truth. The area amateur radio operators who responded to the Palos Verdes fire incident on Aug. 27 were members of the Los Angeles County Disaster Communications Service (DCS), after an official activation by the Lomita Sheriff's Station watch commander. Ken Hartley, the individual mentioned prominently in your article, was one of 10 members in our initial response, and he acted under the direction of DCS.

The recently formed South Bay Emergency Communications Service (SBECS), of which Hartley is the president, did not participate in the incident as implied by your article. Hartley's official DCS ID and uniform allowed him as an individual DCS member to participate. It is also an overstatement to characterize SBECS as "a collaboration of all of the area's ham radio operators" when there are approximately 3,000 amateur radio operators in the South Bay and SBECS has averaged only about a dozen operators checking in to their nets. Further, no responsible emergency manager would encourage hams or anyone else to "rush to assist first responders in a disaster" unless they are specifically activated and tasked by proper authority. Self-activation is dangerous and will get you arrested.

In addition, there are many amateur radio clubs in the area, so to single out one small club in Hermosa Beach as the path to become a ham is particularly peculiar since they don't sponsor classes and other larger clubs do.

- Deane Bouvier

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