

# Announcements on the ferry, one self-explanatory, one not

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While I was riding the ferry last Saturday, there were two announcements made over the public address system. “All crew please report to the Second Mate’s office.” What were they all doing in the Second Mate’s office? Would the whole crew fit into the office? And while all the crew are in the Second Mate’s office, who’s steering the ferry? The second announcement was self-explanatory: “Will the owner of a XYZ please report to the Car Deck to shut off your car alarm? The passenger in the car is becoming increasingly frantic.” What was I doing on the ferry anyway? I was returning to Seattle from [a bike ride](#) with two other friends. (The route is not quite correct, though. Instead of taking Brownsville Highway NE, we took Ogle Rd NE and S Keyport Road NE; also, we took Virginia Loop Road instead of following 308.) The ride includes two stops, one at the [Naval Undersea Warfare Museum](#) in Keyport, and a lunch stop in historic [downtown Poulsbo](#). This ride began over ten years ago as a “Hey, here’s a fun ride, let’s try it.” On a whim, we added a detour to [Chief Seattle’s grave](#), and on the return, coming down Suquamish Way NE, the lead rider “Joe” fell and took an extremely nasty spill. (We concluded later that we must not have been sufficiently respectful at the grave site, and this was Chief Seattle’s way of exacting retribution.) As Joe went rolling down the road, I thought to myself, “Well, it’s a good thing he’s got his helmet on.” And then his head struck the ground and the helmet shattered. But he kept going. “Uh oh, now he’s got no helmet.” Fortunately, he was able to keep his head off the ground and avoid a head injury. Now, this was back in the days before mobile phones were a standard personal accessory. Our group consisted of four riders. We sent “John” ahead to call for help. (We knew there was a casino at the bottom of the hill.) “Bob” directed traffic around the accident, while I tended to our fallen friend. John returned sooner than expected; he said that a passing driver offered his car phone (wow, remember car phones?) to call for help. A police officer and an ambulance from the local fire station arrived. While the paramedics tended to Joe’s injuries, the police officer took statements and took over traffic direction duties. The officer seemed somewhat disappointed that Joe fell of his own accord. I think he really wanted to nail a driver for hit-and-run. As the officer directed traffic, he mentioned to us, “You know, directing traffic is an all-day class.” I hadn’t thought it about before, but directing traffic is actually quite tricky. You have to be able to convey information to drivers using only nonverbal cues. Things like “Two cars should come forward and stop at this point” or “While

I'm directing traffic coming from this direction, cars on the cross street may turn right." While we waited for an ambulance from the hospital to arrive, we asked the fire station paramedics, "Why don't you take us to the hospital yourselves?" "Consider yourself lucky we aren't. If we took you in our ambulance, that would mean you were on the verge of death." Joe, it turned out, suffered a broken shoulder blade. The ambulance driver who took him to the hospital returned later from another run and poked his head into the room. "Whatcha got?" "Broken shoulder blade." The ambulance driver gave him a thumbs-up sign. "Good job!" A little ambulance driver humor there.

Given this auspicious start, we turned the ride into an annual event, naming it "The Joe Memorial Bike Ride". But we never took the Chief Seattle detour ever again. After three or four years, interest in the ride petered out, but I decided this year that it was high time to resurrect it.

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