

Harvard’s answer to the Rockettes: The electric garden tool brigade

by Luke Macannuco

The Harvard Climate Initiative Committee debuted their electric lawn mower brigade at this year’s Fourth of July parade. The brigade, which included electric leaf blowers in addition to the mowers, was a follow-the-leader-style performance spearheaded by committee member Marc Sevigny.

“There was no inspiration, this is just pure mayhem,” Sevigny joked when asked how he got the idea for the parade brigade. “No, the idea was just to draw attention, in a way, visually, so that people aren’t just

“... if we make it silly, people will be more likely to pay attention.”

—Marc Sevigny
Member of the Harvard Climate Initiative Committee

saying ‘Why are there lawn mowers here,’” Sevigny said of the motivation behind the brigade. “So if we make it silly, people will be more likely to pay attention.”

The actual choreography for the brigade was inspired by an online video of a similar parade performance. “We had no time to come up with creative choreography,” Sevigny said, “and everyone is really uncoordinated. So every attempt I made to make it more choreographed was a failure.”

“I’m supposed to set expectations really low, and that way we won’t disappoint anyone,” Sevigny said, clarifying his humorous comments on the “crude concept



Harvard’s Fourth of July parade debuts electric garden tool brigade to enthusiastic onlookers. (Photo by Jen Manell)

of choreography” that he developed.

The brigade itself, which received enthusiastic applause from parade onlookers, included five marchers with lawn mowers and four with leaf blowers. Those with the lawn mowers marched in a single-file line, weaving back and forth and occasionally spinning around. Behind them, the marchers with the leaf blowers were blowing in rhythm with the end of each lawn mower

dance cycle. Out of a speaker held by Sevigny, a snippet of the song “The Power” by Snap! was playing, repeating the phrase, “I’ve got the power!” (Sevigny explained that he originally wanted to use the Björk song, “It’s Oh So Quiet,” but opted for the perhaps more accessible “The Power” instead.)

Members were also holding signs in the brigade with phrases like “Need new

lawn equipment? Go electric!” and “It’s warming, it’s bad, we can fix it!” Sevigny was wearing a white T-shirt with “No Mow Noise” written on the front, and “No Mow Fumes” on the back.

Sevigny was pleasantly surprised by the audience’s enjoyment of the performance. He said, however, that he would be much more selective on who makes the cut in next year’s brigade.

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