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Tufts student whistling group readies for debut performance

Posted by Matt Rocheleau November 8, 2013 03:16 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

The Whistling Collective, one of the newest and quirkiest student groups at Tufts University, plans to make its debut performance this Saturday in the middle of Davis Square.

The group's founder, 18-year-old freshman math major Charlie Meyer, of Pembroke, says whistling has played an important role in his life.

It helped even him get into college.

He said whistling was his answer to an essay question on his application to Tufts that asked: "What makes you happy?"

"I've always loved whistling," he said by phone Thursday. "When you're whistling, you just naturally feel happy."

"It's just a fun way to express yourself and maybe to help relieve some stress," he added.

Meyer founded the group at the start of the semester. The collective meets once a week and draws anywhere between a half dozen to a dozen student whistlers at each gathering.

He recruited classmates through his network of friends and through a [Facebook group](#) he created.

Meyer said he is an experience wind ensemble player, is a member of a Gospel choir group at Tufts and has been involved with music since he was a fifth grader.

But, most Tufts Whistling Collective members have little to no musical experience.

"They're just there for fun," said Meyer. "I think it's cool for them to get some time to express themselves musically."

Compared to other musical groups and hobbies, "Whistling is just a very easy medium," he said. "There's no equipment to buy. There's no auditions or anything. It's very low commitment. I try to make it as low-pressure as possible."

"There's no shame in whistling," he added. "It's kind of hard to be self-conscious while you're whistling."

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As long as the weather is decent Saturday, the group plans to perform, for the first time publicly, in Davis Square at noon.

One member of the group, Jackson Clawson, will play a piano to back up the whistlers.

The show will feature a “smorgasbord” of songs, including some patriotic-themed music in honor of Veterans Day, Stevie Wonder hits like “Isn’t She Lovely,” and Beyonce’s “Love on Top.”

“If there is a crowd – if passersby want to hear things – we can definitely make that happen,” added Meyer.

During the coming holiday season, the group plans to do some “whistle caroling.”

Another possibility will be “whistle grams,” where, likely around Valentine’s Day, members of the group would be hired by a student to whistle for a song to that student’s significant other.

Meyer said the group has not yet sought formal recognition by Tufts’ student government, which could make it eligible to receive some funding.

“In the long run it would be nice to get recognized by Tufts. It would be sweet to get funding,” he said.

“But we’re kind of set with what we’ve got,” noting whistling’s low-cost and that the group already has access to free, on-campus rehearsal space.

Someday, he hopes the group will send members to compete at the International Whistlers Convention, which according to its website <http://www.whistlingiwc.com/index.html> has been held annually in North Carolina for the past four decades.

He said he has heard of one other college student whistling group at Northwestern University, but otherwise, “it’s pretty rare.”

“A Google search of whistling groups yields almost no results,” he said.

But, he said he has found unusual student groups are common at Tufts. For example, some of his friends are in a cheese club, where students taste different kinds of cheese and then talk about it.

“Tufts is very open to new groups,” he said.

Matt Rocheleau can be reached at mjrochele@gmail.com. Looking for more coverage of area colleges and universities? Go to our [Your Campus pages](#).

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New Numbers: 4.2M Americans Dropped From Health Plans

On [The Kelly File](#), we saw some updated numbers about just how many Americans have lost their health plans since the launch of ObamaCare.

More than 4.2 million Americans have now seen their health insurance policies canceled due to the new regulations.

[Megyn Kelly](#) went over the numbers with Robert Laszewski, president of Health Policy and Strategy Associates, noting that so far, the Obama administration has placed the blame for the cancelations on the insurance industry.

"Your 4.2 million number is an interesting one. That's what the count is up to. It's going to get much higher than that. We're going to have these cancelations going into 2014," said Laszewski, predicting that ultimately, 80 percent of people in the individual market will lose their policy due to ObamaCare regulations.

He explained that the "grandfather" provisions written into ObamaCare are "so stringent that very, very few [individual] health insurance policies are going to survive."

Watch the full interview, and tune in to **The Kelly File, tonight at 9p/12a ET** as Megyn takes a look at why military families' health insurance could be under fire!

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wahlker 11/09/13 02:18 PM

Growing up, I was never aware of whistling groups or clubs, but all boys could whistle. Only a few girls could. It was something that took a bit of practice. I wonder if whistling is as common today. My guess is that it isn't, but I could be wrong.

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