

MSP Chronicle

The Massachusetts Society of Professors | Representing Faculty & Librarians on the UMass Amherst Campus



From the President's Desk

By Eve Weinbaum, MSP President

This spring, all eyes have been on teachers in West Virginia, Oklahoma, Kentucky, and Arizona as they organized walkouts and strikes, shutting down schools. Their demands were not only about salaries -- in fact, they focused more on their students than themselves. Refusing to accept budget cuts that have starved public education systems, the teachers demanded full funding from the state. They told stories about crumbling buildings, aged textbooks, inadequate support, no supplies, and insufficient time to teach. They protested decades of policies that have gutted public institutions to provide tax cuts for the wealthy.

Here at UMass, we spent the past year fighting for contracts that reflect our commitment to outstanding public higher education. While Massachusetts does well for K-12 schools, for higher education we are near the bottom. In the last 20 years, per-student expenditures at public universities have fallen by 35 percent. Per-student debt has risen by 122 percent since 2004. Our public university system deserves much better.

I am proud of the issues the MSP has put on the table in the past year. We have focused on improving salary floors for our lowest-paid members; a

pay equity system to address imbalances caused by race, gender or age; and opportunities for professional development for our non-tenure-track faculty members that will benefit the university and our students. We are fighting for fair salary increases that will help us to recruit and retain outstanding faculty and librarians, focusing on our research, service, advising, and teaching.



This coming fall we will have a unique opportunity to invest in our public education system. The Fair Share Amendment will be on the ballot in November. By raising taxes on incomes over one million dollars per year, this initiative is designed to create a funding stream of \$2 billion per year dedicated exclusively to public education and transportation. If we don't make a concerted effort to provide the resources our faculty, staff, and students need, we will be in the same position as West Virginia and Oklahoma sooner rather than later. Our unions are proposing a different vision, based on fair salaries, equity and respect, and the resources we need to deliver the truly excellent education our students deserve. ■

SAVE the DATE

MTA Summer Conference
UMass Amherst
August 5-8, 2018
(advance registration required --
contact the MSP)

Stay tuned next Fall for many
MSP-sponsored workshops and
activities throughout the semester

Have an upcoming event
enhancing MSP's mission you
would like MSP to announce?
Contact the MSP office at:
msp@umass.edu
(413) 545-2206

EEPs, SLOs & April Fool's

By Eve Weinbaum

As if you needed more education-related acronyms in your life, here are two more: EEPs and SLOs. Both are forms of assessment intended to measure what we are teaching and how well we are teaching it. Partly in response to the administration's announcements of these programs and partly because it was April 1, the MSP Executive Board decided to send out a tongue-in-cheek "official" announcement of our own MSPEEP administrative assessment program. If

(continued on p. 5)

Who is the MSP?

The obvious answer to the question “Who is the MSP?” is “Most of the librarians and faculty at UMass Amherst”. We are, after all, a union of people who work here doing similar academic jobs. There are over 1400 of us. We are organized. We are active. We are strong.

Some of us have agreed to spend a little more time working with each other doing the work that needs to be done to protect our rights and to make UMass the best it can be for its students and its workers. The faculty and librarians who meet regularly to work together to guide the MSP are on our Executive Board. A subset of this group is the Executive Committee, often called the officers. Below are continuing and newly elected board members whose terms will continue through the 2018-2019 academic year. The result of one contested election for the Executive Board was not yet known at press time.



Eric Berlin, Vice President. Eric is a faculty member in the Department of Music & Dance. Trumpeter Eric Berlin has made the music of our time the focus of his career, has been a proud card-carrying union member since the age of 16 and lives with Reuben the Wonder Dog in Montague.



Steven Brewer, Executive Board. Steve is a faculty member in the Biology Department and Director of the Biology Computer Resource Center. He is a science educator, technology guru, life scientist, & award-winning author of Esperanto-language haiku, haibun, and prose.



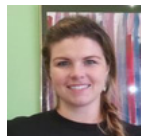
Maciej Ciesielski, Executive Board. Maciej is a faculty member and Associate Head in the Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering. He has been a proud member of MSP for over 30 years, and a member of the Executive Board for the last seven years. His hobbies are skiing, tennis and windsurfing, and enjoys opera.



Christopher Couch, Executive Board. Chris is a faculty member in the Department of Languages, Literatures & Cultures. He tries to attend every indy comics show or convention in the Northeast every year, as well as getting a professional badge for the New York Comicon every October.



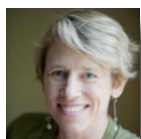
David Gross, Treasurer. Dave is a faculty member in the Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology. He's been a long-term MSP member and was amused to learn that he enjoys marches and demonstrations.



Clare Hammonds, Executive Board. Clare is a faculty member in the Sociology Department and the Labor Center.



Christine I. Ho, Executive Board. Christine is a faculty member in the Department of History of Art and Architecture. She works on modern and contemporary Chinese art, though she teaches all five thousand years of art in East Asia.



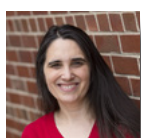
Kate Hudson, Secretary/Clerk. Kate is a faculty member in the College of Education, and the second generation in her family to belong to MSP (her father taught in the Anthropology Dept.) When not attending meetings, Kate is an avid tennis player and gardener.



Marc Liberatore, Executive Board. Marc is a faculty member in the College of Information & Computer Sciences. He first joined a union in 2000 and believes that the tech workforce needs to get on board the labor movement.



Sandy Litchfield, Executive Board. Sandy is an artist and a faculty member in the Department of Architecture. She teaches courses that lie at the intersection of art, architecture, design and writing. Her creative research focuses on contemporary representations of landscape and urban ecology.



Joya Misra, Executive Board. Joya is a faculty member in the Sociology Department. She previously served as a Vice President in MSP, and remains engaged in issues of gender, race, and faculty workload as a researcher, *Inside Higher Education* columnist, and union activist.



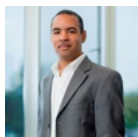
Craig Nicholson, Executive Board. Craig is a faculty member in the Department of Environmental Conservation.



Randall Phillis, Vice President. Randy is a faculty member in the Biology Department. He served as President of the MSP for 7 years, and has been dedicated to the mission of the MSP and the cause of the UMass Amherst faculty since first becoming an MSP officer in 2003.

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(Who is the MSP?, continued)



Dean Robinson, Executive Board. Dean is a faculty member in the Sociology Department. Dean is also a member of the MTA Board of Directors and an NEA Director.



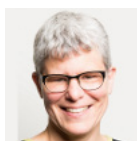
Sigrid Schmalzer, Vice President and All-In Coordinator. Sigrid is a faculty member in the History Department. She studies the history of science in China, writes books for adults and children, and is active in the *Science for the People* movement.



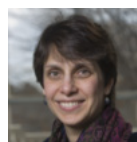
Jim Smethurst, Executive Board. Jim is a faculty member in the Department of Afro-American Studies. His research and teaching focuses on African American literature, culture, and intellectual history.



Priyanka Srivastava, Executive Board. Priyanka is a faculty member in the History Department.



Christine Turner, Vice President. Christine's current position is "Acquisitions and Scholarly Communications Librarian". Christine has been an MSP member since 1999. She fulfills the librarian=cat lady stereotype and loves playing tennis, gardening and walking the beaches of her native Cape Cod.



Eve Weinbaum, President. Eve is a faculty member in the Sociology Department and the UMass Labor Center.



Kevin Young, Executive Board. Kevin is a faculty member in the History Department. He teaches courses in Latin American history; his research deals with social movements and political economy in 20th-century Bolivia and El Salvador.

If you would like to join these dedicated MSP members to guide the MSP, contact the MSP office (email, phone and address at the bottom of the page) to learn about the possibilities! ■

Why I am a Member of MSP

Four MSP members write here about their reasons for being members of the MSP. The writers include Jim Hicks, Lecturer, Comparative Literature; Eliot Moss, Professor, Computer and Information Science; Jeremy Smith, Librarian, Digital Projects Manager in Scholarly Communication; and Priyanka Srivastava, Assistant Professor, Departments of History and Economics.

Jim Hicks

A week or so ago I attended an MSP meeting with the Chancellor and Provost. After all, one of the issues still in contention—paid professional development leave for lecturers—was something that directly affects me. More importantly, though, I suspected I had some thoughts on this subject that the administration not only should hear, but that they actually might hear. Adopting a policy of this sort, it goes without saying, would be

Jeremy Smith

I love being a member of MSP! It's comforting to know that anytime I need to raise an issue at a departmental or unit level, MSP will support me with advice, assistance, or advocacy. I have never needed to enlist the services of MSP, but I feel empowered knowing that they would be there if I ever needed to. The MSP staff is always informative whenever they come to our unit to discuss bargaining, ways to improve our local procedures

Priyanka Srivastava

I got hired as a tenure-track professor in the departments of History and Economics in 2012. During my job interview I was asked why I am interested in working at UMass. I distinctly remember telling the members of the hiring committee that one of the main reasons for joining UMass is the presence of a strong faculty union. I have been a proud member of the MSP for the past six years. My association with MSP and participation in

Eliot Moss

Let me start with my general knowledge of what can happen without labor unions, such as the worst excesses of the industrial revolution and the gilded age. There will always be some who place profit above people, and who will chip away as budgetary pressures increase. I'll admit that, to some, the notion of a union for such highly educated people as faculty and librarians may seem odd. Aren't unions for the working class, for

(continued on p. 4)

(Why am I a member, continued)

Jim Hicks

a great boon to people in my position. Whether such a policy would also benefit the university, apparently, has been questioned, as if the research or training lecturers receive doesn't get channeled back into the classroom, as if the careers of lecturers aren't equally worthy of support, no different than tenure-stream faculty, no different than staff at UMass, who are in fact eligible for professional development leave. Those weren't my reasons, however. Instead, I wanted to remind the administration how, in a time where adjuncts and lecturers are getting burnt out, chewed up, and spit out daily, a campus committed to social justice can and should opt out of this race to the bottom. Even more than that, I wanted to remind our Chancellor and Provost how our University can and does benefit directly from bucking this trend, how its support for lecturers—the very support that MSP has fought for and is now fighting to expand—has made this campus a destination of choice, at least for the lucky few who, even in this meat-grinder of a market, still have choices to make. I speak here from experience. Roughly eight years ago, I had to choose between a position at Smith College and one here at UMass. I chose the campus with a union.

Jeremy Smith

and practices, or just make us aware of larger university trends.

Union membership is not a given in the field of librarianship and based on wage, workplace, and personnel issues that I have heard or read about, there could stand to be more unions in libraries. I feel incredibly fortunate to be in a job I love with a union that will doggedly pursue not just my interests, but the interests of all members of the union, such as non-tenure track instructors, who lack the full protections that I do. As unions continue to be attacked and dismantled around the country, MSP persists in illustrating why unions are needed now more than ever.

Priyanka Srivastava

its various activities have reaffirmed my faith in collective bargaining. As a junior faculty, I have received tremendous support from my union ranging from research funding to regular workshops that highlighted the transparency of the tenure process. Most important, MSP has strengthened my commitment to affordable public education as well as employees' right to unionize. I appreciate the opportunity to organize and participate in campaigns for public education. As a member of the MSP, I will continue to organize, march, and shout slogans for affordable public education and against the efforts to weaken public-sector unions!

Eliot Moss

blue collar labor? But I came to realize that we are subject to many of the same threats and possibilities as any other sector, such as erosion of wages and working conditions, and inequitable treatment of women and people of color. In more than thirty years on campus I have also seen administrators overturn personnel cases in ways I consider inappropriate. If we believe in tenure (as I think most of us do), then keeping our union strong is one of the best ways to maintain the integrity of tenure and our role in academic personnel review, not to mention maintaining academic integrity more broadly. It is, in fact, the union that has been the source of efforts in continued improvement in our personnel processes and pay equity. Finally, I think that the union is a force trying its best to act for the common good, and working always to get better at that. So I am proud to be a member, and to have continued involvement in making our union both strong and excellent.

The New MSP Health & Welfare Trustee

Lisa Di Valentino has been named as the new MSP Health and Welfare Trustee. The Trustee attends meetings of the Trust Fund, which is responsible for overseeing the collection of funds, the management of those funds (e.g., investments), and the administration of dental benefits. The trustees provide oversight to make sure, to the best of their ability, that we receive the money we are owed; we are investing reserves wisely; we are in compliance with relevant laws; and we are getting the best benefits from our funds.

Lisa is the Law & Public Policy Librarian at University of Massachusetts Amherst. She joined UMass after completing her Ph.D. at The University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario. While at Western, she was a T.A. union steward for the Faculty of Information and Media Studies. Having been at UMass since February 2017, she decided that she wanted to take a more active role in the MSP.

Lisa may be reached at ldivalentino@umass.edu.



THE MSP PUZZLE

There were no entries for the limerick contest from the previous newsletter. :(This newsletter's puzzle is a crossword with a local theme. There is no prize competition for this one. The crossword is on page 7. If you have an idea for an upcoming puzzle, please send it to MSPpuzzle@gmail.com.

(EEPs, SLOs and April Fool's, continued)

you didn't get the announcement, you can read it in the box at right.

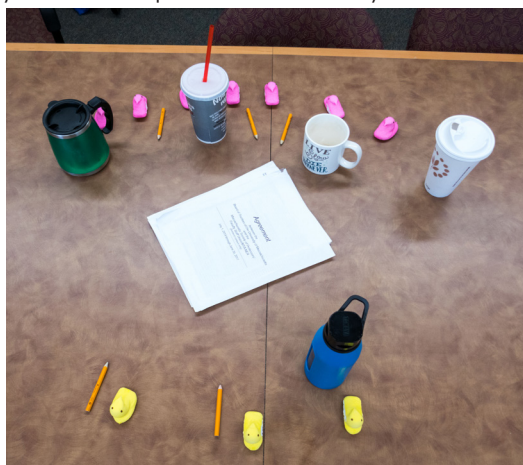
Educational assessment is not a new phenomenon. Faculty constantly assess their instructional effectiveness and they adjust their teaching methods and course content to better meet their goals. Programs and departments do the same. However, administrative calls for measuring student learning have intensified in recent years. This drive for more "accountability" derives from the push toward a privatized educational system. If it works for corporations, it must work for education. Or so say the conservative, corporate-funded think tanks.

Regional accreditation agencies require universities to demonstrate their plans to measure students' learning. UMass Amherst must undergo a regional accreditation process every ten years; our review will begin next year. In preparation for this accreditation review, the administration has asked departments to create Educational Effectiveness Plans (EEPs) by which we explain how we will evaluate the effectiveness of our classes.

In addition, some faculty members have been asked to participate in a pilot program to measure Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in particular courses. In this process, faculty will turn over their students' papers and exams to another professional, who will independently evaluate students' work and thereby attempt to measure students' learning.

SLOs are based on systems that have wreaked havoc on K-12 education. These achievement-based evaluations focus teachers and students on high-stakes testing, narrow rubrics and limited curricula that teach only what the SLOs measure. Such achievement-based testing, along with funding that punishes "underperforming" institutions, is already in place not only at the K-12 level, but also in Massachusetts community colleges.

The MSP wants to hear from our members about how the EEP and SLO initiatives are affecting you. If the process gives departments a chance to review their curricula and to make plans to meet students' needs, we will consider it a success. MSP wants to be sure that these systems enhance both faculty governance and our educational mission, rather than undermining the depth, intellectual engagement, and creativity that are most precious to a university education. ■



Thanks to Eric Berlin's hidden camera, rare shots of an MSP/Administration contract bargaining session are revealed in this issue of the Chronicle! At left, the MSP team, which always color coordinates in pink, gathers on one side of the table while the Administration team, coordinating in yellow, are on the other side. At right, Mickey Gallagher provides clarification of the MSP proposal for continuous employment for PEEPS.

For Immediate Release

April 1, 2018
Amherst, Massachusetts

MSP Launches Executive Effectiveness Plan

Building on our long tradition of commitment to data-driven effectiveness and outcomes, the MSP is proud to launch a new "best practices" initiative for administrators, known as INCESANT ASSESSMENT. The cornerstone of this initiative will be the MSP Executive Effectiveness Plan (MSPEEP). The MSPEEP fits squarely within the MSP's Strategic Plan, launched as a campus-wide effort in 2015, and currently being "refreshed" for springtime.

MSPEEP offers an ongoing structure for top UMass thought leaders and change agents to conduct systematic inquiry into the effectiveness of their efforts to support administrators' success. Drawing from the essential elements of incessant assessment, the MSPEEP focuses on evidence-based inquiry and using results to enhance administrative practices. MSPEEP provides a confusing and overburdened process for executive reflection and reporting. Inquiry results can be used on an incessantly ongoing basis (because redundancy is effective, and efficient, too) to inform the full range of executive planning and reporting requirements. A secondary benefit of MS. PEEP, included only because our lawyers require it, is to examine the status of women in the top UMass executive ranks, and why they speak so quietly.

TO THIS END, THE MSPEEP REQUIRES ADMINISTRATORS TO DO THE FOLLOWING ON A REGULAR BASIS:

- 1 Review, adapt, and refresh your ADMINISTRATIVE OBJECTIVES and incessant assessment goals.
- 2 Conduct an environmental scan to gather evidence of incessant assessment of executives at PEER INSTITUTIONS, especially those in the Top 20 public universities.

3 Review the ALIGNMENT of these objectives with your incessant assessment design and delivery, communication with faculty and librarians, and previous "a la carte" outcomes measures.

4 Perform a deep dive to identify and analyze the EVIDENCE you currently have about the university's progress on those objectives.

5 There is no item number 5. Go back to item number 1 and repeat.

6 Identify the ACTIONS you will deploy (or have deployed) to improve or enhance the experience of faculty, librarians and staff with incessant assessment.

7 Identify and implement an EXECUTIVE-DEFINED LINE OF INQUIRY into incessant assessment success. The new MSPEEP process includes the expectation that executives will identify, design, and implement their own investigations into their program effectiveness through ongoing inquiry into faculty and staff experiences with incessant assessment.

8 Ignore outcomes from items 1-7 (omitting 5) and design a new paradigm of assessment for the next fiscal year.

NOTE: THE EXPECTATIONS FOR THE SPRING 2018 PLAN ARE THAT EXECUTIVES WILL COMPLETE ITEMS 1-7 IN THE LIST ABOVE, AS WELL AS IDENTIFY A LINE OF INQUIRY, OUTLINE AN INITIAL PLAN, AND SCHEDULE THE ENTIRE ASSESSMENT (INQUIRY TO BEGIN NO LATER THAN FALL 2017, INITIAL REPORTING OF PROGRESS MARCH 2018). THEN COMPLETE ITEM 8. The short-term, intermediate-term, long-term, penultimate, final and post-final reports are due no earlier than June 31, 2018.

Note #2: If the UMass administration successfully signs a contract with the campus unions in the next two weeks (after all, it is the season of miracles) we will consider suspending the MSPEEP for the current year and instead having a picnic.

Note #3: We wish the campus a wonderful Passover and Easter, full of rebirth, bunnies, and, of course, PEEPS.



The MSP in Action



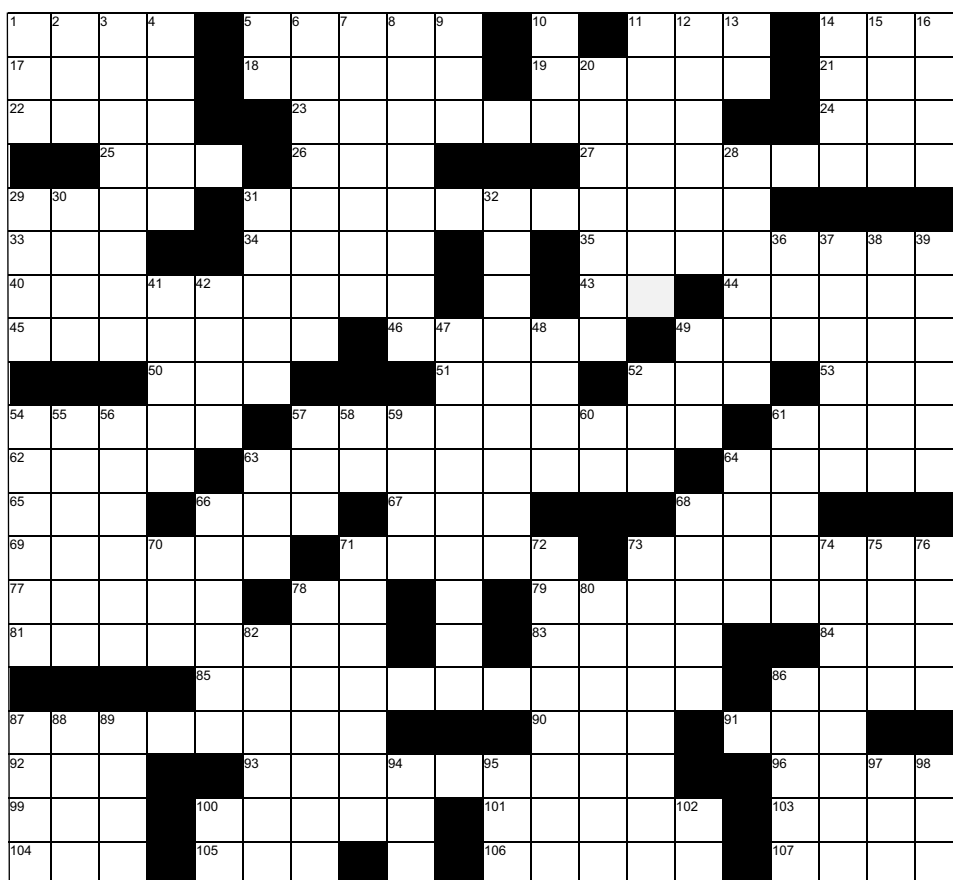
Top set of images: UMass Board of Trustees meeting action, April 6, 2018.
Bottom set of images: MSP meeting with the Chancellor and Provost, April 12, 2018.
Photo credits: Eric Berlin and Emily Steelhammer.



"Collective Acronyms"

ACROSS

- 1 Watering holes in Ireland
 5 Rented farm in Scotland
 11 Like some counties in Kentucky
 14 Long line org.
 17 From the start
 18 Mountain rabbit relatives
 19 Saw
 21 Alley character
 22 Marsh whistler
 23 *Mellow agents?
 24 *To A Nightingale*, for example
 25 Royal Observatory std.
 26 *Thimble Theater's* Olive ____
 27 Virtual conference presentation
 29 Where to go for a vacation escape
 31 Donald Trump's favorite line
 33 Hammer sound
 34 Union representing Australian university employees (abbr.)
 35 *Jack Horner's favorite?
 40 *Wild, scruffy nag
 43 Goes with old lace? (abbr.)
 44 Large, lazy sea duck
 45 Leads on
 46 What management manages
 49 Berlin sound
 50 Relative of S.D.
 51 Australian destination from JFK
 52 Largest bird found in 51 across
 53 Frank McCourt memoir
 54 Know in Madrid
 57 *Basketball and volleyball genre?
 61 With *The*, Streep and Hanks movie
 62 Healthy berry
 63 Smart folks' persuasion?
 64 Vegas bandits
 65 Steve Winwood's *I'm A* ____
 66 Zeppelin leader
 67 Home of *Cash Cab* (abbr.)
 68 Science guy Bill
 69 Classy speaker
 71 ____ fartsy
 73 *Actor Greg
 77 Ligament
 78 Incurable genetic disease (abbr.)
 79 "This is thrilling"
 81 June-December Hebrew marriage?
 83 One side of a Parliamentary debate



- 84 Roth ____
 85 Abbreviations found in starred clues
 86 Hoots of displeasure
 87 What follows a Ph.D. and precedes a faculty job
 90 Tokyo bank currency
 91 Hooter
 92 Side with korma (var.)
 93 *Adele Block-Bauer* or *Stiller Weiher*, for example
 96 Sounds heard in a spa
 99 Dined
 100 Unordered vowels
 101 Accustom to the undesirable
 103 Texter's welcome
 104 Grassy area
 105 UMass college
 106 Farmstand cheat?
 107 Long time in Britain
- DOWN**
- 1 N'cest ____
 2 One in Tegucigalpa
 3 Earl Grey's oil?
 4 Pioneer Valley chancellor
 5 Unix-speak for drag & drop
 6 Fresh cheeses of Italy
 7 Fair Hawaiian ring?
 8 Autumn pause?
- 9 English poet, friend of W. B. Yeats (init.)
 10 Cleopatra's downfall
 11 Volkswagen recalls
 12 Lace network
 13 91.44 cm
 14 Roger Rabbit, for example
 15 Pop
 16 Copier
 20 Boardwalk golf score?
 28 Hindu cosmic center
 29 Nice abbot
 30 Alert
 31 Start on action?
 32 Death due to groaners?
 36 Monterrey relative
 37 Including MadMen promos?
 38 Slogan for the Trump era
 39 Romantic rendezvous
 41: Yiddish woe (var.)
 42 Thom ____
 47 Helper
 48 Locker room feature
 49 No. twos
 52 Summer in Lyon
 54 Side with korma
 55 Black-legged tick
 56 Botanical berry that is the world's #1 fruit
 57 H.S. equiv.
 58 Sailor rank (abbr.)
- 59 Triptan target (abbr.)
 60 Social network for scientists and researchers (init.)
 61 Potentiary beginning?
 63 Country of Eur.
 64 Picture and sound property
 66 Recently hired ambulance employee?
 68 World of Warcraft character
 70 Third level (abbr.)
 71 Union federation
 72 Chinese pair? (var.)
 73 Most residential door features
 74 Make pale
 75 Dynamic beginning
 76 Nutr. recommendations
 78 Roof crowns
 80 Old lion's toupee?
 82 Relative of a famous hallucinogen
 86 Big boss in East Africa
 87 B-movie probe?
 88 Liver spread
 89 *Ideal draftee?
 94 Water closet text
 95 Red ____
 97 Health plan
 98 Helios in myth
 100 One in LA
 102 Mini album

A full-size copy of the puzzle and its solution can be found at <https://goo.gl/btcXfs>. (But you don't need that, do you?)



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