



Writing Ourselves Back In March 2025



Image: Some of the founders of Our Bodies Ourselves in 2018, with a photo of the founders from 1975.
Back row, from l to r: Jane Pincus, Vilunya Diskin, Joan Ditzion.
Front row: Norma Swenson and Judy Norsigian

A Note From Our Program Director

Dear Friends,
Since its **first incarnation in 1978**, Women's History Month has been a time to highlight women and their accomplishments. "Making the invisible visible!" has long been the rallying cry for researchers, as we ferret out evidence of women's overlooked words and experiences throughout the past.

This year, instead, we find ourselves in the midst of a large-scale attempt to erase women and the history we've painstakingly recovered and collected.

Federal agencies **including the Pentagon** have deleted thousands of images of women from their websites, removing visual evidence of our very existence in public life. Executive orders have deleted historical data on women's health and racial disparities from federal datasets and dashboards. For instance, the CDC's Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS), begun in 1988, is **suspended**. Meanwhile,



official National Parks Service signage and public resources **no longer mention the existence of trans or queer people**. The purges are part of a larger attempt to silence and dismiss us. Their message is that we don't deserve to be seen or heard.

Well, we've been here before and we remember what to do. Our Bodies Ourselves began before Roe v Wade, in a time when women struggled to learn anything about their own bodies, health, and sexuality. Yet **"Women and their Bodies"** -- the very first version of "Our Bodies, Ourselves," from 1970 -- dared to cover abortion and birth control, to publish an open critique of capitalism in medicine, and to debunk "Some Myths about Women."

The answers back then came from speaking out and working together to defy the stigmas. We created a collective whole from our individual pieces. We know our own history of activist education, and we are here to do it all over again if we have to.

In this issue, we revisit our history for tools, knowledge, and inspiration. We hope you too draw strength and hope from the rich archives of Our Bodies Ourselves.

In solidarity,

Laura R. Prieto

Support Our Bodies Ourselves!

REWATCH: Jane Pincus on the new tour of her groundbreaking abortion film

In 1970, Our Bodies Ourselves co-founder Jane Pincus collaborated with five other women – Sue Jhirad, Catha Maslow, Janet Murray, Mary Summers, and Karen Weinstein – to make a film about abortion. It was 2 years before "Ms Magazine" published its famous piece, "We Have Had Abortions," and 3 years before Roe. The striking film turns 55 this year. And with Roe overturned, increasing abortion bans, and growing threats to reproductive care, we're watching it again with fresh eyes. In recent public screenings from South Dakota to California, new and returning audiences are connecting with the film's stories and message.



We talked with Jane about making "Abortion and Women's Rights 1970" and what it means to share the film again now.

[Read the Interview](#)

Explore Our Website: Historical Insights

Our Bodies Ourselves takes the long view of the politics around our bodies and our lives. Resources like these illuminate the connections between past and present.



The National Museum of African American History traces **the long and vitally important history of Black midwives to doulas**, from their work under enslavement through the rise of hospital-based births, to today.

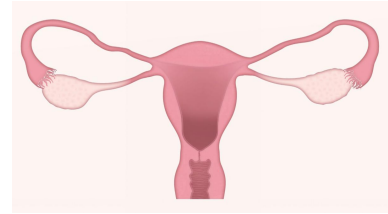
[Read about Black birth workers](#)



U.S. evangelicals in the 1970s first mobilized around opposing racial desegregation – not around abortion.

What led the religious right to shift its focus? How did they connect racial segregation with abortion?

[Read about the politics of race & abortion](#)



Hysterectomies have a long, fraught history, connected to racism and sterilization, as well as to liberation and feminism.

How does **the complicated legacy of the procedure** continue to shape hysterectomies today?

[Read about the history of hysterectomy](#)

NEWS AND EVENTS

What Happened to Feminism and Body Literacy?

Laced with humor as well as righteous feminist rage, Kate Helen Downey's new podcast "**Cramped**" follows her quest for answers about her severe period pain, and why the medical system still does not seem to know enough about female bodies. **Our Bodies Ourselves program director Laura R. Prieto** was a recent guest, talking with Downey about OBOS, the start of the women's health movement, and what happened to all that activist energy after the 1970s.

[Listen to the podcast](#)





Interview with Artist Karen Moss

Karen Moss's portrait of Kata Hull reading "Our Bodies, Ourselves" is part of the exhibit, "We Read Banned Books!" at the Boston Public Library. Each portrait depicts a single person reading a banned book of their choice. Moss herself remembers being in an amazing women's group in Boston at the time "Our Bodies, Ourselves" came out, and was friends with some of the early contributors.

Callie Crossley interviewed Moss about the exhibit for her WGBH radio show "Under the Radar." Moss described her hopes that the portraits will help raise awareness of ongoing book bans across the country. The number of challenged and banned books has been increasing every year. Over 4200 individual books were targeted between 2023 and 2024, reports the American Library Association.

(Fun fact: **the 1976 or the 1979 editions of "Our Bodies, Ourselves" had identical covers**, so we can't tell which one Kata is reading without flipping it open.)

Image: Karen Moss, Portrait of Kata Hull
Photograph by Will Howcroft, courtesy of Karen Moss

[Listen to the interview](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS - SAVE THE DATE!

We regret having to cancel our International Women's Day event this year. Thank you for your understanding and continued support! We hope you'll join us for one of our other events in the months ahead:

April 5 – 6: [Collective Power 2025 Conference](#) (Amherst, MA)

- OBOS is co-sponsoring and attending this annual gathering of hundreds of young activists. Register by March 28th to get your ticket.

April 23 – May 1: We're co-sponsoring a virtual screening of "At Your Cervix" in honor of Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention Month. Tickets available starting April 23; [watch our events page](#) for more info.

May 28 (7pm EST): Virtual panel featuring Loretta Ross, Marlene Fried, Carrie Baker, and Candace Bond-Theriault (photo below) in conversation about their new books on reproductive justice, activism, and abortion access. Details coming soon!



The Making of a Feminist Physician

In February, Our Bodies Ourselves co-sponsored a talk with Dr. Alice Rothchild about her new memoir, "Inspired and Outraged." The full recording is now available, thanks to our event partners, the Ford Hall Forum at Suffolk University and the GBH Forum.

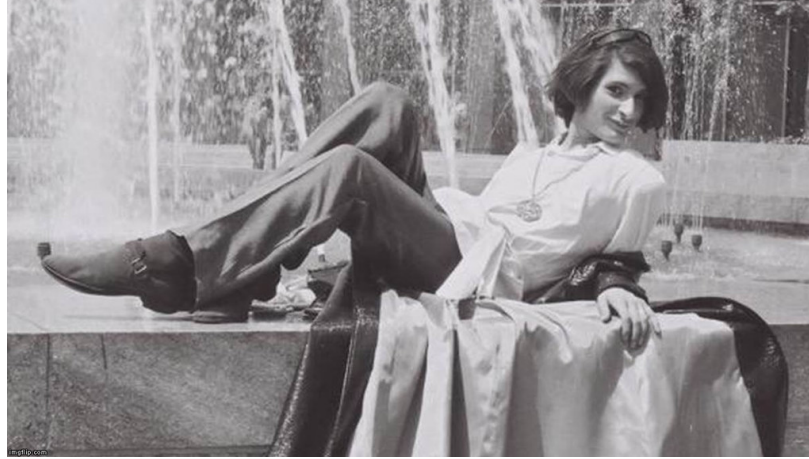
[Watch the recording](#)



Organizing for Change

March 31 marks **International Transgender Day of Visibility**. And more than ever, transgender rights need our support.

Nice Girls don't Make History



Proudly named for **Puerto Rican transgender civil rights activist Sylvia Rivera**, the **Sylvia Rivera Law Project** works to guarantee that all people are free to self-determine gender identity and expression, regardless of income or race and without facing harassment, discrimination, or violence. They fight for political representation of gender non-conforming people, paying particular attention to people of color, people with low incomes, and people who have been imprisoned.

Image: Sylvia Rivera; photo by Glaurung Quena / Flickr, CC 2.0

[How to get involved](#)

Please share this newsletter with a friend!

**Your accurate *and* inclusive
guide to health, sexuality, *and*
reproductive justice**



Our Bodies Ourselves | 73 Tremont Street | Boston, MA 02108 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Our Privacy Policy](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)