

The Periodical

Spring 2014



In this issue of THE PERIODICAL there's a lot of exciting news on the menstrual front. In addition to reports on the many fascinating activities being undertaken by individual SMCR members, there are several items about specific initiatives undertaken under the banner of the Society itself. SMCR President Ingrid Johnston-Robledo announces the recipient of the 2015 Making Menstruation Matter Award to be bestowed in Boston at the next conference, and there are details about the joint project being undertaken with other organizations in connection with Global Menstrual Hygiene Day on May 28, 2014.

However, given the busy and productive lives our members lead we are surely unaware of other news that deserves inclusion. So, looking ahead, mark your calendars for September 15 as the deadline for submission for the next issue. But you don't have to wait until the last minute. Send your news in as soon as possible so we can have it queued up and ready to go.

-David Linton, **Newsletter Editor**

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Submission Deadline for
next edition
of the SMCR News:

**SEPTEMBER 15TH,
2014**



Getting Congress on the Right Menstrual Track

April 25th, 2014 by David Linton

For nearly 20 years Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney has been working to have enacted into law a bill aimed at providing better quality control of tampon manufacture. Researchers have repeatedly raised alarms regarding the potential health risks women are exposed to due to the effects of some of the chemicals used in their composition, especially those involved in tampons. However, despite having attracted strong support from some other members of Congress, the bill in various forms has never made it through the committee process onto the floor of the US House of Representatives for a vote.



Rep. Carolyn Maloney

Undaunted, Congresswoman Maloney is about to try again and this time the members of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research are on board to muster support. Partly due to SMCR input, the bill has been refined and clarified so as to spell out the reasons it is needed and the expected outcomes. And, the bill has a new name, **The Robin Danielson Act**, in recognition of a woman who died of Toxic Shock Syndrome.

The timing for this legislative push coincides with SMCR commitment to support the international **Menstrual Hygiene Day** being spearheaded by the Berlin-based organization, WASH-United. Around the world various groups will be hosting special events, film screenings, menstrual poetry and art activities, and educational efforts throughout the month of May, all geared to a May 28, Menstrual Hygiene Day, celebration of the cycle and rejection of the taboos, stigmas, and shame factors.

More information will be forthcoming shortly on how everyone can get involved by signing petitions, contacting members of Congress, and becoming activated to pass the Robin Danielson Act.

<http://menstruationresearch.org/blog/>

2015 Making Menstruation Matter Award

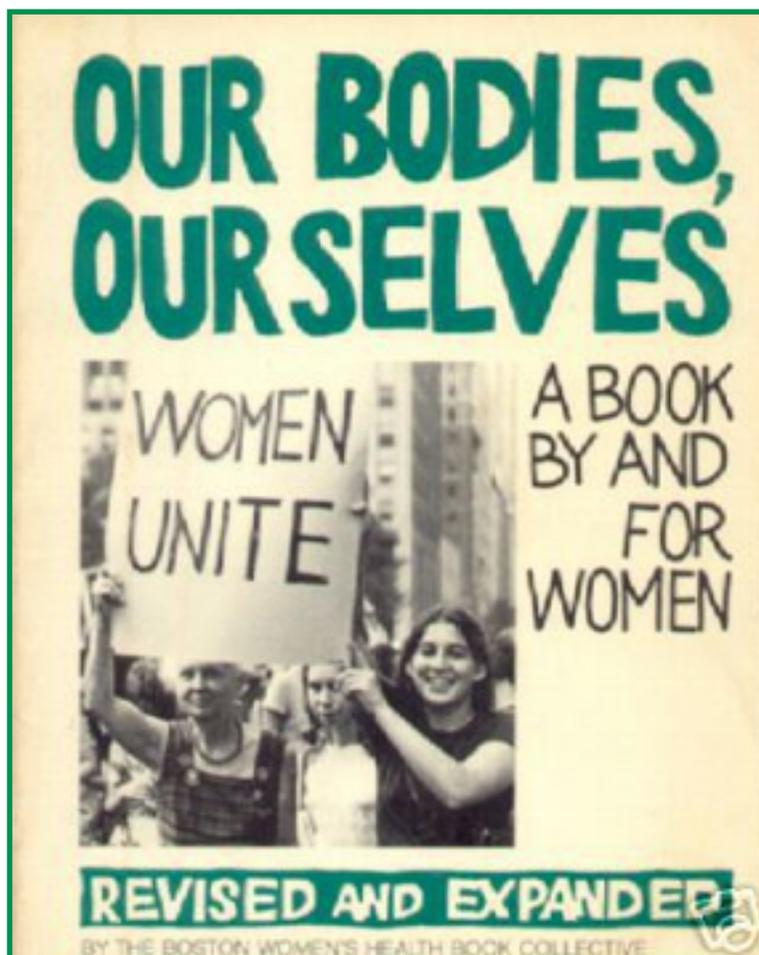
Hello SMCR Members:

I am delighted to share an important announcement with you all...

In 2013, we established the *Making Menstruation Matter Award* to recognize a journalist, activist, artist, public figure or organization Who/that has meaningfully contributed to the public understanding of menstrual cycle-related issues. As you may already know, our first recipient was Gloria Steinem, author of the widely influential essay *If Men Could Menstruate*.

On behalf of the 2015 Conference Committee, I am pleased to announce that the next recipient of this award is: *Our Bodies Ourselves*.

Given their pioneering history of improving femcare product safety (through the historic efforts spearheaded by Esther Rome) and menstrual health and awareness more generally, *Our Bodies Ourselves* is the PERFECT recipient.



We will honor this Boston-based organization at our Boston conference! Stay tuned for more details.

Ingrid Johnston-Robledo, President
SMCR

SAVE THE DATE



Menstrual Health and Reproductive Justice: Human Rights across the Lifespan

3 jam packed days: June 4 - 6 2015

Suffolk University, Boston, USA

Because menstrual health is a human right as well as a reproductive right.

CONFIRMED CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- A Kick Off Flash! Plenary featuring more than a dozen short presentations representing diverse perspectives on menstrual health and politics today
- Keynote delivered Reproductive Justice Pioneer Loretta Ross
- Cutting-edge research presentations throughout the 3 days
- Making Menstruation Matter Award Presentation to our 2015 winner: Our Bodies, Ourselves (OBOS) and Keynote delivered by OBOS Executive Director, Judy Norsigian
- Plenary on Menstrual Hygiene Management campaigns across the globe
- Keynote delivered by Tomi Ann Roberts, Professor of Psychology, Colorado College
- Film Screening of the new film Menstrual Man with Q and A with Director, Amit Virmani
- Menstrual Art exhibit & Artists' Panel Luncheon
- Our 2nd Menstrual Poetry Slam and Thrilling Raffle!

Look for the Call for Abstracts in early 2015 at <http://menstruationresearch.org>

We seek proposals from researchers, clinicians, artists, performers, educators, policy analysts,

We seek proposals that make every possible menstrual connection. Consider:

- Genital Cutting
- Trauma
- Humor
- Disability Studies
- Cancer and other diseases
- LGBTQ Issues/ Queer Studies
- Consumerism
- Reproductive aging
- Hormone therapies
- Millennium Development Goals
- Fat Studies
- Pedagogy
- Native and Indigenous Studies
- Humanitarian Emergencies
- Sexuality
- Fertility
- School Curricula
- Identity and Meaning Making
- Shame, Secrecy and Silence
- Literature
- Film
- Narrative
- Popular Culture
- Social Media
- Body Studies
- Critical Race Studies
- Social justice

Menstrual Health and Reproductive Justice: Human Rights across the Lifespan



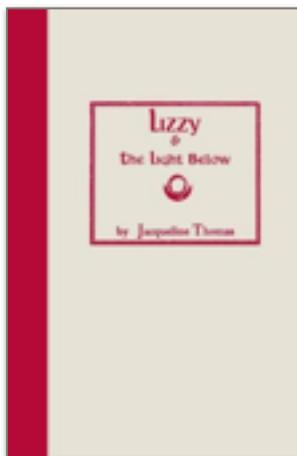
Suffolk University, Boston, USA

Loretta Ross

Credited with co-coining the term REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE, Ross is a nationally recognized trainer on using the transformative power of Reproductive Justice to build a HUMAN RIGHTS movement that includes everyone.



By and About Our Members



Jacqueline-Thomas - While Thomas wrote the book for mothers to read aloud to their daughters, it could be given to a girl to read alone. To provide mothers with background for the book's historical and anthropological claims, Thomas has included a brief scholarly introduction to the research underpinning the story. Look for the new edition at Amazon.com or find it on Kindle. For more information, contact:

Jacqueline K. Thomas, Ph.D. at jkthomas@mail.utexas.edu

http://www.amazon.com/Lizzy-Light-Below-Jacqueline-Thomas/dp/0615926894/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1400360671&sr=1-1&keywords=lizzy+%26+the+light+below



SMCR MEMBER NEWS

The diversity of the SMCR membership is truly impressive made up of artists, scholars, teachers, activists, counselors, physicians, and community leaders. Here are some reports of their more recent activities.

Josefin Persdotter - Period Pieces

During the month of March Gotheburg, Sweden, have been completely covered in menstrual red! At urban artroom, a street-art gallery in central Gothenburg, menstrual activists and artists Emma Arvida Byström and Josefin Persdotter put together an artshow with 11 different menstrual artists from all over the worlds, showing pieces that surrounded menstruation, and/or used menstruation as material. The pieces were several different forms, such as photographs, installations, paintings and videos by artists Arvida Byström (SE) Aimee Leigh (AUS) Beauty in Blood (US) Chloe Wise (CAN/US) Hancel (US) Jennifer Medina (VE/US) Maddie Goldbeck (US) Mensverket (SE) Jocelyn Van Daal (SE) Sara Andreasson (SE) Miriam Wistreich och Alexandra Jönsson (DK). As we look back on the show we can conclude that it's been a huge success, with record-breaking numbers of visitors to the gallery, and a very high coverage in both social and traditional Swedish media. Josefin Persdotter authored a debate article in relation to the show, which generated quite the storm of comments. The article is available in Swedish and Spanish. With fond memories of last

year's wonderful Menstrual Howl in New York we also did a Menstrual Poetry Slam in the gallery. Period Pieces cooperated with Gothenburg Feminist Network and Gotheburg Poetry Slam and invited both professional poets and amateurs to share their menstrual poetry. Everyone who participated got a free menstrual cup by our sponsors "Lunette". We are happy to see that the show has already "gotten legs" and is planned for a pop-up in Stockholm in late April, and we're discussing with partners in London as well. Our hope is that Period Pieces will continue to grow and travel! If you would like to get more information please like out Facebook page. I also recommend that you check out what people have posted on instagram at our hashtag #periodpieces

DEBATE ARTICLE:

Swedish: <http://debatt.svt.se/2014/03/04/dags-att-krossa-tabun-om-mens/>

Spanish: <http://helechoverde.blogspot.mx/2014/03/debemos-hablar-mas-de-menstruacion.html>

PERIOD PIECES FB-PAGE:

<https://www.facebook.com/PeriodPiecesMenstrualArt>



Kate Merrick, MA, UKCP - I'm a Gestalt Psychotherapist working in London, England and having come off the pill just several years ago, noticed a dramatic shift in my own mental, emotional and physical health. This led me on a heuristic journey of self discovery, in which I not only re-connected to my menstrual cycle, but learnt how to work with the ebb and flow of the cyclical nature of my body, rather than continually attempting to fit myself into a more masculine, linear way of doing.

Whilst my experience of psychotherapy has been both rich and abundant, ignoring the varying phases and life stages of the menstrual cycle dismisses the totality of a woman's experience. This perpetuates the process of splitting off in women, where the body remains a stranger and in many cases, the enemy, which of course has a detrimental effect on women, men and the World at large. Reconnecting to our cycle has the potential to transform our relationship with our bodies, thus alleviating a lifetime of pressure, shame and comparison to others in an "I'm less than" way. The focus instead, is directed toward our internal phenomenology, as we begin to nourish ourselves from the inside out, as opposed to the outside in, which is incredibly hard to steer away from in Western culture. The menstrual

cycle gives us the greatest vehicle in which to do this.

I am now working to raise awareness in the field of psychotherapy, about the importance of the menstrual cycle as a vital means of self-regulation for women, and how reconnecting to our bodies through our cycle, supports women in re-discovering our needs, our vitality, and our authentic selves. By tracking and re-connecting to the four different and unique phases of our cycle, women gain back the information (and power!) about our bodies, about our hormonal fluctuations and can make informed diet and lifestyle choices based on this information, to better support our selves during the cycle and throughout our lives in general. As well as writing up my findings for publication, I am also planning a series of experiential workshops centred on the wisdom and celebration of the menstrual cycle.

You can contact me on katemerrick@mac.com

Saniya Lee Ghanoui - accepted a position as a doctoral student in History at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She will explore the historical use of film in sex education with an emphasis on menstrual education. This research came out of her master's thesis at NYU where she examined the history of Disney's *The Story of Menstruation* (1947).

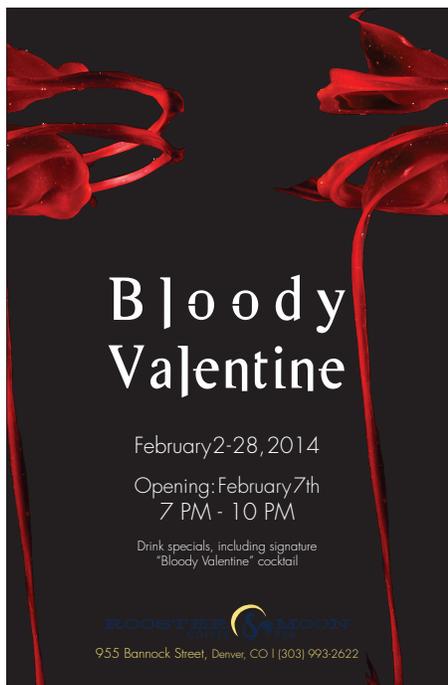
Jennifer Lowe Lewis - After relocating to Denver, Colorado, I landed my very first solo exhibit for Beauty in Blood.

The whole month of February I'll be showing "Bloody Valentine" at the Rooster & Moon Public House here in Denver. Additionally, back in the fall I wrote a guest blog for the Feminist & Women Studies Association (UK & Ireland) about my art project -

<http://fwsablog.org.uk/2013/09/25/beauty-in-blood/> Also, I've been selected to participate in a "thematic panel" discussion about feminism, body politics and art as a participant in the 2013 Feminist Art Conference for future publication by Cambridge Scholars Publishing. And I'm also doing a monthly "Menstrual Pin-Up" on the SMCR blog.

Mindy Erchull - The last few weeks of the spring semester were very good ones for Mindy Erchull.

During the award ceremony at the close of the 2-day Psychology research symposium she organizes for her department, the officers of the UMW chapter of Psi Chi, the



International Honor Society in Psychology, surprised her when they announced that they had learned that day that she had been awarded the Florence L. Denmark Faculty Advisor Award by Psi Chi. This award recognizes Erchull as the one faculty advisor for the 2013-14 academic year who best achieves Psi Chi's purpose. That chapter's officers nominated her because they felt she well exemplified the criteria of ongoing service to the chapter while being motivating to members and having made contributions to the field of psychology at both local and national levels. The award will be presented to Erchull at the American Psychological Association convention in August.

A few days later, while at the spring Virginia Psychological Association conference with her departmental colleagues and independent research students, Erchull learned (via text messages and Facebook posts) that she was awarded the second Waple Faculty Professional Achievement Award from her institution, the University of Mary Washington, during the spring general faculty meeting. While she could have loved to celebrate with her campus-wide colleagues, being able to celebrate with her departmental colleagues was still a treat.



By and About Our Members

In April 2014, **Chris Bobel** was honored to participate in a debate "Can We Design Empathy?" at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. The debate was part of MoMA's series: "Design and Violence," an ongoing online curatorial experiment that explores the manifestations of violence in contemporary society by pairing critical thinkers with examples of challenging design work. The debate focused on the Menstruation Machine (2010), designed by Sputniko! (aka Hiromi Ozaki), a device designed to simulate the menstrual experience of cramps and flow. Chris debated Mickey Boardman, (Editorial Director, Paper magazine). Chris was delighted to be cheered on by SMCRers **David Linton** and **Saniya Ghanoui** and thanks all the wise and wonderful people who generously helped her prepare for the debate.



By and About Our Members

The debate is online at

<http://designandviolence.moma.org/design-and-violence-debate-ii-designing-empathy/>
http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2011/talktome/assets/TTM_258-large.jpg



While in New York City, Chris discussed her new research project "Keeping Girls in School: Taking a Close Look at the Promises and Perils of Menstrual Health Campaigns in the Global South" at the Jefferson Market Branch of the New York Public Library. The talk was a KHORAI Live! Organized by SMCRer and NYPL librarian **Marie Hansen**. KHORAI is an online newsfeed of reproductive and maternal mental health as well as topical issues related to women's general well-being. Recently, KHORAI has introduced a LIVE dimension: psychological and body literacy to the general public through small, informal classes. See <http://www.khorai.org/>

Joan Moon - On May 19, 20 I will be launching my new website Women's Health Dynamics Institute: The Gathering Place. The site will replace my previous site, Women's Health Dynamics in which I focused on my modules on the menstrual cycle. Although this work will be the basis for my new site, the wonderful thing is that the new site will involve a weekly subscription where women access stories, themes, articles, podcasts and a blog to share their thoughts and feelings to the theme.



Upcoming stories include the following:

The Menstrual Cycle – Stigma or Life Map
A Story of Menarche – A Story of Aching
A Cautionary Tale of Hormones
A Story of Two Cancers and Life Reflections
Out of the Mainstream: Fertility Awareness and Sustainable Menstrual Cycle Products
Searching for Joy - Postpartum Depression
Long Bone Age – A Mother’s Quest for Care
Putting “Men” into the Menstrual Cycle
Who are They Protecting? A Clinical Trial Calamity

These are just the beginning...

Other exciting stories are waiting to be told. I am hoping to bring an awareness to the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research (SMCR) and will hand out materials at the conference. A few members have worked with e on the first couple of presentations and their expertise and eloquence is certain to launch this site in a positive, professional manner.

I would appreciate hearing from any of you who have a focus on the menstrual cycle that I might tie in with a story. The work for doing so is minimal...a 30 minute podcast where I would send questions for you to consider, I would access (and pay) to use an article of your preference, and if you wanted to write an informal story of what interested you in committing your time to researching or working with women on the menstrual cycle. Celebrating “Women of a Certain Age” ... which means highlighting women who have spent their careers in a women’s health focus. SO...if you know someone whose work you would like me to celebrate, a week’s space will focus on that women...her story, contributions, website etc. Please let me know who she is so I can contact her.

This is an exciting time in my life. I just turned 70 and feel that I exemplify the energy and power that is open to us as we move along in life. Thank you for considering taking this journey with me.

[Career-focused degrees](#)

By and About Our Members

MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY APPROACHES



As mentioned previously, May 28 is Global Menstrual Hygiene Day. The following item and link come from SMCR collaborators at WASH-United in Berlin who are coordinating the international effort.



It's May! Menstrual Hygiene Day is just around the corner!

We are extremely thrilled that May 28th is gaining momentum across the world. In this newsletter, we want to share with you exciting updates, such as:

- [Worldwide activities & events on May 28](#)
- [Menstrual Hygiene Day Press Release](#)
- Our **FREE Menstrual Hygiene Day ACTION Kit**, which includes
 - [Fact Sheets](#)
 - [MHM infographic](#)
 - [28 Conversations](#)
 - [MH Day Social Media Toolkit](#)

...& many other *menstravagant* updates such as resources, news articles & more!

Don't forget to visit the new website www.menstrualhygieneday.org!

