



Newsletter - April 2021

# 500 Women Scientists Bern-Fribourg

We have the pleasure to announce that **Andrea Fortier** and **Ana I. Benítez-Mateos** have recently joined Claudia and Teresa in the coordination team!

**Silvia Crespo-Pomar**, who is in charge of the networking activities across different associations, is working hand by hand with the Frauenstreik Koordination to organise some exciting activities for the 14<sup>th</sup> June. Stay tuned for more information!

Last but not least, if you have not done so, you are still on time to register for our next outreach event on **May 20<sup>th</sup> at 7pm**. See the flyer attached for more details and **book your spot [here!](#)**

**500 Women Scientists Bern-Fribourg Pod Coordinators**

**Claudia Kasper, Teresa Chávez-Capilla, Andrea Fortier and Ana I. Benítez-Mateos**

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## TOP STORIES

### Women in NCCR projects

To celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women's right to vote in Switzerland, the NCCR created the NCCR Women campaign. From March 8<sup>th</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup>, videos featuring women working in NCCR projects will be shared. Meet some of the women behind research in Switzerland [here](#). The videos will be posted every week on the NCCR women [YouTube](#) and [Instagram](#) channels. The women of NCCR Chemical Biology will be taking over from May 31 to June 4.

### The Female Scientist: A blog

Do you want to make your scientific results more visible? Would you like to share real-life issues as a woman in science? You can do it through the blog [The Female Scientist](#). This

community project was launched by [Dr. Melanie Seiler](#) to make the work and life of women in science more visible to the public.

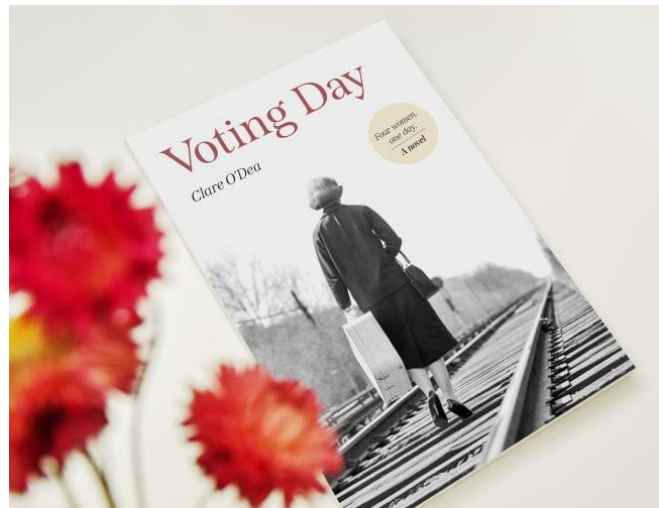
If you are enthusiastic about science communication, write a summary of your latest work, a guide with tips and tricks that can help others, or share some interesting science. You can also introduce yourself on a portrait covering either personal topics or your scientific expertise and aspirations. Get to know other female scientists from around the world, how they feel and what they work on! [Register](#) to start participating.

## Good reads with Andrea: *Voting Day*

This year, 2021, it's been 50 years since women got the right to vote in Switzerland. It was in a referendum in February 1971 that men finally agreed that women could also take part in Swiss democracy and vote at the federal level. What some people do not know is that there was a previous referendum on 1st February 1959, which was rejected by a majority of 67% (of men, of course).

"Voting Day" is a short novel that takes place on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1959. It is the story of four Swiss women whose lives are connected by the fate of a child on the referendum day.

The story starts very early in the morning of that Sunday in a farm where Vreni, the farmer's wife, is making sure that everything is ready so that her family can "survive the day" without her around. Later in the day we meet Magrit, Vreni's daughter, who lives in Bern where she works in an office. Magrit is trying to make a life of her own in the city, away from the farm and the expectations of her family. As the day goes by, we are



introduced to Esther and her hard life as a cleaning maid. Esther is a Yenish woman who works in a hospital in Bern. Her son was taken away from her several years before and she wants to get him back even if he might not remember her. Beatrice, the fourth woman of the book, is Esther's boss and wants to help her to recover her son. Beatrice makes sure that the hospital runs smoothly under her watch. On this day, she has high expectations about the outcome of the referendum, for which she has worked very hard.

Through a captivating narrative, we get to know these four women who in principle have little things in common. We learn also how women in Switzerland lived at the end of the '50s and what society expected from them. For those of us that live in Bern, there is an interesting extra, as we recognize the places that are described in the book. We can clearly follow Vreni and Magrit while they walk around the city on that Sunday afternoon or when Beatrice takes the tram back to her home in Breitenrain.

Reading this book brings us to the middle of the 20th century in central Switzerland, to the struggles of women at that time, their dreams, and expectations. It is a relief to see that we have advanced since then, that some things do not happen anymore, that we do not have to ask men for permission. It is, however, upsetting to realize that other things, more than sixty years later, have not changed at all.

It is good to be reminded that sometimes things do not turn out as expected, no matter how hard we worked for them. It feels disappointing, unfair, it makes us not want to continue any more. History however shows us that we must recover and start again because things eventually can change, and then it feels so good not to have given up.

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#### SAVE THE DATE

Our next outreach event will be held on **May 20<sup>th</sup> at 7pm**. Join us for an exciting virtual evening of science and games! Available places are limited, book your spot [here](#).

#### READ

The interview to [Dr. Kenza Benabderrazik](#) in Paths Through Science

#### DON'T MISS

The mentoring programme of the [Swiss Women in Chemistry](#). Send an e-mail showing your interest to [swc@scg.ch](mailto:swc@scg.ch)

CONTACT US in [500wsbern@gmail.com](mailto:500wsbern@gmail.com)

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