A Discrepancy

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The Mathematical Intelligencer *encourages comments about the material in this issue. Letters to the editor should be sent to the editor-in-chief.*

Robert Jones's article, "Felix Hausdorff in Bonn," in the Spring 2012 issue of *The Mathematical Intelligencer* was engrossing, but puzzling, too.

According to the article, Hausdorff, his wife, and her sister committed suicide in 1942 rather than face concentration camps. But the translation of the inscription on the tombstone gives "29. Januar" for the death of the sister, Edith, whereas Hausdorff and his wife both died on "26. Januar." If this is not a typographical error, then some explanation should be given for the 3-day delay of the sister's death.

I'm sure there are many other discerning readers of the *Intelligencer* who would appreciate an explanation for this little riddle.

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The Editor Replies

Thank you for pointing out this discrepancy; we agree it should be clarified.

In *Mathematicians Under the Nazis*, Princeton University Press, 2003, p. 459, Sanford Segal explains: "That evening they took lethal doses of barbiturates (veronal); in the morning Hausdorff and his wife were dead; her sister lingered for a few days in a coma." For more about the Hausdorffs' decision to end their lives, see also *Transcending Tradition: Jewish Mathematicians in German-Speaking Academic Culture*, reviewed by Reinhard Siegmund-Schulze in this issue.