

Last Half of Two of a Kind Left Us

HANS MICHELS⁵

We lost a bright, smart and lovely star in the parapsychology skies and I'm proud to have known her.

My first activities in parapsychology started around 1971, as a hobby with a small group of friends, that developed into the Synchronicity Research Unit (SRU, 1975–2018). In 1980 I met the Dutch skeptical journalist Piet Hein Hoebens (PHH) and SRU started some projects with him. Shortly after Piet Hein's death in 1984 Gerd Hövelmann, Jeff Jacobs and I discussed our first plans for a book on his life and many papers (Hövelmann & Michels, 2017). That same year I made my first of many trips to Gerd in Marburg.

In those years Friederike was working in Professor Bender's institute in Freiburg. I met her for the first time at the 1987 PA Convention in Edinburgh. We had a pleasant chat the first evening and were soon joined by Gerd, with whom I shared a room during that conference, something we did on several occasions to lower our expenses a bit.

The following years Gerd and I worked together on translations (such as books by Wilfried Kugel and Walter von Lucadou, book reviews, documents on stamps auctions), research, our PHH-book and more. I corresponded with Friederike too, not only on para-topics, but also on psychology and linguistics, since both of us graduated in psychology and my daily job was technical translator. Another topic in letters and phone calls (no Internet yet!) were her plans to share her life with Gerd and the problems associated with their wish, until it was finally fulfilled at the end of the nineties. The two soon developed into what Gerhard Mayer mentioned "an inseparable unit." I spent many hours in the apartment in which Gerd lived with his wife and their daughters and later in the large house where Friederike joined him. I can confirm that this "unit" existed in their scientific activities as well as in their relationship, and was always clearly present when and where we met.

5 **Hans Michels** (1950) is a psychologist-ergonomist, graduated from Tilburg University. As a member of the Synchronicity Research Unit (SRU) he carried out experiments, often using random number generators, some in cooperation with the Dutch skeptics organisation Skepsis. From 1980 to 2015, he has been a technical translator in a translation agency of which he was co-founder. Since then he is editor and corrector for different authors, writing on varied topics, such as history, art, music, parapsychology and architecture.

I felt bad for a long time after Gerd's death in 2017. Once or twice a year I visited Friederike in Marburg and we always went to Gerd's grave. In April 2022 we spent almost a week in Marburg to check and correct the English version (Huesmann & Schriever, 2022) of a paper Friederike wrote with Monika Huesmann over 30 years ago (Huesmann & Schriever, 1989). In 2023 we started transcribing a videotaped interview with Gerd (still in progress). My last visit was in August 2023 and approximately a month before her sudden death in February we planned a new visit in May or June. Friederike and I exchanged many emails and phone calls. The last four emails were all on February 18, when Friederike suffered from bronchitis. We always made a phone call on four specific days a year: our own birthdays in July, February 5 because Gerd died that day in 2017 and Gerd's birthday, February 20. So my last contact was a phone call that evening, less than three days before I received the call with the devastating message of Friederike's sudden death the night before. Friederike owned two LOS-institutions (to help children who are poor in reading and spelling) and was trying to sell one of those soon and the second one somewhat later. The last couple of years she now and then admitted that she was working too many hours and also told me regularly "I want to spend most of my time on para again." It is so sad that this strong wish will never be realized.

I lost a very precious girlfriend with whom I shared so much. One of my and Friederike's favorite artists is the Danish singer Agnes Obel. One of her songs (composed by John Cale) describes my feelings of late February:

I still hear your voice at night
When I turn out the light
And try to settle down
But there is nothing I can do
'Cause I can't live without you
Any way at all