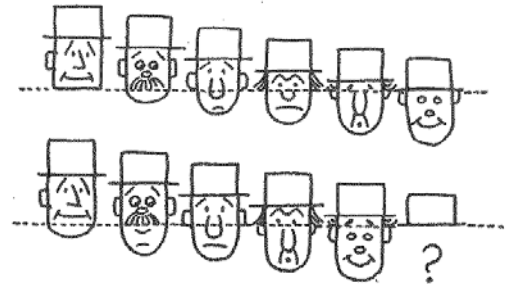


# WHICH MAN DISAPPEARS?

**G4G12 EXCHANGE**  
 from Stuart Moskowitz  
 Humboldt State University  
 Arcata, CA 95521  
[stuart@humboldt.edu](mailto:stuart@humboldt.edu)

In *Mathematics Magic and Mystery*, Martin Gardner includes "The Vanishing Face" puzzle (pictured at right) and notes that "it is useless to ask which face vanishes because after the shift is made, four of the faces have been broken into two parts and the parts redistributed so that each face gains a small amount..."



In the middle of the night, right after sharing Martin Gardner's Vanishing Face puzzle during my workshop titled "Make Puzzles Less Puzzling with Math" at Western Michigan University in 2001, the following was sent to me via email. It provides one of the best means for explaining why the question "which man disappears?" is a misleading question.

Thu, Feb 22, 2001 at 5:43 AM  
 To: [stuart@humboldt.edu](mailto:stuart@humboldt.edu)

Stuart

I enjoyed your talk yesterday.

Last night I had an amusing thought about which of the six men in top hats disappears. If you print their names between the heads, then we can talk about exactly which guy goes.

J O R D R A E O O O L ----- Y N N B L A N E E L I R N D E T	J O R D R A E O O O L ----- Y N N B L A N E E L I R N D E T
--	--

See what happens?

After the shift we have Joey, Ronald, Donnie, Robert, and Allen.

Just a thought. Best wishes, Allen Schwenk