



## G4G14 Exchange Gift

### *In 1994 I worked on a collaboration project with Martin...*

Binary Arts wanted to produce “Martin Gardner Presents 6 Mathematically Based Magic Prediction Tricks” and I spent several months corresponding with him trying to assemble a worthy collection.

Although the project never made it to market, Martin shared a number of wonderful paper-based mathematical magic tricks with me and we built a great working friendship, something I will always treasure.



Over the years I have periodically looked back through this material for inspiration, but somehow until last month I never noticed one envelope which had been tucked into a neglected folder.

Sifting for G4G exchange gift inspiration, immediately when I saw the trick I realized this would be a perfect contribution. Not just the mathematical simplicity, also the “typewritten with edits-by-pen” style that was characteristic of Martin’s correspondence.

Then I noticed something curious... the date. Martin wrote this letter on October 21, 1994, his 80th birthday! How fitting to think of him spending a little time that day formulating a simple mathematical magic trick for the world. And how fun, nearly 28 years later, to unearth it and be able to share with all of you.

### *Happy Belated Birthday everyone!*

Bill Ritchie

ThinkFun co-founder

With colleagues Melinda Contreras and Sophie Miller

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To make your own tokens, print this page and Martin Gardner’s letter on the next page, double-sided, with long-edge binding. Then, cut out all four squares below.



## G4G14 Exchange Gift

MARTIN GARDNER  
110 Glenbrook Drive  
Hendersonville,  
N.C. 28739  
(704) 693-3810

21 Oct 94

Dear Bill:

I just read a British book on magic that describes a simple and clever force of the number 18 that was new to me.

It uses the four cardboard disks (or squares) numbered as shown on the enclosed set.

Show the audience that the disks bear numbers 1 through 8. Pretend to mix them up but leave them on the table ~~alone~~ so that the odd digits (1,3,5,7) are on top.

Turn your back and ask him to turn over any two disks, then total the four numbers showing. They will always be 18.

The trick works the same if you start with the four even digits showing.

The following occurred to me. Let the spectator begin by turning the disks at random so that the numbers on top are genuinely<sup>y</sup> randomized. If he leaves the disks with all even or all odd showing, you go at once into the presentation.

If only one disk is the wrong parity, explain that while your back is turned he is to turn over two disks, "like so." To illustrate, turn over the "wrong" disk.

If two disks are wrong, then of course you illustrate what he is to <sup>do</sup> by turning over <sup>two</sup> ~~the~~ two disks.

This dodge automatically insures that the four disks are all the same parity, but leaves the impression that they have been randomized.

All best,

Mart.

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