

course, as natural, but causing confusion for Nancy. She reasoned that 3♥ would have been forcing and natural, so 4♥ was something unusual, probably a splinter for spades. She wasn't entirely certain her interpretation was correct (and perhaps she should have erred on the side of caution, therefore, and chosen 4♠), but following their agreements, she responded to the splinter bid by showing the number of key cards she held for spades: 4NT showed zero or three.

Alan knew something was wrong at this point, so he passed, hoping to limit the damage.

<i>Vernay</i>	<i>Schaffer</i>
1♠	1♥
4♠	3♠
	Pass

A good Precision sequence: Schaffer was able to jump to 3♠ because his opening bid limited him to 15 HCP (otherwise, 1♣). The jump in Precision shows a maximum opener and four-card support.

Bridge Bulletin auction: 1♥-1♠; 2♠-4♠; Pass

Scores: 4♠ 11; 4♥ 10; 3♥, 3♠ 6; 1NT 1
Popkins 49, Vernay-Schaffer 43

Problem 7

South deals. Both vulnerable.

<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>
♠ A K J 9	♠ 7 3
♥ A K Q J	♥ 10 8 3 2
♦ K 5	♦ A Q 2
♣ A K 6	♣ J 8 7 3

<i>Alan</i>	<i>Nancy</i>
2♣	2♦
2♥	2♠
2NT	3♣
3♦	3♠
4♥	4NT
5♣	5♦
6♣	6NT
7♥	Pass

The Popkins play a popular expert treatment commonly known as "Kokish."

The idea is for the 2♣ opener to

show super-strong balanced hands (25-plus HCP) without jumping to 3NT or higher.

After the 2♦ (waiting) response, 2♥ shows either a strong hand with hearts or a balanced hand in the 25-plus range. Responder continues with 2♠ as a conventional relay to find out which type of hand opener has. 2NT shows the balanced battleship.

The next part of the dance is exploration of a possible major-suit fit. Using a modified version of puppet Stayman, Nancy's 3♣ asked if Alan held a five-card major. 3♦ said no. 3♠ showed four hearts (and denied four spades), and Alan confirmed a 4-4 fit by bidding 4♥.

Nancy knew the combined values of the partnership were at or near the slam zone, so she continued with 4NT, RKCB for hearts. 5♣ showed one or four (four, obviously, in this case) and 5♦ asked about the ♥Q.

Typically, the player responding to this inquiry also shows any side-suit kings by bidding the suit with the king. For economy, the cheapest king is shown first. Popkin's response, it seems, should be 5♠ (showing the ♥Q and the ♠K), but he bypassed spades and chose 6♣. In theory, this should deny the ♠K.

Despite the 4-4 heart fit, Nancy went for the matchpoints (6NT). Alan, with significant extras and a partner clearly interested in finding out more about his hand, took a chance on 7♥.

<i>Vernay</i>	<i>Schaffer</i>
1♣	1♦
2♥	2♠
2NT	3♣
3♦	3♠
4♣	4♦
6♥	Pass

1♣ was strong and artificial, showing 16-plus HCP, and 1♦ was a negative response, showing 0-7. 2♥ promised either a balanced hand in the 24-26 HCP range or a very strong hand with four hearts and a six-card minor. 2♠ was forced, and 2NT showed the big, balanced hand.

3♣ was puppet Stayman, 3♦ revealed at least one four-card major, and 3♠ showed four hearts. 4♣ and

4♦ were control-showing bids.

Vernay, knowing that his partner held the ♦A and not much else (Schaffer was limited by the 1♦ response), settled for the small slam in hearts.

Bridge Bulletin auction: 2♣-2♦ (waiting); 4NT (27-28 HCP)-6NT; Pass

Scores: 7♥ 12; 6♥ 10, 6NT 8; 6♣ 5; 5♥ 2; 3NT, 7NT 1
Popkins 61, Vernay-Schaffer 53

Problem 8

West deals. E-W vulnerable.

<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>
♠ 4	♠ A J 7 3
♥ K Q J 10 8 6	♥ 7 2
♦ 8 3	♦ A K 10 5
♣ K 9 6 2	♣ Q 10 4

<i>Alan</i>	<i>Nancy</i>
2♥	2NT
3♠	4♥
Pass	

Alan began with weak 2♥ (a near-maximum). Nancy's 2NT was Ogust, asking opener to further describe his hand. 3♠ showed a good suit and a good hand, so Nancy bid the game.

<i>Vernay</i>	<i>Schaffer</i>
2♦	2♥
Pass	

Vernay and Schaffer use the "multi" 2♦ bid for any hand that contains a weak two-bid in a major. Their style, according to Vernay, is fairly random with regard to the quality (and length) of the suit and strength of the hand. This explains Schaffer's tepid approach: 2♥ was "pass or correct," asking opener to pass if hearts was his suit, or bid 2♠ (which Schaffer would have raised to game) if that was his suit.

Vernay, not knowing anything about his partner's hand, obeyed and passed.

Bridge Bulletin auction: 2♥-2NT (feature); 3♣-4♥; Pass

Scores: 4♥ 10; 3NT 5; 3♥ 4
Final score: Popkins 71, Vernay-Schaffer 57