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.

Vernay	Schaffer
	1 ♥
1♠	3♠
4♠	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.

West	East
♠ 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

Alan	Nancy
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 ♥.

Vernay	Schaffer
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 bid[s]

Vernay, knowing that his pa[rtner] held the ♦A and not much el[se] (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.

West	East
♠ 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

Alan	Nancy
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.

Vernay	Schaffer
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