Dear Mr. Gottlieb,

I have a comment concerning the helplessmate problem in the November-December *MIT Technology Review*. Such problems have been considered before. In 1994 Noam Elkies composed the position below, which requires seven moves to mate. Elkies also constructed a position (which I cannot recall) with many promoted men on the board that requires ten moves.

![Chessboard diagram](image)

**Noam Elkies**
unpublished, 1994

Mate in 7

An interesting variant is *ultimate mutual Zugzwang*: whoever moves must be eventually checkmated regardless of what either player does. It is not so easy to find any positions with this property. Two examples are given below.
H. Hünerkopf

_feenschach_, 1972

Whoever moves must be mated in one

Noam D. Elkies

original, 2000

Whoever moves must be mated in two

Sincerely, and Happy New Year!

Richard Stanley