

**Wheels:** An e-mail from Al says, “We have 67,000 miles on our car, which is good condition and driven regularly. Over July 4<sup>th</sup>, in upstate New York it overheated. The next day we let it run with the air on for 10 minutes and heard a noise under the hood. We killed the engine and saw that fluid in the reservoir was boiling madly. We were able to coast to a garage, but it was closed over the holiday. The next day the mechanic could not see me, but said to drive home without using the air conditioning. We did with no problems, checking under the hood several times on the 350 mile trip home. Since then we have had no problems. What should I have checked? The radiator man thought it would be OK. Another suggested we change the thermostat in case it is bad for about \$50. We want to drive back to New York and want to know where to start to avoid this problem.”

**Halderman:** You did not mention when the engine overheated. If it was during city driving, the most likely cause is an inoperative cooling fan. To check if this works, simply turn on the air conditioning and the fan should work. If not, the problem is either the fan itself or the fan relay. If the car overheats at highway speeds, the most likely causes include:

1. Lack of proper coolant flow such as being low on coolant
2. A defective water pump
3. A restricted radiator

I hope this helps.

