

Wheels: An e-mail from David B. says, "I read your column in the Saturday issue of the Dayton Daily News and thought I would pose the following situation to you. I have a 1994 Oldsmobile 88 LSS with 105,000 miles. Since late October, I have experienced a very intermittent problem described as follows. Sometimes, with a cold engine, when I pull the transmission lever into reverse or drive, the car will not move although engine RPM will increase. If I pull the lever into "1", the transmission always responds appropriately and I can drive away with absolutely no difficulties. The first time this happened I was in South Bend, Indiana, and I drove home to Dayton with no problems. The engine RPM appears appropriate and shift points occur normally with no obvious abnormalities. I changed the transmission fluid at 30,000, 60,000 and 100,000 miles. The severe cold weather we've had lately and not operating the car for over 3 weeks recently (out of town) has had no noticeable affect on the situation. Again, this situation is very intermittent, and occurs maybe 30% of the time. Do I have a transmission on the verge of failure, or what?"

Halderman: Thanks for writing. When you place the gear selector into manual low or reverse, the line pressure is increased. This tells me that the most likely cause is due to worn clutches. If so, the problem will continue and the only reasonable repair is an overhaul. It is possible that a valve body or pump problem could be the cause, but again, an overhaul would take care of these concerns also. I think I would simply live with this problem because it doesn't affect the safety or use of the car.

