

Wheels: An e-mail from Paul asks, “My mother has had a problem with her Buick and the dealer is unable to resolve the issue. When the gas tank is approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ full and the car slows to a stop you can hear the fuel bounce against the plastic fuel tank – a rather strong thud. The dealer changed one tank and the problem still occurs. Do you have any suggestions?”

Halderman: That is a good one that I have never heard before. I think the noise is coming from somewhere else that sounds like the fuel in the tank. Noise travels in a vehicle and can fool even the best technician. Maybe the weight of the fuel in the tank has created forces on the drivetrain that are causing the noise. A likely fault is the automatic transaxle. When it downshifts into first gear, it can cause a thud noise. The same is true for the brakes. Try braking to a stop with the transmission in neutral. If the problem stops, the transmission is the cause. If that doesn't work, try slowing to a stop (away from traffic, of course) using just the parking brake and see if this helps.

