

Wheels: An e-mail from Josh says, “I have come into possession of a 1999 Buick Park Avenue with 26,000 miles that has only been driven about 500 miles a year for the last 3 to 4 years. When I back out of the driveway and accelerate, there is a klunking noise and the transmission seems to slip. The brakes make a grinding noise when I brake, and I can feel vibration in the brake pedal. When I go over a dip in the road, the car bounces like the shocks are shot. I can’t believe that all these things have gone bad because of the low mileage. Could the fact that the car hasn’t been driven much somehow cause these problems? What do I need to do to fix them; I sure don’t want to replace the transmission.”

Halderman: I think both problems are a result of not driving the vehicle for extended periods of time. The transmission problem could be caused by other things besides the transmission, such as the engine itself, engine mounts, drive axle shaft joints, and etc. I believe that the brake problems you are encountering are due to rust on the brake rotors and drums. The suspension “bouncing” could be due to low tire pressures and/or flat-spotted tires from sitting for a long time without being driven. I suggest that you drive the vehicle for an hour or so and try to get the vehicle on the open road when the engine and the entire drive train can get up to normal operating temperature. If the problems continue, see an experienced technician. The brake rotors and/or drums may need to be machined to remove the rust.

