

Wheels: An e-mail from Kees asks, “We have three cars in the family and all were purchased new. The oldest of the three is a 1988 Toyota Tercel, which my son now drives. This car has approximately 90,000 miles, is a five-speed, and has a carburetor. My question is this, most of the time the car seems to idle at the correct RPM. In the early morning when it is cold, the RPMs are higher and after it warms up the RPMs drop. Periodically, however (we haven’t been able to find a pattern), the idle drops so low that the car stalls. At one point during the winter, we tried adding some fuel injector/carburetor cleaner to the fuel tank and it appeared to help, although it did happen again on the next tank. Is there something I can do to eliminate this low RPM/stalling problem once and for all?”

Halderman: One idea comes to mind. Does it stall or idle down after the engine has been run for a few minutes and has the temperature been between 32 and 50 degrees when this occurs? If so, then the cause could be a missing or damaged heat tube to the air cleaner assembly. Fuel also can play a part with this problem. Can you pin it down to a particular station or grade? For example, using premium gasoline during cold weather can cause this problem if the vehicle was not designed to require premium grade gasoline.

