

**Wheels:** An e-mail from Ron says, “I just wanted to pass on to you what happened this past week to my sister. She has a new 2004 Chevy Minivan with around 5,000 miles on it. Within the past 5 weeks, the check engine light has come on. And she has taken it back to the dealer. The dealer has put the computer tester on it, checked the gas cap, opened the hood and checked the oil, radiator, transmission fluid and everything one could think to check. The computer stated that all were running normal. The computer reset the warning and off they went. A week later, the check engine light came back on again. So back to the dealer with the same routine as before; the computer is reset and off she goes. A week later, the same thing happens and another trip to the dealer with the same results. To make a long story short, it comes on again. My sister drives the vehicle to my dad’s house where I was and we checked all the things the dealer did. We both looked at each other and said “let’s take it to Frank, an experienced mechanic.” Frank asked her two questions: 1. Does this van sit outside all the time? 2. Is it parked near trees or a woods? She said yes to both. Frank opens the hood and removes the air breather unit and there is a nest built inside the unit. Some varmint had made a nest. He has seen it time after time. He cleaned the area, reset the computer and to date no more check engine light. I thought I would pass this along. Thanks again for all the help and I enjoy reading your column.”

**Halderman:** Thanks for the story. We teach at Sinclair Community College that a visual inspection is the first step of any diagnostic procedure. Your story shows the importance of this step.

