

**Wheels:** A letter from Gene of Centerville says, “I have a 1987 Oldsmobile with a 3.8 liter V-6 fuel-injected engine. The car runs fine when being driven and never misses, even in a pull. About a month ago, it started “shuddering” at idle. I have replaced the plugs, high-tension wires, the EGR valve and the fuel and air filters. I have used a number of containers of injector cleaner. The problem continues to get worse. Now the car dies periodically at idle, especially when the air condition is on, and hesitates when starting out. Once it is moving, it is fine. I took it to a shop. They said it would cost \$70 to put it on their engine analyzer, but couldn’t guarantee they could fix it. Do you have any idea what the cause of this problem might be?”

**Halderman:** Idle-related problems on a fuel-injected engine can be due to many different causes, but the most likely is due to dirty throttle plates. Because crankcase fumes are routed near the throttle plate, deposits form, which disrupt the flow of air into the engine. In some vehicles, these deposits can even cause the throttle to stick. While there may be other causes, I would ask an experienced service technician to clean the throttle plate and the base of the throttle body before spending additional money on further service.

