

Wheels: An e-mail from Jim says, “My aunt lives in a retirement center and her car has not been started for 2 ½ years. It is a 1983 Ford Crown Vic and she thinks it is probably worthless now. It has around 100,000 miles and overall is in very good shape. I suspect it could be running again without too much effort, but I’m concerned about trying to start it with such old gasoline. I know that gas turns to goo over time. It will need a battery and should the car be towed to a service garage and the gas tank emptied? She lives more than 3 ½ hours away so anything I do to help her will most likely have to be done by phone.”

Halderman: Being far away really does reduce your options. If the fuel tank was full when it was parked, the gasoline “may” be OK. If the gasoline level is less than half, you can be pretty sure that it has gone bad due to varnish and moisture. I think your idea of having it towed to a local service facility is a wise move. Be prepared to spend several hundred dollars however because once they start looking over items that need to be replaced, it is easy to exceed your budget. Items that I think should be replaced include fuel filter (maybe even the fuel pump assembly), spark plugs, and other related items. You may want to consider donating the vehicle or selling it as is rather than start the restoration procedure.

