Wheels: Don writes, “Recently, with the cold spell, my car battery wouldn't work so I put it on trickle charge for two days. Then, thinking it was at full charge, I attempted to install it in the car. After hooking up the positive cable, I tried to hook up the negative cable but got a lot of arcing. (Which scared me as I know batteries can blow up -- one blew up on my son one time.) Never having encountered this arcing when installing a battery before, I belatedly checked the voltage and found it to be only eight volts. Was this reduced voltage causing this arching and, if so, why?”

Halderman: The arcing was most likely due to being connected to the vehicle backwards. If the battery had low voltage and you were using jumper cables or a jump box that had 12 volts or more, than an arc would appear. It looks like the battery is bad and needs to be replaced. If the battery cables were connected backwards, you may have damaged some of the electronic components in the vehicle, including the computer and the alternator. I suggest that you install a new battery correctly and hope for the best. Blown fuses would be the first thing I would check before installing the battery.