Wheels: Don writes by e-mail, “My wife is working in New Orleans. I left a 1998 Explorer, six-cylinder, 100,000 miles for her to drive over what have to be the worst maintained roads in the country. I have never had a problem with the Explorer, but I also maintained it very well. The car developed random failure to start problems, requiring it to be jumped fairly often. My wife took the car to a local dealer and they diagnosed the problem as a short in the radio. It was unhooked and the car ran fine for a while.

I think the radio is still the problem. When they put in the good battery, the radio drained it somewhat after you would stop, but it still had power to start and would partially charge when you drove it. Driving it to and in Florida would have charged it due to the distances and time if it had a slow drain issue. Driving around town, it has no chance to charge. I just found out that the car has been sitting since late last summer. Do you have any ideas from what I passed on to you?”

Halderman: I did not see any battery drain test being performed nor any readings. This should be done and the readings should not exceed 50 millamp (0.05 ampere). If there is a drain, then fuses should be removed one at a time to see if any of the circuits affect the drain. If a fuse is removed and the drain stops or goes below 0.02 amps, then that is the circuit causing the problem. Then the technician should disconnect each component being powered by that fuse one at a time until the fault is found. Find a shop that is willing to perform this test and I am sure they will find the root cause.