

the light rail train or any Metro Transit bus. Another option is the six-hour pass for \$3.50, which allows you six hours of unlimited bus and train rides. The day pass and six-hour pass are available at any Metro Transit store and from ticket-vending machines at rail stations. Bus fare is paid as you board the bus—so have exact change ready. Note that buses don't always run on time, and it can take a long time to get to your destination because of all the bus stops.

Plan your bus routes using [www.metrotransit.org](http://www.metrotransit.org) (go to "Plan Your Trip") or call (612) 373-3333. This is not a city where you stand on the corner and hail a taxi. You will find taxis only at stands near major hotels in downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul. Know that if you take a taxi to somewhere other than the airport, you can't always count on getting back by cab, unless you make arrangements with the driver or call the taxi dispatch. To get an estimate of taxi rates to various parts of town, visit [www.taxicabrates.com](http://www.taxicabrates.com).

If you enjoy gaming or national entertainment, the Mystic Lake Casino has round-trip regular shuttle bus service from the downtown hotel circuit to the casino in Shakopee. The shuttle bus pick-up schedule and map may be accessed at [www.mysticlake.com/shuttle.html](http://www.mysticlake.com/shuttle.html).

The Minnesota Zoo located in Apple Valley is one of the top zoos in the nation. You can pet stingrays, get up close to sharks, watch a dolphin show, and enjoy the unique personalities of over 2,400 animals. See [www.mn zoo.com](http://www.mn zoo.com).

If you enjoy nature and want to see an incredible showing of spring flowers and bulbs (remember: April showers bring May flowers!), you could make the thirty-minute drive from Minneapolis just past Chaska, Minnesota, to the 1,047 acres of the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. Grounds are open daily from 8 AM to 8 PM. You can take a free guided walking tour or board a guided tram around Three-Mile Drive. For more information, visit [www.arboretum.umn.edu](http://www.arboretum.umn.edu).

If you want to take a quiet walk along the river, St. Paul has the longest Mississippi River shoreline of any U.S. city. Just twelve miles from downtown Minneapolis, you can explore the Science Museum of Minnesota or attend a play at one of the many local theaters. See exotic wild animals for free at the Como Zoo. Or eat your lunch surrounded by beautiful botanicals in the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory. Are you a beer lover? The Summit Brewing Company in St. Paul hosts free tours at 1 PM on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. You'll learn beer history and get a brewing lesson, along with three free



## Conference Certificate Program


**Y**ou said you wanted better educational opportunities. STC's Technical Communication Summit is poised to give them to you.

Among the new offerings at STC's Technical Communication Summit are five *certificate programs* that let participants explore a subject in depth over the course of the conference. Participants who complete a program earn a Certificate of Attendance. To do so, participants first participate in a two-day pre-conference seminar and, during the three days of the conference, attend four designated conference sessions in the same subject area. This combination of seminar and sessions helps participants develop skills and exposes them to the broad range of thinking in a given subject area.

The price of the certificate program includes full-conference registration, so participants may also attend other technical sessions. (Conference rates will appear in the January *Intercom*.)

Participants have a choice of these five certificate programs:

- Technical Communication 101—a basic introductory course for those new to the field
- Master Writers—for experienced practitioners in an advanced discipline
- Usability—instruction on the theory and practice of usability assessment
- Content Management—a case-study-based approach to defining, proposing, and implementing a content management system
- Team Management—a course in managing a documentation team

The pre-conference seminars are scheduled 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM, Saturday and Sunday, May 12 and 13, 2007. A catered lunch is included both days. Participants then remain for the conference, where they attend four designated sessions. People who complete the entire program receive their certificates at the end of the conference. Look for more details in future issues of *Intercom*. 

sample beers at the end of the tour. For more information, visit [www.summitbrewing.com](http://www.summitbrewing.com) and [www.visitstpaul.com](http://www.visitstpaul.com).

For more information about the people, places, and events around town, see the current *Mpls.St.Paul Magazine* at [www.mspmag.com](http://www.mspmag.com).

### If You Have a Whole Day

Duluth, Minnesota, is just 150 miles northeast of Minneapolis—St. Paul via I-35. This city is unique because it is built into a steep, rocky cliffside overlooking the agate beaches and clear, cold water of Lake Superior. See the old-time lift bridge and unique historical architecture. Enjoy a day of charter fishing. Look for gifts at hundreds of quaint specialty shops on the waterfront that feature local artists, boutiques, outdoor gear, and antiques. They say a picture is worth a thousand words, so for photos and related information, visit [www.northernimages.com](http://www.northernimages.com) and [www.visitduluth.com](http://www.visitduluth.com).

If you're looking to slow down a bit and enjoy true small-town charm, your destination is Stillwater. Less than forty miles east of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, the quaint little town of Stillwater forms the heart of the St. Croix River Valley.

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### Cold Calls

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thinking, ‘Earn, baby, earn!’ Right now, I don’t think I can afford the luxury of waiting for work to come to me. Cold calls might broaden my client base. Maybe I could even charge a bit more if I concentrated on private companies and took on fewer nonprofits.”

*Celebrate your successes.* Many independents say they don’t make calls because of their fear of rejection. Early in my process, I had two rejections, but they were so polite and respectful that I didn’t wither. And to balance those two rejections, I had two huge successes: HR managers who said, “You know, we’ve been talking about writing training for a long time. Why don’t you come in and show us your stuff?”

### Opening the Floodgates

Whatever your comfort level with cold calls, there is no doubt that this tactic can be productive. Elkins said she obtained her biggest and oldest client via a cold call. Bowerman swears by cold calls: “Cold calling does work. It may not be working for you, but you simply cannot even come to that flawed conclusion until you’ve done a TON of it . . . stick with it a little longer, the floodgates [will] open” (*Seconds*, p. 87). I believe cold calls are the fastest way to obtain work, certainly faster than networking and other passive forms of marketing. Bowerman stresses that cold calls aren’t absolutely necessary—you can build your business more slowly—but they can be an immense help.

Whether or not you receive a flood of business from your cold calls, you’ll

definitely learn more about your market, your product (service), and yourself. Once I overcame my fear, started applying discipline and organization to the process, and asked for help, I started to see my marketing seeds sprout and grow.

And my garden? I have so many tomatoes and zucchini, neighbors avert their eyes when I walk toward them with a bowl of harvest in my hands. ❶

### SUGGESTED READINGS

Bowerman, Peter. *The Well-Fed Writer*. Atlanta: Fanove, 2000.

———. *The Well-Fed Writer: Back for Seconds*. Atlanta: Fanove, 2005.

### Strange Rules

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The subjunctive uses a slightly different tense structure from the indicative (principally *were* instead of *was*) and applies to statements that are wishes, or that are doubtful or contrary to fact, as in, “I wish he were here.”

### Imagined Errors

Williams reserves a special section for what he calls “The Bêtes Noires,” or rules that he says are “largely capricious, with no foundation in logic, history, etymology, or linguistic efficiency.”

He heads the list of supposed errors with the use of *like* instead of *as*, as in “Write like you talk.” Right behind that is *different than* rather than *different from*, as in, “These numbers are different than the others.” Very few of us today take the trouble to use *different from*.

Williams’ third bête noire is the familiar *hopefully*, as in, “Hopefully, the matter will be resolved soon.” The claim that “the matter does not hope” is not valid. Therefore, *hopefully* can definitely be used attributively, like other introductory words, such as *candidly*, *seriously*, *frankly*, *honestly*, *sadly*, or *happily*.

Williams readily allows the use of *fi-*

*nalize*, although I’m sure he doesn’t like it to be overused, as it is in many technical papers.

He also thinks that we have gotten a bit oversensitive to prohibiting “absolute” words like *perfect*, *unique*, *complete*, or *final* to be modified by *quite*, *more*, or *very*. Even the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution talks about “a more perfect” union.

### Authors’ Choice

It’s quite clear that authors have a wide choice when it comes to grammar, not just a single set of “correct” rules. And this choice is not rigid. It follows the way educated people speak when they are trying to influence people. The key word is choice.

Thus, Williams is not saying that rules do not matter. They do. But they vary with different authorities, and over the years they change.

Certainly, it’s well for authors to know a wide range of rules. But the chief discipline is not grammar, but rather idiom—the way educated people speak and write. This is what we need to learn to communicate effectively. ❶

### Minneapolis

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Downtown Stillwater offers antiques galore, an antiquarian book lover’s paradise, and diverse gift stores.

This small town hosts a logging and railroad museum, and many unique Victorian bed and breakfast inns. Ride the Minnesota Zephyr dinner train, board an old-fashioned paddlewheel boat for a river boat tour, or take the city trolley tour to learn about local outlaws, logging tycoons, and the beautiful architecture of the town. To plan your day or make reservations, visit [www.stillwatertraveler.com](http://www.stillwatertraveler.com) and [www.ilovestillwater.com](http://www.ilovestillwater.com).

The city of Rochester is probably most famous as the home of the world-renowned Mayo Clinic. It is seventy-six miles southeast of the Twin Cities. Take a tour of the Mayo Clinic, visit the restored and refurbished William Dee Log Cabin (dating back to 1862) and the traditional one-room Hadley Valley School House, and walk around the George Stoppel Farm. For more information about the area, visit [www.rochestercub.org](http://www.rochestercub.org) and [www.rochestermn.com](http://www.rochestermn.com), or for information on the Mayo Clinic, try [www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org). ❶