

Organizing for Writing Success
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It's a new OCACW meeting year (September through May) and time to take a look at how we are approaching our writing efforts. Most of us have writing notes in various places, including our computers, journals, backs of envelopes, written sideways on church bulletins, and even on a few napkins. Many of these items are stuffed into a book or journal, piled on a corner of a table, languishing in the bottom of a purse, and occasionally run through the laundry in a pocket.

If you are one of the minority among us, meaning you actually have a file with project folders in it – which you actually use much of the time, congratulations! We'll all visit you soon to look over your filing system so we can copy the applicable parts of it in our own homes.

For most beginning writers, however, knowing how to organize one's very own Writing Area is a niggling thought on our "someday" list. Whether you tend to write on a laptop at a restaurant, a journal while people-watching in a park, or on notebook pages while swinging on your porch; you need a place for your writing materials to "live." Somewhere they'll be safe from spills, where you can always find them when you are ready to write—or to market your writing.

So, to help everyone organize for a successful writing hobby, avocation, or business; here's an **"Equipping Your Writing Space" List**. For about \$35, you can begin; less if you shop flea markets and garage sales (and don't be tempted to stray from your purchase goals).

1. A file drawer – a "milk carton" crate works fine for this, just be sure it has tracks on the inside lip to hold hanging folders.
2. A set of hanging folders – unless you're ready to pay a premium for fancy colors, the cheap dark green ones work fine.
3. A set of manila folders – these go into your hanging folders, often you'll have several similar projects that need their own manila folder but should be grouped together in the same hanging folder. Again, you can pay a premium for fancy designed folders; but that goes over the \$35 limit.
4. A shelf (think garage sale) on which to collect your writing how-to books, journals, and writing notebooks.
5. A set of pens/pencils that have a good feel for you when you hold them.
6. A set of little pocket (2 ½ by 5-inch) notepads. Many of our best ideas come when we're doing other things, something other than sitting at a computer "to write." Always carry around something in your pocket or purse so you're ready capture those writing ideas when they occur. We think, "I won't forget that great idea;" only to realize later that it was as fleeting as the morning dew.
7. A set of cheap mugs (think flea market), large enough to stash a pocket notepad and a pen inside; then set them around the house so they'll be handy to capture that idea when you're busy cooking, doing laundry, soaking in a tub, working on a hobby, watching a movie – you understand the idea. You may want to select distinctive pens, by color or design, so other family members who are tempted to "borrow" your writing mug pens will recognize those are "reserved" for your writing.

Now I'm anticipating hearing how everyone already has, or is, organizing for writing success.