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Getting Organized

An e-newsletter of organizing tips for faculty members. November 2005.

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"What we're really talking about is a wonderful day set aside on the fourth Thursday of November when no one diets. I mean, why else would they call it Thanksgiving?"

-- Erma Bombeck

→ Some pages below will open in a new browser window. M. D. Anderson does not endorse external sites.

The Organizing Expo

Thanks again to all of you who came out for the 2005 Organizing Expo. We had a great day and learned about many new products aimed at making your life a little easier.

For those of you who couldn't make it, here are a few of the more popular products:

Avery-Dennison Sign Kits

This [kit](#) turns 8 1/2 x 11 sheets of paper into posters and large signs. The special paper can be printed out to the border of the paper and has a sticky side that can be positioned into place to create a seamless poster. The good news is that the paper can be repositioned so you can line it up, and it comes in several sizes and two colors -- white or yellow.

Uni-ball 207 Gel pens

So really, how much can anyone improve a black ink pen? Well, surprisingly enough, a new pen is out. The [Uni-ball 207 Gel](#) has special ink, which becomes trapped in paper and makes illegal check washing almost impossible. The pen, which came out in September, comes in red, blue, and black ink and helps "prevent check fraud." The spokesman for the pen is none other than Frank Abagnale, the identity theft expert whose life was the basis for the movie *Catch Me If You Can*. He should know.

Sharpie pens

I'll admit it. I'm a Sharpie junkie. I just love 'em. This season, they have new colors and mini-retractables. I'm so there.

Oxford At Hand Sheet Protector Dispenser

This box of 50 sheet protectors looks like the plastic baggie box you would find in your pantry, but these protectors are acid-free, archival safe, and three-hole punched. They come out of the box without any folds and come in two choices -- light weight, semi-clear or standard weight, crystal clear. The box is easy to store.

ACCO Brands

Week Over Week Dry-Erase Calendar

The [Week Over Week Calendar](#) has four, dry-erase strips on a magnetized board, and the calendar can be used to write out to-do's, priorities, or manage team projects. The current week is at the top of the list, and you can rotate the weeks on the magnetized board.

Desktop Erasable Planner

The [Desktop Planner](#) is basically a dry-erase flip book that can be used as a weekly planner. Each day of the week has two sides, one for hourly appointments and the other for setting priorities or to-do's.

→ With both products, you can reuse them week after week and even use different colored dry-erase markers to color code your appointments and to-do items.

Avery Easy Apply Labels

These new labels help you label binder dividers all at once, especially if you're making a large number of binders for a project or meeting. The [templates](#) are found on Avery's website.

Fellowes Premium Monitor Riser and Laptop Riser

The [monitor riser](#) can be adjusted to a comfortable viewing level and has space for CDs/DVDs, a cupholder, and a storage drawer. The [laptop riser](#) is also adjustable so your laptop is at optimal viewing level. Sorry -- no cupholder with this one.

Kensington Contour Roller Notebook Case

Your laptop fits snugly into this [notebook](#), and this works very well for the frequent traveler. The bag is designed to reduce shoulder fatigue -- which is always a good thing.

Wilson Jones Binders

Binders are always a big draw since so many of us use them in our day-to-day work and projects. You have the typical "workhorse" binders that are always there when you need them -- Office Depot Locking No-Gap Round Ring and the [Heavy Duty Locking D-Ring](#).

A couple of binders that looked interesting were the Premium Single Touch Locking D-Ring Binders and the Basic Round Ring Binder with Color Label Sleeves. The Single Touch can be opened and closed with a single touch -- just like the name implies. It's always a little annoying when you feel like you have to wrestle a binder open. The Color Sleeves come with six-color, poly-translucent sleeves that slip onto the binder's spine.

Custom labels can be made with [free web templates](#) found online. All of the binders come in various sizes.

Smead Rotary Files

The [rotary file cabinets](#) are accessible on both sides, which maximizes space. The files rotate with a push pedal, and you can file documents on both sides of the cabinet. When you don't need to see your files, you can turn the cabinet to the non-document side to secure files or for a cleaner look. Height varies from a three-tier cabinet up to a nine-tier.

Smead Workspace CD Jackets

The manila folders come with [CD jackets](#) attached to them. You can file your projects and any accompanying CDs all in one space.

SpeedPro Electric Stapler

I also call this the disco [stapler](#) because a blue light flashes when you're running low on staples. There's a staple remover tucked in the back so you never have to look for it again.

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Holiday Survival Tips

The winter holidays are nearly here, and nearly everyone I talked to has been stunned by how quickly the end of the year is approaching.

Here are a few tips to get you through the holiday season:

- Order stamps and boxes directly from the U.S. Post Office
→ To mail gifts, use the flat-rate boxes. Go to the [U.S. Postal Service](#).
- If possible, order gifts from the web and have them shipped directly to the person you're buying for
- Address holiday cards while you're watching TV
→ It's a great way to multi-task.
- When possible, get help
→ Don't try to do it all yourself. Just remember -- those perfect holidays are only on TV, and they usually have a cast of thousands working behind the scenes.
- Select gifts that fit your budget
→ We're tempted to overspend during the holidays.
- Don't sweat the small stuff
- Don't bring work home during the holiday vacation
→ You know you're not going to do it anyway, and why cause yourself any extra pressure?
- When you get stressed, take a walk, do Yoga, or go to the gym
→ It's a great way to work off stress and those extra holiday calories.

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Where's Waldo?

Feeling lost? Two websites can help you find yourself -- literally. [Google Earth](#) and [MSN Virtual Earth](#) both use aerial and satellite images and street maps so you can see where you are and where you want to go. It's a great way to prepare for a trip. You can find your hotel and see if it really is close enough to walk to where you're going.

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From the Bookshelf

If you already bought Julie Morgenstern's *Making Work Work*, then you don't need to pick up her new title, *Never Check E-Mail in the Morning*, since it's the same book. The name was changed for the paperback version. If you don't own either version, the paperback usually costs less.

Organize for Disaster: Prepare Your Family and Your Home for Any Natural or Unnatural Disaster by [Judith Kolberg](#)

It's been a rough year for the Gulf Coast, and Kolberg's book is a great common sense guide on how to prepare for any type of disaster. Topics include:

- Protecting photographs and memorabilia

- Organizing your essential documents
- What to include in a first aid kit
- What kind of food and supplies to buy
- How to hunker down if you're staying put

Kolberg also includes lists of activities to help kids prepare for disasters, such as learning first aid and how to call 9-1-1.

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Life. Organized. Seminar

Mark your calendars! The National Association of Professional Organizers-Houston Chapter presents *Life. Organized. Houston's Organizing Forum* on January 20-21, 2006 at the Sheraton Brookhollow, Highways 290 and 610.

The first day of the seminar is for professional organizers and those interested in becoming organizers, and the second day is for anyone who is interested in becoming more organized. Barry Izsak, author of *Organize Your Garage in No Time*, and Donna Smallin, author of *Organizing Plain and Simple*, will be the keynote speakers during both days.

For more information and registration, check out the [NAPO Houston](#) website.

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Got Clutter?

I have developed 15-minute, 30-minute and 45-minute presentations on organizing and time management. Moving to a new building? I also have a 15-minute presentation on preparing for a move for your department.

I also do one-on-one sessions in your office and help you come up with a solution. To schedule a presentation or a one-on-one appointment, call (713) 792-8061 or e-mail [Janice Simon](mailto:jsimon@mdanderson.org) (jsimon@mdanderson.org).

Happy Organizing! And Have a Happy Thanksgiving!

-- Janice

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