By Mary Beth Weisenberger

I just returned from a shopping trip with my husband. Let me tell you, I'd rather stick a thousand needles in my eye than go shopping, especially with my husband, and he would rather do the same. But the recent Christmas season, and our busy schedules (aka our proclivity to procrastinate) compelled us to grab our coupons and sales flyers, gas up the van, put our names on the church's prayer list and take off together for the Great American Mall Adventure.

Let it be known that I am not the stereotypical female shopper. I do not shop recreationally. When my girlfriends and I find ourselves at a mall, I usually end up in a nearby bookstore, reading (and possibly napping) in a corner chair with a stack of potential buys in my lap.

While I do love a bargain, and I enjoy finding the perfect gift for someone, I am basically a random, drive-by shopper who puts very little planning into my efforts. Long forays in stores make me go weak in the knees and cause my patience levels to drop to nonexistent. It's too much stimuli for someone so scatterbrained, I just can't focus.

My husband is even worse. When I first met him, he acted like the mall was the house of the devil and he often waited in the car while I went in to make a purchase. Once, on my birthday, he made me wait in the car while he ran in to JCPenneys, grabbed the first thing he saw in the ladies' department, threw it on the counter along with some cash and dashed back out to the car. "Happy Birthday!" he said, with a look of triumph on his face. It was a hideous plaid dress, three sizes too big. Knowing what a big step he had just taken, I couldn't be too upset. But I did return the dress.

While we have both increased our shopping stamina somewhat over the years, the two of us on a shopping excursion remains a losing combination. It's bad enough on the rare occasion when we get groceries together (I admit: I only have him come along when I'm tired and don't want to carry all those bags to and from my vehicle. I accept that my bill will be twice as big, the junk food twice as numerous and the trip twice as long). But put us in a mall together and it's a battle of the brains, the easily distracted kind. We went for DVDs, a pair of jeans, a set of towels and a couple of books. Simple. He emerged an hour later with a remote control toy helicopter, a

pair of high-end sunglasses and a box of Cinnabons®. I followed shortly after, with fewer hairs on my head and ten books. For myself. We argued over each other's purchases, and then went home and ordered gifts online.

We did manage to efficiently team up and devour the Cinnabons®. I'm calling that progress.

Mary Beth Weisenburger believes whoever invented online shopping deserves a medal. See what else she's up to at inthesameboatwithmarybeth.wordpress.com.

Mary Beth Weisenburger is a columnist for the Paulding County Progress.

The opinions stated are those of the writer, and do not necessarily reflect that of the newspaper.