

**Family Living**  
**Focus**  
by  
**Janice Stoudnour**  
Bedford County  
Cooperative Extension



**Is Shopping On Black Friday And Deer Hunting The Same?**

I know many of you have drug yourselves out at 5 a.m. the day after Thanksgiving to join the shopping frenzy that has often been referred to as "Black Friday."

For those who are true die hard holiday shoppers, this is the day that separates the lookers from the buyers. It is not a day for the meek and the timid. You either love it or swear you'll never submit yourself to the experience again. There is no slow lane for a shopping cart on Black Friday, you either move with the traffic or stay in the car.

For those of you who have family members who do not truly appreciate your zeal for shopping on Black Friday, it may help them to understand by comparing your enthusiasm and commitment to the hunter on the first day of deer season. If you have never given any thought to the similarities between deer hunting and shopping the day after Thanksgiving,

this may actually be a revelation.

First of all consider the amount of preparation that goes into deer hunting. A hunter cleans the gun, "shoots the gun in," makes lists of supplies needed, buys new clothing, and engages in the ultimate search for just the right pair of boots that will be comfortable, warm, and dry despite rain, snow, or sleet.

There are a lot of preparations that must take place before you go shopping not unlike getting ready for the first day of deer season. You need to go to the bank, secure a child care provider for the entire day (no young children allowed on this trip), assemble the appropriate credit cards, make a safe place on you to keep receipts and a dollar tally as you go, find a group of friends with similar ambitions, and make "the list." The shopping list should include: sizes, preferred colors, where sales are located, prices, store locations, and an itinerary. Yes, you just don't start at one store and mind-

lessly wander. You need a game plan.

Getting up at 4:30 a.m. in the dark while your family innocently sleeps, you get in your car to pick up your shopping team mates. On the way, the list and shopping plan are shared and any last minute changes are made. You arrive at the first store at 5:30 a.m. and notice the parking lot is full. That's okay, you've come prepared to walk. Each person in your shopping team has their mission and you synchronize your watches accordingly.

Once inside, one person secures a shopping cart for your team. Go directly to the first item on the list. Upon finding the desired item, pick it up and put it in your cart. Please note that you will need to make an immediate decision when you find the item or else someone else will undoubtedly be hauling it away in a cart while you ponder. If you hesitate, you may miss the buy of the day or the "big one" which is how deer hunters often call it.

Establish one friend in your party to stand in the mile-long line while you and the others find the rest of your items. This is where the similarity between driving for deer comes to mind. Once you get through the check out line, you reach the door and find that the sun has come up and you say to yourself, "Yes! It's going to be a great day! Off to the mall!"

By this time, the mall has just opened its doors. Again the shopping driving team goes into action. Armed with their lists, coupons,

store flyers, and at least one large shopping bag, the day long endurance quest begins. Each person has a strategic point that they must cover in a specific amount of time. A meeting time and place is again agreed upon and a back up plan for delays in case of long lines. The experienced Black Friday shopper understands this and thrives on the excitement of shopping under such conditions. In fact, the Black Friday shopper finds the sound of a "15 minute blue light special" announcement down right invigorating. There is nothing more satisfying to a shopper as getting the last special on the shelf. Indeed, this is a real self-esteem booster! An accomplishment your shopping team will be proud of and of which you can boast for many more shopping seasons.

At lunch time, the shopping team meets to compare notes. They now decide what items need to be bought, assess the shopping climate, and develop a possible new strategy to secure the rest of the items on their lists. This is also a time to share the conquests and the gifts that got away in someone else's shopping bag.

At the end of the day, the shopping team meets at the entrance of

the mall and decides if their goals have been reached. Even though the check-out lines were long, the stores were hot, and the sales may not have always been the greatest, the team assesses the trophies of the day. More than likely, each person will have found something that made the trip worthwhile.

For most of us Black Friday shoppers, it's the camaraderie of the team that makes it all worthwhile. Like deer hunters, we have fine tuned our skills and this is the one day of the year where we can best put them to use. If you ask deer hunters why they hunt the first day of deer season, you will usually hear that it really isn't killing a deer that makes them brave the cold and the crowded woods year after year, but it is the total experience of being with friends, communing with nature, and continuing a tradition. Is Black Friday shopping much different? You decide. Have a wonderful holiday season!

If you see me in one of those long check out lines, give me a "thumbs up."

If your deer hunting friends ask what you are doing, just say that it's a holiday shopping support sign.

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