

Tis the season to be Mary

Ok... it is not Christmas time. However, as we are under a dreaded Winter Storm Warning I felt like talking about one of my favorite Yuletide movies. As I was playing Scene It with my niece earlier this evening, this question was raised: "In the National Lampoon Vacation movies, what was the nickname of Clark Griswold's son?" Of course anyone who has seen the misadventures of the Chicago suburban family knows the answer: Rusty.

Christmas Vacation is my favorite of the four films (yes, there were four... let us not forget the travesty that was *Vegas Vacation*). It shows the hapless Griswold clan as they do their best to entertain their whole extended family (both sides mind you). Everything from chopping down the family Christmas tree to the reading of "A Visit from St. Nick" on Christmas Eve. My favorite scene from this classic has to be Clark hanging from the eavestrough attempting to staple lights onto the roof. I can imagine my father doing the same thing... even attaching his coat sleeve to the roof and sliding down with the collapsing ladder.

One nitpicky bit though. Speaking of Rusty (as well as Audrey, the daughter), they seemed to age differently in each movie. The young man seemed to decrease in age between *European Vacation* and *Christmas Vacation*. Rusty was played by Jason Lively (?) in Europe and by Johnny Galecki (before he was cast as Darlene's boyfriend on "Roseanne") at Christmas. I often wondered why the change in age. It's not as if Chevy Chase, Beverly D'Angelo, and Randy Quaid could decrease in age. Just a minor quibble to an otherwise hilarious holiday tradition.