

The Lights of Zetar and Al Gore

A very different and fun game night was had into the wee hours of this morning (check out the post time). Megan and I made our way to visit with some of my many new Village Players friends and play some Star Trek and James Bond Scene It with a little Trivial Pursuit thrown in. I must say that I was impressed very much with Travis' vast knowledge in Trek. I need to brush up on some of the more obscure episodes including The Lights of Zetar. Really... even my knowledge does not stretch that far. But thank goodness for My Play and the IDIC (Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations) category of questions... pop culture surrounding Star Trek that tests knowledge of things not necessarily dealing with the "Wagon Train to the Stars."

I must say that my knowledge was better served in the James Bond version. Just please don't ask me what make and model vehicle he drove in anything but *Goldfinger* (the Aston Martin DB5 with modifications). Who would have guessed the model of car that Jinx arrived in at the ice hotel in *Die Another Day*? But I did clean up in that game.

The Trivial Pursuit game we played was very unique and very fun. You had the six categories to pick from but each category was divided up into six boxes each card had 6 different levels of difficulty. The level was determined by the roll on the die: 1-6. It was very possible to win each piece with a level 1 question... however unlikely. There is also an added feature that allows such things as face offs in order to win a pie piece, and the ability to move an opponents marker to any space on the board making it harder for the player to win a piece. Very fun and pretty much for everyone!

Thanks Mary, Travis, Jen, and Megan. It was a BLAST!

Christmas Celebrations

I LOVE CHRISTMAS. I still look at the holiday with the wonder of a child. For the entire month of December, I still do believe in the magic of Jolly Ol' St. Nick but still marvel at the wonder of the true meaning of the holiday. I even have my sister wrap my presents and I do still snoop (ok, I admit it). After getting off work at 2 on Christmas Eve, the immediate family and their kids opened presents and had the first of three feasts throughout the weekend. What a haul! The highlight of my haul were two Scene-It games. I had asked for the rather awesome looking *Star Trek* edition the moment I heard about it and submitted a question to the makers of the game when it was being developed. I also received a pleasant surprise. I had picked up the Simpson's edition for my nephew just after Thanksgiving. I unwrapped the one of my own for Christmas. I have played it with some friends and ADORE IT!

Midnight Mass (well, 11PM mass) was beautiful as usual. The past few years singing "Silent Night" at Communion have been really difficult. I am immediately taken back to the four Christmas concerts in high school singing the carol by candlelight. I can still see Emily behind the piano. I then went home and caught my sneak-in viewing of *A Christmas Story*.

Christmas Day was feast number two and a day typically set aside for watching movies people had received. We were treated to *Santa Buddies* courtesy of Alex. I was exhausted and slept through half of it.

More fun and merriment to come with the Swary family Christmas.

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.