

Going Home for the Holidays can be crazy

Do any of you dread going home for the holidays—facing evil siblings, crazy spinster aunts, and nagging parents? If so, you'll relate to Holly Hunter's tormented character in Jodie Foster's *Home for the Holidays*. Foster bounces back from earlier directorial disasters to produce a wonderfully funny, perfectly cast motion picture about the terrors (and joys) of spending Thanksgiving with the family.

Hunter plays Claudia, a struggling artist who is having a really bad day; flu-stricken, she is fired from her job just before she leaves for Thanksgiving. Her sixteen year old daughter informs her that she is planning to lose her virginity while mom's away. And

things don't get any better when she gets home.

The laughter is non-stop with her interfering parents played by Anne Bancroft and Charles Durning. Robert Downey, Jr. is hilarious as her gay brother, Tommy, who terrorizes the family with pranks galore (he takes pictures of Claudia as she showers and shows the photos to prospective boyfriends).

Claudia's holiday worsens when

Movie Review

By Paige Layno

her jealous sister Joanne and crazy Aunt Gladys show up for turkey and cranberries. Aunt Gladys sings show tunes while dad plays the electric organ—enough to ruin anyone's appetite. The homophobic Joanne, jealous of the closeness of her siblings, informs the family that Tommy has just become someone's "wife," a fact that sends mom into the broom closet to finish her Thanksgiving meal.

Chaos, arguments, and other family woes are on the menu at this house-

hold, and it's insanely funny. The movie does have its somber moments, like when Claudia tells Joanne, "We don't have to like each other. We're family." Sadly, the sisters can't put aside their differences and remember what Thanksgiving is all about. Still, the family has its happy moments, like watching home movies, sharing morning coffee, and tearfully waving good-byes at the airport. Foster shows us that family life isn't always great, but reminds us that it's never too far to mom's house.

Home For the Holidays is a frighteningly realistic look at family gatherings. Claudia's father says it best when he looks to the future: "We have Christmas to look forward to, whether we like it or not."

Third Meredith student crowned Miss Garner

By Arinn Dixon

When Deborah Handy was 17 years old, she entered the Miss Thomasville pageant in her hometown. She competed well, but didn't win. "I was upset about the loss," Handy said of that disappointment. "But I didn't let it stop me."

She certainly didn't. Don't call it a comeback, but a few weeks ago Handy showed them all by winning the coveted title of Miss Garner 1996. The most interesting aspect of her win is that she is the third Meredith woman in a row to win the Garner crown. Two years ago Dana Stephenson was Miss Garner, and last year it was Lisa Bamford. Even more interesting is that both Stephenson and Bamford also went on to become Miss North Carolina.

As for the reigning Miss Garner, Handy still can't believe she won. "That was the best night of my life," she recalled. "It was the greatest feeling in the world to know that the judges picked me." Handy had her family and her Meredith friends, whom she calls her biggest fans, there to support her the night she took her title.

Now that she has acquired the name, Handy has to live up to it. In the next month, she will speak to the

Garner Chamber of Commerce, the Garner Town Board, and area high schools and middle schools about her pageant service project, which revolves around building a house in Garner through Habitat For Humanity. She will also make guest appearances in events such as the Raleigh Christmas Parade. "My classes haven't suffered so far because of my new duties, but that's only because I'm good at time management," Handy stated. "This really is a big job, but I love it all."

One of Handy's biggest jobs right now is getting ready for the Miss North Carolina pageant in June. In addition to a \$3500 scholarship to go with her title, Handy won a wardrobe allowance and a personal trainer. She has to buy an evening gown and a swimsuit with the wardrobe allowance, and works out with the trainer four times a week to get in shape for the upcoming pageant. Handy rolled her eyes at

the mention of the trainer; "I thought we were going to just do aerobics or something, but she wants me to lift weights!"

Handy is thrilled about her new title and crown as Miss Garner, and is anxious about the approaching Miss North

Carolina pageant. When faced with the statistic that the last two Meredith Miss Garners went on to win Miss North Carolina, Handy simply smiled and stated, "Well, just remember that good things come in three's."



Deborah Handy, Miss Garner 1996, is surrounded by her friends after being crowned.