

# LIFE & ARTS

Coming Monday

## NEIL DIAMOND PROFILE

Enduring singer due here

## A 'boomer' boom

Hallmark Channel showcases older actors | D5



The Columbus Dispatch

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Tom Harmon, toiling at his perfectly cluttered TV-repair shop in Obetz

DORAL CHENOWETH III | DISPATCH PHOTOS

Tom Harmon takes TV repair seriously — but not seriously enough to let it interfere with his day.



A closer look at the electronic components of a disabled television

# Channeling an easier pace

By Aaron Beck  
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

**TV** repairman Tom Harmon isn't factory-authorized, online or prone to working inside a building past noon.

Lately, though, the semi-retired one-man show at Obetz TV has spent much more time in his expertly cluttered two-room shop (a former carryout attached to the Ruby Hill Bar on Groveport Road) than he has in his impressive tomato patch (a plot growing near the foundation of the bar) or playing fiddle and guitar with his beer-drinking buddies in his "rec room" (a garage attached to, yes, the bar).

On a recent Tuesday morning in the shop, Harmon was performing surgery on the guts of a 10-year-old, 50-inch Zenith.

"You should have been in here last week," he said during a break. "We had to walk sideways, the place was so full."

Amid a sluggish economy, business has picked up for the 74-year-old Korean War veteran — who

See CHANNELING Page D8



Harmon on modern televisions: "They're all pretty much the same."

► To see an audio slide show of Tom Harmon, visit Dispatch.com/multimedia.



## SOCIETY

## At gay bars, customers just as likely to be straight

By Kevin Joy  
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Seated in a dimly lighted booth at Axis, a gay nightclub in the Short North, Jordan Harris and John Peters sip cans of Pabst Blue Ribbon as nearby speakers blast techno music.

A blonde in a tank top approaches. "Hey, are you guys gay?" she asks matter-of-factly.

Both shake their heads: They're straight.

"Want to dance?"

Through smoke from a fog machine, she leads Peters to the floor.

They move together closely for a few songs, his hands on her hips.

Despite the setting, with drag shows and male revues of "hot college



COURTNEY HERGESHEIMER | DISPATCH

Ben Pritchard and Margaret Moore at Union, a predominantly gay bar

jocks" making up part of the weekly schedule, a heterosexual presence (or even a pairing) isn't so strange anymore.

This month, Axis hosted Sweatin' — a high-energy, agenda-free party that attracts gay and straight patrons interested in dancing, socializing and, perhaps, looking for a fling.

As for the gay-friendly location: "Nobody seems to think about it," said Harris, a 24-year-old who lives near Ohio State University.

"There's no pressure. It's just people who want to have a good time."

As younger generations benefit

See BARS Page D4

## Q&amp;A | ALICE COOPER

## 25 albums later, rocker not punch-line material

By Bill Eichenberger  
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Rock critics love to make fun of old rock acts — the geezers in, say, Journey, Kansas and REO Speedwagon or even in the Rolling Stones, Van Halen and the Who.

Few make fun of Alice Cooper, though.

Cooper, also known as Vincent Furnier, just released his 25th album, *Along Came a Spider* — drawing raves from coast to coast.

Beyond the music, the shock rocker said, is the Alice Cooper ethos in concert.

"I'm 60, and they see us up there onstage, and, yeah, maybe one critic did call us dinosaurs — but I went out there and told the crowd we play carnivore rock," Cooper said by phone.

"We eat little bands."



After he stopped laughing, Cooper — who will perform Sunday night in Columbus — turned serious.

"I've always said that, when I can't get up onstage and do

28 songs five nights a week and throw in a five-hour radio show and play golf with the best in the world . . .

"When I can't make an audience stand up and cheer and scream for more, that's when I'll call it quits."

"But that hasn't happened yet."

Q: You never got caught up in fads or fashions. Does that ex-

See COOPER Page D3