



The health care battles that remain

Even with the rollout of the Affordable Care Act, the challenge of reducing exorbitant costs remains **5**

Homeless teens await an answer

Pete Golis on plans to transform former Warrack Hospital into housing and service center for disadvantaged youth **5**

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Courtesy of MARTIN SCHERER

BEFORE: This Hopi vase had been broken into about 30 fragments prior to its painstaking reassembly at Tesserak Restoration Studio.

SEBASTOPOL: Tesserak Restoration brings lost treasures back to life

Magic Hands

By **ANDREA GRANAHAN**

WEST COUNTY CORRESPONDENT

Martin Scherer of Tesserak Restoration is a magician. But instead of making things disappear, he makes them reappear after everyone thought they were gone forever.

Rather than waving a wand, he does it through painstaking, tireless work.

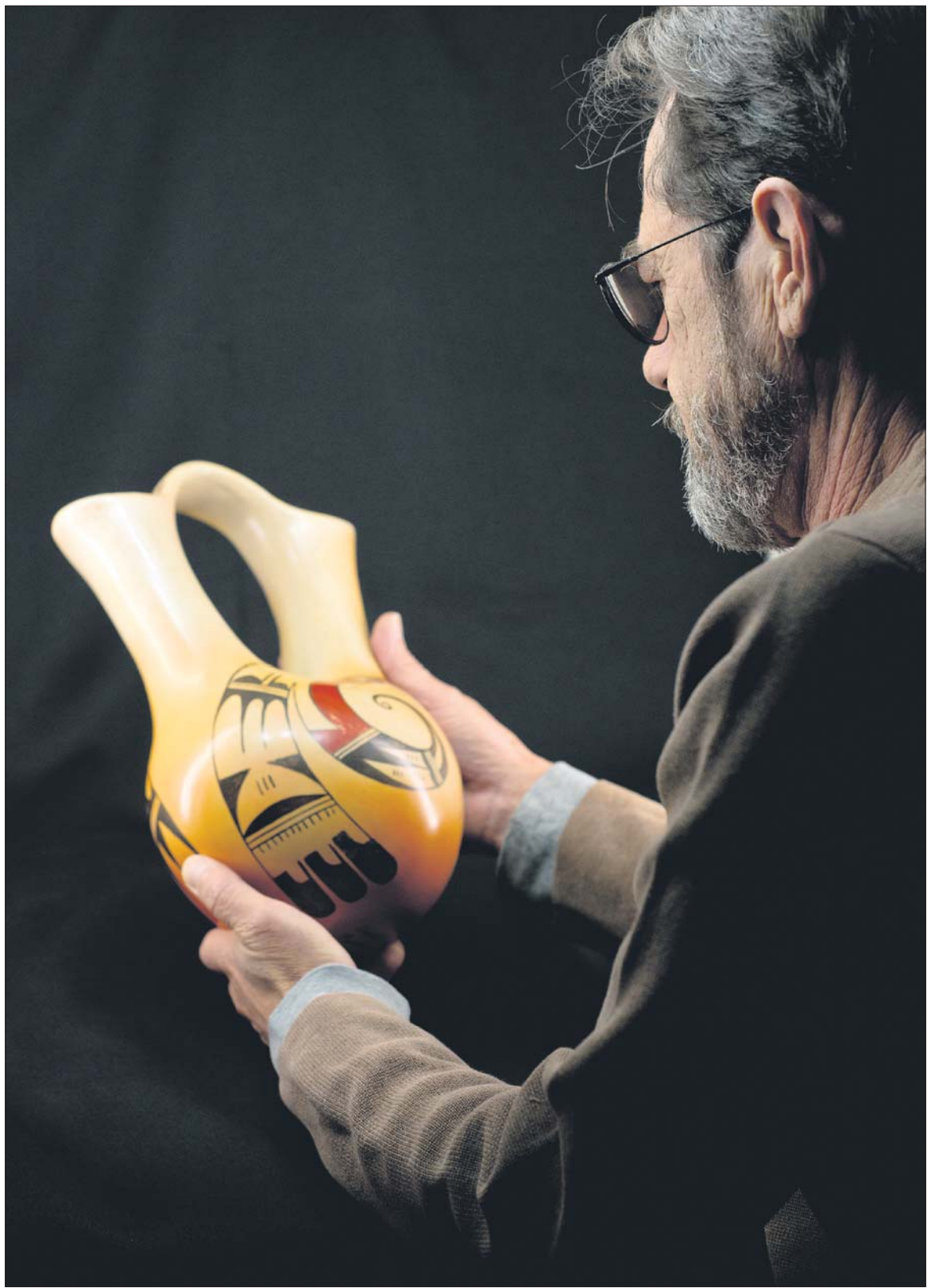
This fall, Scherer worked his magic on a prized Hopi vase that was shattered in an earthquake more than a decade ago, providing the Christmas present of a lifetime for Glen Ellen vintner Chris Loxton.

Scherer, 60, is an artist and musician who specializes in restoring ceramic, glass and stone objects, using skills he learned at Venerable Classics, a Santa Rosa firm that gained notoriety for repairing countless pieces damaged in the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989.

"I didn't interview for the job, I auditioned for it," Scherer said. "Janet Connolly taught me what I know. She was picky, demanded high quality, and I loved it."

When Connolly closed Venerable Classics a few years

TURN TO **TESSERAK**, PAGE T4



ALVIN JORNADA / The Press Democrat

AFTER: Martin Scherer takes another look Dec. 3 at the Hopi vase he restored over the course of about four weeks in his Sebastopol studio. The handmade 1960s vase was broken during an earthquake more than a decade ago.



For more photos from Tesserak Restoration's Hopi vase project, visit **pressdemocrat.com**

SONOMA VALLEY: A 'refreshing and grounding' Native American custom

Finding peace in pipe ceremony

By **DIANNE REBER HART**

TOWNS CORRESPONDENT

Native American traditions are once again celebrated in Sonoma Valley, long after indigenous Coast Miwok and Pomo tribes made their homes in the Valley of the Moon.

Thanks to the hospitality of Sioux and Dan Messinger, small groups assemble at the couple's home for sacred pipe ceremonies led by Native American Elder Fred Wahpepah of Richmond, a member of the Kickapoo and Sac-and-Fox tribes.

The next two are Jan. 12 and Feb. 9.

Hosted by Wahpepah's nonprofit Seven Circles Foundation of Marin, the ceremonies are steeped in Native American culture still relevant in today's society.

Those with full plates, lengthy to-do lists and never-ending obligations are finding a sense of peacefulness and grounding from the ceremonies.

"This is really an opportunity for us to be nourished," said Sioux Messinger, 50, who has long had an affinity for native peoples. Several years ago she legally changed her first name from Susan to Sioux, permanently embracing a belief that the Native American reference was a more authentic name for her.

"The spelling of 'Sioux' really fit for me," Messinger said. The executive and leadership development educator said she finds pipe ceremonies "so healing and refreshing and grounding."

Wahpepah, 83, brings many decades of training and wisdom in Na-

tive American traditions to the ceremonies and considers them an opportunity to share tribal customs and encourage people of all beliefs to nurture and support one another and the planet itself.

The Chanupa, or sacred pipe ceremony, is a ritual considered spiritual by some. Participants sit in a circle on the floor, encouraged by Wahpepah to speak from the heart about their lives or concerns.

Ceremonies may include drumming and singing native songs. An eagle feather is passed to participants as they share their feelings, a second rotation typically bringing forth deeper emotions.

Wahpepah then leads the group in passing the long, slender pipe, considered by many indigenous people

TURN TO **CEREMONY**, PAGE T4



Courtesy of LENNY EIGER

Native American Elder Fred Wahpepah leads sacred ceremonies through the Seven Circles Foundation.



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