

Town focus **Valley Center**

Passion for drawing has followed artist through life

By Cheryl Walker
COMMUNITY NEWS WRITER

VALLEY CENTER — Kim Weed has traveled around the world — twice. And he has transferred his memories to paper.

Weed is one of many artists whose work will be displayed at the Valley Center Art Association's show March 26-27 at Valley Center branch library.

These days, every day that the 83-year-old can pencil a drawing or paint a picture has become more precious to him. He doesn't know how much longer he'll be able to continue his art, because he is losing his sight from macular degeneration.

"I can only draw certain days," he said. "Some days are better than others. Magnifying glasses don't seem to help. I'd gladly trade my legs for some eyes."

Through the years, Weed has won many prizes at various shows, including several first place and best of show awards.

He started drawing when he was 3 years old.

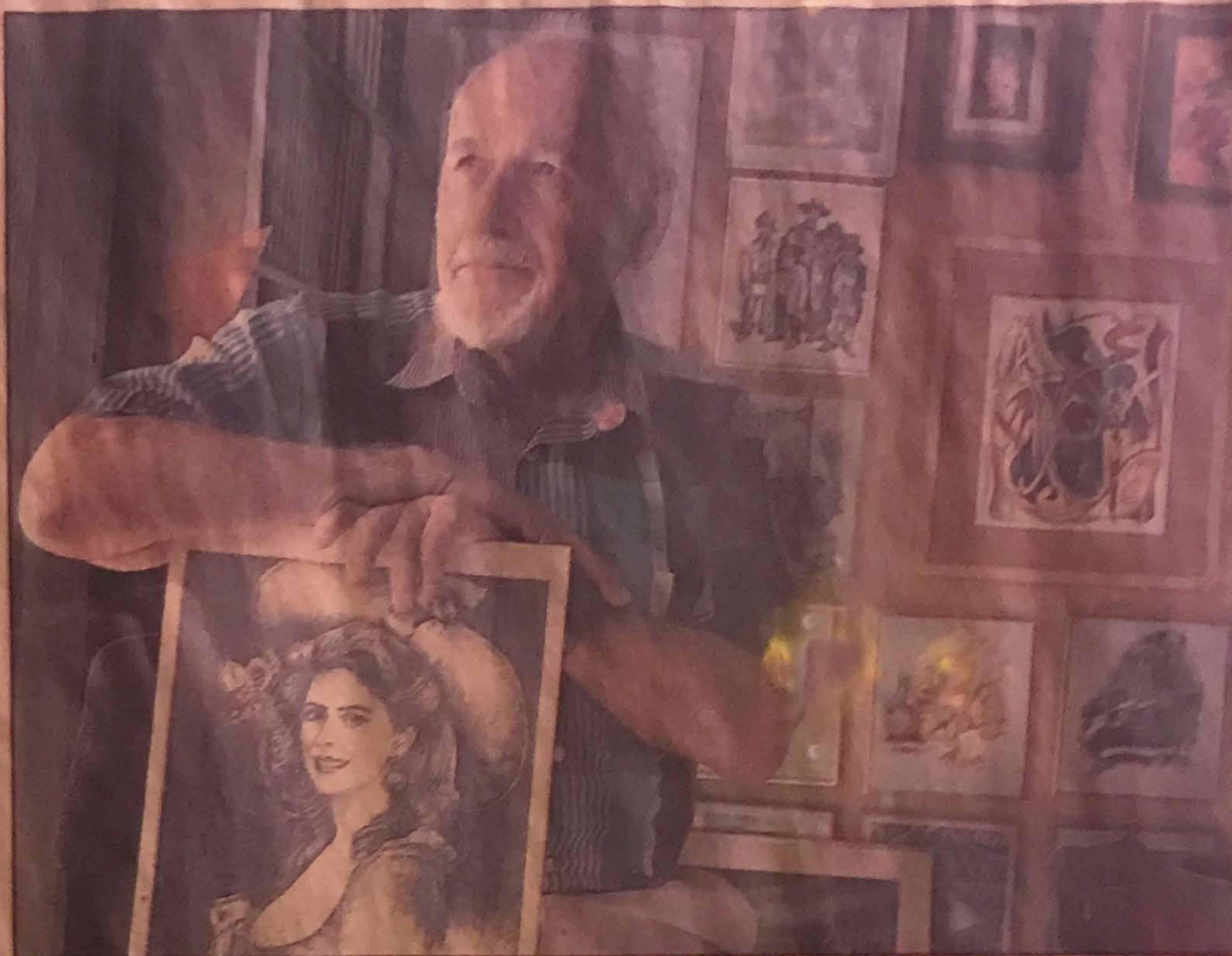
"My mother said I'd draw flies and bugs and that they were good," he said. "She kept a lot of the drawings because she thought it was pretty unusual for a 3-year-old. But when I got to be 6, she didn't think it was so unusual anymore, and she started throwing them out."

Weed grew up wanting to go to college and be an illustrator. But he got little support from his parents.

"My mother told me going to school for art would be a waste of the taxpayers' money," he said.

When he was 16, he submitted some of his work to the Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles and won a scholarship.

Weed said the art institute told him he would have to work twice as hard as the other students "to prove I de-



Artist Kim Weed held a pencil drawing of his daughter, Heidi Weed. His work will be on display at the Valley Center Art Association's Marvelous March art show. *K.C. Alfred / Union-Tribune*

served the scholarship."

"I had to go to school, work as a fry cook and do a lot of homework," he said. "It was the hardest time of my whole life, but I got through it."

After he left the institute, he worked at Walt Disney Studios for a year and illustrated for the animated film "Fantasia."

Weed was drafted during World War II and served in the Navy. There he found he had another love: airplanes.

Through the GI Bill he went to college. He graduated from the University of California Los Angeles and became an aerospace engineer.

After finishing college, he served stints with the U.S. and German air forces as well as the National Chinese Air Force in Taiwan. Because of his experience with logistics, the Chinese recruited him in the 1950s for their military. He was able to maintain his citizenship, and he worked with the Chinese for three years. Then from 1960 to 1965 he was a specialist with the German Air Force, working with the F104 fighter plane.

He speaks Spanish, French, German and Chinese.

"Chinese is difficult," he said. "They hooked me up with an officer who was to teach me, because they said I wasn't learning Chinese fast enough."

Weed retired in the early '70s. Since then he has devoted most of his time to his art and to making musical instruments, including guitars, violins and mandolins.

He estimates he has probably done a couple of thousand pieces of art during his life. Almost every wall in his home displays his work. His pictures run the gamut from nudes and portraits to village scenes, seascapes, deserts, abstracts and fantasy creatures.

"I draw everything that can be drawn," he said. "I like fantasy because you can put your mind to pasture and just draw. There's no rules."

He has sold many of his drawings and paintings. His most popular ones are seascapes.

"Whenever I do a seascape, somebody always buys it," he said. "I've really been lucky in my life to work with the things I love most — art and airplanes."