

LOCAL MUSEUM HONORS THE 'LOST ART' OF NURSING

Every corner and surface in the home's first floor contains a nursing memento

By **NANCY MCCARTHY**
FOR COAST WEEKEND

The artwork in Melodie Chenevert's home doesn't reflect the sea or the forests surrounding Cannon Beach. She doesn't display crafts by local artisans or books by Oregon authors — except the books Chenevert herself wrote.

But the home is devoted to art, nevertheless — a lost art.

The Lost Art of Nursing Museum is entirely contained in Melodie and Gary Chenevert's Tolovana Park home.

From the historic posters, magazine covers and paintings of nurses that consume nearly every inch of wall space, to the dolls and stuffed animals (including Miss Piggy) dressed in nursing outfits on every surface, Melodie's living and

dining rooms and the entrance hall is, indeed, a museum.

In a corner of the dining room is an early 20th century wheelchair. In another corner of the living room is a cape worn by a former nursing school director who once lived in Arch Cape. Beneath the glass in the coffee table lies Marybel, surrounded by leg and arm casts, crutches and measles spots; she is the “doll who gets well,” according to the original 60-year-old box.

“Most people who come here look at everything and try to absorb it. There's always something they've never seen before,” Melodie said.

'Pride and productivity in nursing'

When she graduated from high school in Iowa in the late 1950s, Melodie, who really wanted to be a writer, found that more practical career opportunities for young women were limited: She could become a teacher or a nurse. Since she

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LEFT: Melodie Chenevert, a former nurse, has turned the main floor of her Tolovana Home into a museum dedicated to nursing. Artwork collected by Melodie Chenevert includes materials once used by the Red Cross to recruit nurses. The museum also includes an array of paintings and books.