COPING WITH ALZHEIMER’S

Bart and Doreen Lewis enjoyed the art during the Museum Moments program at Emory University’s Michael C. Carlos Museum. Bart has mild cognitive impairment. Photos by Johnny Crawford / crawford@ajc.com

Review: ‘Titanic’ elicits suspense, 11

DINING OUT

Atlanta bakery tops, magazine says

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DINING OUT

Atlanta bakery tops, magazine says

Bake magazine conducted a nationwide search for America’s best bakery and, once the votes were tabulated, Atlanta’s own Sublime Doughnuts was the winner. Kamal Grant’s Midtown shop at 535 10th St. N.W. will be featured in the May issue of the Industry magazine.

HOME

IKEA line combines furniture, electronics

Already the one-stop shop for compact home furnishing, IKEA has launched another product for your living room: the IKEA TV. The new furniture range, called Upplands, integrates an LED TV, a sound system with wireless bass speakers, an Internet connection and CD, DVD and Blu-ray players — all in one piece. The furniture comes in three designs and will be sold first in Sweden, France, Poland, Germany and Italy in June. By the first half of next year, it will be available worldwide, with the cheapest costing about $395.

Today’s number

79

Number of consecutive weeks that NBC’s “Today” held the No. 1 spot in ratings. The Nielsen Co. said Monday that ABC’s “Good Morning America” beat NBC’s morning show last week by a narrow margin of 1,010,000 viewers. The “Today” show’s streak began in December 1995 when Bryant Gumbel and Katie Couric were anchors.

From staff and news services

FREE AND CHEAP

Milton Earth Day Festival, 11 a.m. Saturday, Free, Birmingham Pk, 751 Hickory Flat Road, Milton, cajyf/refugia.us.

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DINING OUT

Lazarro’s Cuban Cuisine

11 a.m.-10 p.m. Tuesdays–Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.-11 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. Appetizers, $5-10; salads and...
Art able to arouse memories

Alzheimer's

continued from D1

museum after Meet Me at MoMA, a program at New York's Museum of Modern Art, which uses specially trained tour guides to help people with mild cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's to connect.

For now, the program at the Carole museum is designed for people with the earlier stages of Alzheimer's; Lu hopes to eventually expand the program for people with more advanced stages.

"I think art is something that speaks to the human condition, to life and aging and all of those moments in life," she said. "It can make you happy and sad. There are no wrong answers." She has also seen people respond to all genres of art, including abstract pieces such as "Boogie Woogie."

"It's a series of yellow, blue and white shapes," she said. "And there's nothing immediately recognizable. But it's very dynamic, very colorful and expressive. And people see different things. Some people see buildings. Some people see street lights. Some see a city grid. And for some people, it reminds them of dance and motion."

On a recent afternoon, a docent shared intimate details of an ancient sculpture of Terracota, the muse of dance.

But then the docent, Sharon LeMaster, asked a series of personal questions that indicated this was not an ordinary tour.

"Does this remind you of anything?" she asked the group.

She paused. "How does this make you feel?"

She paused again. "Have any of you traveled to Greece?"

Bart Lewis, 65, smiled. "I'm traveling to the Mediterranean country three times, including a backpacking adventure with his college roommate and then years later on a romantic getaway with his wife of 40 years, Doreen. "I had one of those books about going to Europe on $5 a day, and my roommate and I got by on $3 a day," he said with a laugh. "We took the train and when we were in Spain, we had a four-course meal with a liter of wine for 60 pesetas. And back in those days, it was 70 pesetas to the dollar." The scheduled tours, which started in March, took place one or two times every month. The next three are scheduled for April 25, May 16 and June 20.

Patient docents answer questions and take their time moving from one collection to the next. Chairs are set up in each viewing area to accommodate the visitors. About 30 visitors chat and marvel at collections from around the globe.

Ken Hepburn, a professor in the Emory School of Nursing who helps develop caregiving programs for people living with Alzheimer's, said art can be deeply moving.

"Whether it's a painting, a sculpture, a piece of music or poem - it's in tact in itself; it is whole with no extraneous (or distracting) parts," said Hepburn. "The disease erodes so many things and many capacities, but there remains an experiencing person, one who is increasingly in the moment. And an encounter with a work of art may, therefore, offer the possibility of uncomplicated enjoyment - and delight."

During the tour, LeMaster talked about how the sculpture of Terracota was carved out of marble during the late fourth century to the mid-second century B.C.

One of the visitors said she could imagine the sculpture in a garden. In another dimly lit room, the group looked at ancient Egyptian artifacts that include a stone sculpture of Medusa. The group discussed the expression on her face. Was it a look of shock or astonishment? LeMaster asked the group what they thought of her eyes.

Lewis said he enjoys going to museums because it keeps his mind engaged, and because it's an enjoyable experience.

"It's going to have an overall long-term positive experience on me, I don't know. We hope it will," he said. "But it was fun."

Inside the museum, Lewis stroked down memory lane - recalling the backpacking adventure through Europe with his college roommate, and then reminiscing about a romantic getaway with his wife during the late 1980s.

Lewis, the retired chief of the Atlanta Regional Commission's Research Division, was diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment about two years ago.

While he no longer works, he tries to stay active and engaged. He's learned ways to help with his daily life, like keeping a pocket briefcase and writing everything down.

After the tour ended, the Lewises stayed behind and looked at the exhibit "Mandala: Sacred Circle in Tibetan Buddhism."

"Museums are something we both like.," said Bart Lewis.

And something they will continue to enjoy together.