



Rich compost from student-led GCSU program will be sold to public in fall



Above: Molly Robbins and Anna Lippy. Below: Ama Kpoyizoun reads temperature.



You can't get there by GPS. There are no signs to direct you. But just yards from Hwy 49 in Milledgeville, a little hillside with a great view is abuzz with the sounds and smells of rotating and baking leftover food.

An all-female team works this spot and plans to sell their compost, starting this fall.

Not many universities have a student-led compost program. The site diverts about 1,000 pounds of food waste from the Georgia College & State University dining hall every week.

That's roughly 25,000 pounds per year or 1,000 cubic feet of food waste that doesn't end up in landfills. Currently, about one-fourth of all landfill garbage is food, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

"About 40% of food consumed in the United States ends up in landfills. Around the country, we're outgrowing our landfills," said compost manager Molly Robbins, a senior environmental sciences major from Duluth.

"Compost is incredible for soil health. It increases the water-holding capacity of soil," she said. "It introduces new nutrients into the soil, allowing for microbial growth which is super important to suppress disease."

Georgia College's Office of Sustainability operates the compost site. Since it opened in 2017, more than 70,000 pounds of food waste have been diverted from area landfills and turned into amended soil—superior to store-bought compost.

Senior environmental sciences major and compost assistant Anna Lippy of Stone Mountain is creating a business plan to sell 5-gallon plastic buckets of compost to local homeowners for a nominal fee. It might be called "PawPost" or "Georgia College Compost."

This material "is far superior" to anything found in hardware and garden stores, according to Robbins. Last year, a campus environmental sciences study "proved our compost to be incredible and helped grow some really hearty tomatoes," she said.

Robbins and Lippy work the site daily, along with newly-recruited

compost assistant and first-year nursing major Ama Kpoyizoun of Togo, Africa.

Bins of leftover food are collected from the dining hall, and waste is put through a mixer with a spinning rake-like tool. Students pull out non-degradable items like wax liners, plastic cups or aluminum foil. They mix in a carbon source, like sawdust and wood chips. The material moves up into an 'in-vessel,' where it heats, slowly rotating for about three weeks.

The material is then moved to nearby tarps and turned by shovel every week—allowing piles to aerate and "cook." Once it heats to about 150 degrees Fahrenheit, the team knows bacterial microbes are working to break down waste.

"We like our material hot," Robbins said. "That means bacteria is doing its job. They're eating up all the food and turning it into useable nutrients for plants."

"You'll come out here on a winter day, and it'll be about 32 degrees out," she said. "You break open one of these piles, and it'll be steaming like crazy inside."

The entire process takes about three months. The final product is sifted through wire screens, then loaded into large bins and taken to the West Campus Garden for use.

Although composting has become fashionable, Robbins said most universities either don't separate and collect food waste or they send it to private waste management facilities.

Once compost is for sale, the university will use proceeds to improve and expand its project. In the future, leftovers from area schools and restaurants could be included.

"Coming to Georgia College, I didn't know we had a compost operation. It would've made me all the more excited if I had," Robbins said. "It's one of my major passions to be able to interact with our food system in a unique way and educate people on why it's important to know where your food goes and to care about it."

Andalusia Interpretive Center's birthday opening

As a gift to fans of Flannery O'Connor, Georgia College & State University recently opened its new Andalusia Interpretive Center.

A ribbon cutting ceremony kicked off two days of celebration honoring O'Connor's birthday. The renowned author and Georgia College alumna would've been 98 years old on March 25.

Celebrations included author talks, book signings and free tours of Andalusia—O'Connor's home from 1951 until her death in 1964. The birthday festivities also included cake and song.

The Interpretive Center at Andalusia is a \$3.5 million investment in the preservation and interpretation of O'Connor's life, literary legacy and history of the Central Georgia region that inspired her writing.

"For fans, the improvement is two-fold," said Matt Davis, director of historic museums at Georgia College.

The new Interpretive Center "will improve and continue to enhance what you can experience about the life of Flannery O'Connor at Andalusia," he said, "and it also helps us to take all the non-original functions out of the house museum and recreate the environment Flannery knew when she lived there."

The center encompasses 5,300 square feet of exhibition, artifact storage, retail and conference space. The open-concept design allows visitors greater access to many personal affects collected at Andalusia. Visitors can also view the work of curatorial staff who catalogue and preserve O'Connor's material legacy.

The center is a giant step in restoring the farm where O'Connor completed the majority of her published output, Davis said. The surrounding environment appeared in her stories, which include "Good Country People," "A Circle in the Fire" and "The Displaced Person."

For the celebration, there were free public tours of the Interpretive Center and Andalusia farmhouse. Author Amy Alznauer discussed and signed copies of her book, "The Strange Birds of Flannery O'Connor." Museum staff and guests



GCSU President Cathy Cox cuts the ceremonial ribbon at the recent opening of the Andalusia Interpretive Center.

gathered to sing "Happy Birthday" to Flannery and enjoyed cake. Dr. Monica Miller closed the event with a lecture about her book "Dear Regina: Flannery O'Connor's Letters from Iowa."

Did you know?

Georgia College & State University's Rural Studies Institute (RSI) in partnership with the Sustainability Council is launching the inaugural "Rural Changemakers Lecture Series" April 11, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. in Peabody Auditorium.

The speaker, Catherine Coleman Flowers, is a 2020 MacArthur genius fellow internationally recognized for her work on environmental issues.

Flowers has advocated for environmental justice, primarily fighting for equal access to clean water and sanitation for communities across the United States.

She founded the Center for Rural Enterprise and Environmental Justice (CREEJ) and spent her career promoting equal access to clean water, air, sanitation and soil to reduce health and economic disparities in marginalized, rural communities.

In "Waste: One Woman's Fight Against America's Dirty Secret," Flowers shares her inspiring story from childhood to environmental justice champion.

Conductor wins 2023 international competition

Bryan Hall, assistant professor of music and director of Orchestras at Georgia College & State University (GCSU) attended a well-known and highly-regarded conductor training program in January—and walked away with an award for best conductorship.

"I wasn't focused on the competition at all, just focused on making myself better," said Hall, who was hired in 2022 to teach upper strings at Georgia College.

"I approached it through the lens of being a better conductor," he said. "I don't care what a person does. If you stop learning, you become irrelevant and should probably do something else. Things are always developing, and it's nice to be able to develop with it."

A violinist, Hall was one of 11 musicians who

took part in the 31st International Conductors Workshop and Competition (ICWC) in Atlanta. The other two winners were Tal Benatar, co-artistic director of the SONUS Choir in Nashville, Tennessee, and James Chang, a freelance conductor from Jacksonville, Georgia.

Participants came from all over the globe and U.S.—France, the United Kingdom, Illinois, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Texas, as well as Georgia. They received intense instruction on techniques, rehearsal procedures and music preparation for standard orchestral repertoire, according to a statement by the ICWC.

The four-day workshop also required reading five books on conducting, studying 8 hours a day, taking master classes and being individually coached by three regional directors and co-

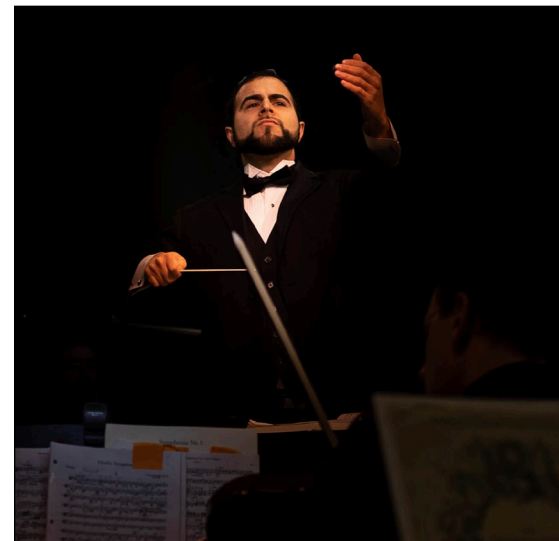
directors of symphonies in Gwinnett and Macon, Georgia, and Kiev, Ukraine.

Training included how to prepare scores and move hands, as well as when to help orchestra members and when to hold back. A conductor is responsible for every section of the orchestra—including woodwinds, brass, strings, percussion and sometime more.

A conductor has to keep up with the music—the spaces between beats and "super technical music stuff, like creating more rhythmic space for syncopation and hemiola," Hall said.

After only six rehearsals, conductors led an orchestra in a culminating concert. Hall conducted the Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky piece. Orchestra members felt the strongest connection with him.

Developing his conducting skills ultimately helps his students and improves the GCSU Orchestra.



GCSU Music faculty Bryan Hall conducting. Hall won the 2023 International Conductors Workshop and Competition award.

What's going on in Bobcat Territory?

Visit frontpage.gcsu.edu/events

Tuesday

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11 a.m.-5 p.m. Red Cross Blood Drive in Peabody Auditorium.

2-6 p.m. GCSU Softball Tailgate Tour vs. Anderson at West Campus.

2-4:45 p.m. Artist and Art Therapist Michah Goguen will speak and give a demonstration on "Creating Multi-dimensional Layers in Drawing and Painting" in Ennis Hall.

5-9 p.m. GCSU Baseball vs. Emmanuel College at John Kurtz Field.

7:30 p.m. "Sound Creations" concert in Max Noah Rectal Hall.

Wednesday

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10 a.m.-4 p.m. Red Cross Blood Drive in Peabody Auditorium.

Thursday

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4-7 p.m. GCSU Women's Tennis vs. Georgia Southwestern at Centennial Center tennis facility.

5 p.m. Sexual assault prevention event in A&S building, room 3-70.

7:30 p.m. Senior recital with music major Alex Burch playing French horn in Max Noah Rectal Hall.

Friday

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4-8 p.m. GCSU Softball Doubleheader vs. Georgia Southwestern at Peeler Complex.

Saturday

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1-3 p.m. GCSU Softball vs. Georgia Southwestern at Peeler Complex.