

## A CONVERSATION ABOUT Baby Chicks



Photo courtesy Tim Kennelty

**By Jean Thomas**  
It's the time of year when we cannot avoid the thought of baby birds. Most obviously, we are inundated with chocolate and marshmallow baby chicks sold for Easter whenever we go grocery shopping. There's another day in the spring that's considered by some to be as exciting as Easter. It's the day the farm store brings out the baby chicks!!!! And some baby ducks, too, in the interest of full disclosure.  
Baby chick visits become mandatory for small children, and some days the piping noises are as loud from outside the pens as from the inside. There is a considerable contingent of adults who are equally enchanted by these noisy little fluff balls. They are, they claim, motivated by the thought of future healthy free range eggs. Some will admit to a fondness for dining on poultry, but these are fewer by far. In episode 62 of "Nature Calls, Conversations from the Hudson Valley," Professor Nicole Childrose discusses the realities of raising chickens. She manages to maintain a starry-eyed attitude even

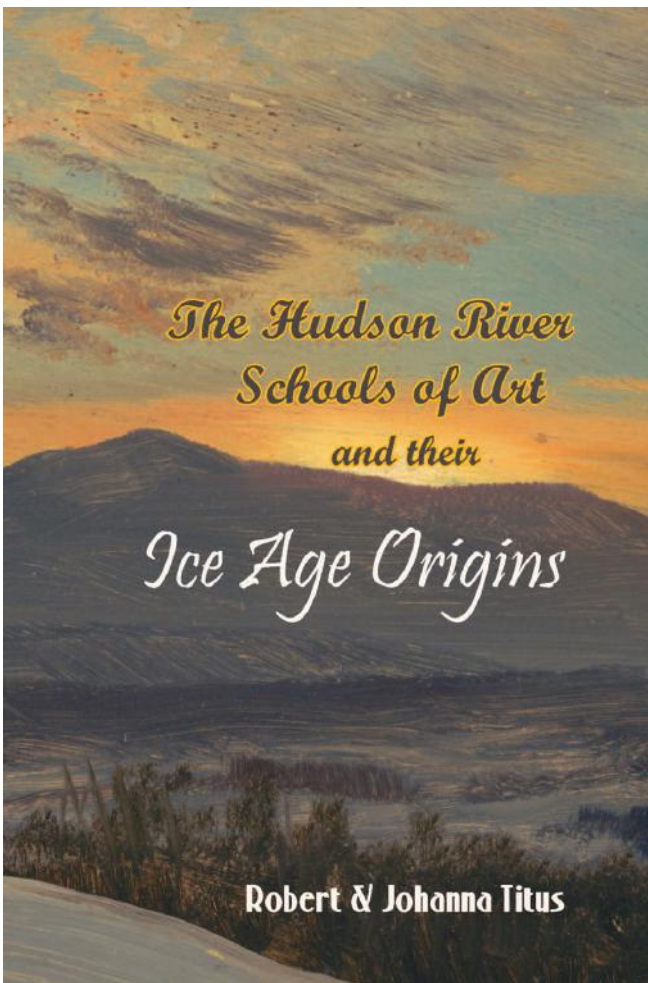
while going into gruesome detail about the ways things can go wrong. Listen in at any podcast platform or at <https://ccecolumbia-greene.org/gardening/nature-calls-conversations-from-the-hudson-valley/episode-62-raising-chickens>. Prof Childrose often teaches a course in raising chickens at Columbia Greene Community College, but this spring she is expanding her scope a bit and is teaching a class on "Starting Your Small Farm" via Zoom. The college has a continuing education catalog available online at [columbiagreene.edu/continuingeducation](http://columbiagreene.edu/continuingeducation) or call to register at (518) 697-6370, if you want to explore her class a bit.  
Here come the warnings about baby chicks: they're not pets. Don't give them as Easter gifts (unless the recipient already has a chicken coop and is 4-H qualified). I find myself grumbling about "how can people be so dumb?" then I check into my own memory banks and remind myself that we all have to learn. The key thing at this stage is that they are, indeed, babies. So preparation is important. You won't get lovely fresh

eggs very soon. If you know anything about babies, human or feathered, you already know they do little but eat and excrete. Be prepared. And you "ain't seen nuthin'" until you see a teenaged chicken changing from fluff ball to feathered friend. Not pretty. They are also an appealing taste treat to your furry neighbors, so protection is a must. If you are visualizing free range chickens waiting sedately in line to cross the road, think again. Remember driving past that neighbor's house and admiring the social flock of hens roaming the lawn, removing ticks? Do you remember them being there in many subsequent drive-bys? Much as you learned to protect your veggies from bugs and diseases and furry neighbors, you must learn to appropriately protect your poultry. There. Now I've given you as many warnings as I can think of, feel free to learn about the amazing and wonderful varieties of color and size and personality available in the world of chickens (and ducks and geese). You'll appreciate the 4-H poultry displays at the County Fairs with a whole new perspective.

## THE CATSKILL GEOLOGISTS BY PROFESSORS ROBERT AND JOHANNA TITUS Our New Book

Our fifth and newest book, "The Hudson River Schools of Art and Their Ice Age Origins" has recently been published by Purple Mountain Press. See our photo. It is certainly our most original work and quite possibly our most important. We argue that during the 19th century there was something of a cultural Renaissance right here in the Hudson Valley region. Led by Washington Irving, Jame Fenimore Cooper and William Cullen Bryant, America's first worldclass literature appeared. Led by Calvert Vaux, Alexander Jackson Davis and Andrew Jackson Downing, we saw the birth of American landscape architecture. Most importantly, led by Thomas Cole, Asher Brown Durand and Frederic Church we saw the appearance of the Hudson Valley School of Art. In short, our region became the center of a truly important cultural movement. More than anything else, it witnessed the close integration of our culture with our beautiful and scenic landscapes. All of us in this region should be aware of this great heritage. That is the centerpiece of our book.

But there is more to all this, much more. None of this, we argue, would ever have happened if the Hudson Valley, especially the North Lake area, had not been so heavily glaciated. We take our readers to the Catskill Mountain House ledge during the Ice Age and look down into the Hudson Valley below. We find that a massive glacier is flowing down the Hudson Valley. We watch as a branch of that ice peels off and turns west to go up Kaaterskill Clove and encircle South Mountain. It sculpts much of the picturesque scenery that is seen thereabouts. Later, when the ice melts, those meltwater flows erode



many more scenic landscapes. When the artists arrive, they find a special, even unique inspiration. They paint Kaaterskill Clove, Kaaterskill Falls. North and South Lakes, North Mountain, South Mountain and the Catskill Front itself. All were the direct and indirect products of ice age sculpting. Are you fond of the Hudson River School? Then knowing the ice age history that inspired it will help you appreciate that art so much more.

After that we go back to the Mountain House ledge and look down into the valley once again. First it was filled with ice but later the climate warmed and it was filled with the glacial meltwaters of something called Lake Albany. Time passed and we watched those waters drain away. We watched as platforms composed of lake sediments emerged from the draining waters. When a Hudson Valley aristocracy moved in, including many members of the Livingston family, they built their mansions upon

those platforms. Their architects designed the grounds so that scenic views were opened up. Today these are commonly called planned views, and they became central to landscape architecture as it developed across America. At its core, however, this landscaping was glacial in its origins.

Our book amounts to a marriage of art and science. It allows readers to develop a much broader comprehension of a truly grand landscape. But we went to great pains to keep the writing short and keeping it light. We always want to communicate with our non-scientist readers. You will find no techno-garble in our book. Sure, there is formal academic art history and science in our book – but always in a readable form.

Contact the authors at [randjtitus@prodigy.net](mailto:randjtitus@prodigy.net). Join their facebook page "The Catskill Geologist." Read their blogs at "the-catskillgeologist.com." Order their book from Purple Mountain Press at [www.nysbooks.com](http://www.nysbooks.com).

## Cool Times at SCS



SCHOHARIE - On Monday, members of the Schoharie Central School National Junior Honor Society sponsored an Ice Cream Social for all sixth, seventh, and eighth graders who have been on the honor and or high honor roll for the first and second quarter.

This project fed 102 junior high students and they thanked the STEWARTS Organization for the donation.

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