

# This River is Gold

Alvin H. Reiss





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**ArtAge Publications**

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## THIS RIVER IS GOLD

### Synopsis

This is a story of an amiable senior community located on north and south hills separated by a river, which actually is more of a creek. The residents are over the hill and proud of it. At the annual meeting of the association the harmony is disrupted when it's revealed that there's a budget shortage and that therefore, a planned new activity center cannot be built. Hotheads from both the north and south hills including a cut-the-budget-at-all-costs southerner each accuse the other hill of causing the budget problem.

The scene shifts to the river, where the community's greedy developer, who has been hired to clean up the shoreline with funds set aside for the project, excitedly tells his henchman that he's going to make a fortune if he can get the rights to the river. A geologist, hired by him before the clean-up is to begin, has discovered that there's a natural spring with pure water underground, a kind of artesian well. When the community gives him the rights to the water --he plans to build a snack bar on the river banks after the clean-up in return for the new activity center he'll build at cost, he can sell the pure water to beer or water companies and make a fortune. A community gossip out of sight of the two overhears the developer saying, "This river is gold!" and assumes that he means there's gold in the water. Now the community cannot give the developer the rights to the water and accept his offer to build a new center not when gold has been discovered. A gold rush and civil war between the two hills, erupts.

Among those torn apart by the battle are a widow and a newcomer, a widower-lawyer living on different hills, who discover they were lovers many years earlier before they drifted apart. Now with the gold rush underway and the two hills split, the developer comes up with a new plan. He'll help one side only the south which has more units and a penny-pinching hothead as a leader, find all the gold and keep it. In return, he'll build the new center and reap the publicity, resulting in new clients when word comes out to the world that he discovered the gold. He only wants all the rights to the water other than the gold, so he can decorate his snack bar with authentic minerals from the water.

The nerves of residents on both hills are becoming increasingly frayed as the *civil* war disrupts everyday activities. If north can't play bridge with south as a partner, who can it play with? An anti-war movement gets underway and residents of both hills have a momentary truce at a party for residents leaving for Rome to celebrate their 50th anniversary. The widower-lawyer, increasingly suspicious of the developer's motives, recruits a resident, a Russian immigrant who was a geologist, to investigate the properties in the river. Indeed, she determines that there's no gold in the river but a valuable natural spring. Now both hills come together as one to claim their equal rights in the river and with the natural spring an income source, to solve their budgetary problems. They are united again. Even the developer touched by the moment offers, albeit with some prodding, to build the activity center, for free. As he proclaims indeed, this river is gold.

## THIS RIVER IS GOLD

### About the Show

This River is Gold is a musical tribute to senior citizens, lauding their lifestyles, aspirations and dreams. Their spirit and love of life is reflected in the song, *Over the Hill* which begins "We're over the hill and we're proud of it, we've climbed every step and we've reached the top, we've savored each moment that we've had of it, now we'll enjoy life and we won't stop."

A tuneful, joyous excursion into life in a senior community the show also reflects local politics and the forces - money and greed - that can divide a community. The 14 songs ranging from romantic to wistful to humorous to boisterous advance the action of both the main plot - the consequences of a presumed discovery of gold on the community - and several subplots. *Years Have Passed* sings of the rediscovery of a past love and *I Wanted to Write a Song For You* sings of the unexpected discovery of a new love.

The show's characters all 55 and over, sing songs, individually, in duets and in group chorus numbers, that reflect character and action ranging from a greedy developer *I Am Sleazy* to a community recreation room number, *Games*, to a celebratory concluding number, *This River Is Gold*

The show was written specifically for production by theater groups in senior communities by Alvin H. "Skip" Reiss, well-known in the cultural field as writer educator, consultant and lecturer. The author of eight books on the arts hundreds of magazine articles and columns, including a current Arts Agenda column for Travel Weekly Magazine he also writes and edits Arts Management, the world's oldest continuing publication for cultural administrators which he co-founded in 1962.

In the musical theater world his produced works include The Hills Are Alive, Are We? and Tall Paul, A Tall Tale, The Legend of Paul Bunyan. In Westchester County New York, where he has a home in a senior community, he was the local library's Centennial Author and his works were featured in "Songs by Skip," a program of his music at the Somers Library. He also has had his original songs featured in three "Thalia Follies" musical revues at New York's noted Symphony Space and at arts conferences throughout the world where he served as keynote speaker.

## ALVIN H. REISS

### Biographical Sketch

Alvin H. Reiss has pioneered in the arts and other non-profit areas as educator, author, and consultant and program innovator. Editor and co-publisher of Arts Management, America's first journal for arts administrator, co-published by the Association of Arts Administration Educators, he is founder and lecturer of Marymount Manhattan College's Arts Management Program. Since 2003, he has written the monthly "Arts Agenda" column for Travel Weekly Magazine.

Mr. Reiss lectures and consults throughout the world including lecture tours of Japan, Australia (twice), British Columbia, and several U.S. states and has addressed conferences overseas. He's presented seminars on funding, marketing, corporate sponsorship and tourism in Hong Kong, Vienna, St. Croix, Copenhagen, Bucharest, Istanbul and Stockholm; and, as the QE1 Arts Council's Distinguished Visitor, he presented a 16-day lecture tour of New Zealand. In higher education he founded and directed a graduate arts management program at Adelphi University. He served as Visiting Professor at the Philadelphia Colleges of the Arts and Visiting Fellow at American University. From 2000 to 2008 he served as lecturer and consultant to the graduate Arts Entertainment and Media Management Program at Columbia College Chicago.

The author of hundreds of magazine articles on the arts and travel, his monthly, "On the Arts" column ran for 17 years in Fund Raising Management and from 2003 to 2005 he served as founding editor of Travel Arts Partnership. He's written humor for Esquire, New York Times, Family Health, Playbill and Diversion. His and his original musical Tall Paul, A Tall Tale: The Legend of Paul Banyan, with book, music and lyrics by Mr. Reiss, was produced in 2003 and in 2005 by the Bam Playhouse in New London, NH. Another musical, The Hills Are Alive, Are We? was produced in 2005. His eight books include Culture & Company, Cash In! Funding and Promoting the Arts, Don't Just Applaud, Send Money, CPR For Nonprofits, and his 2006 work, The ReissSource Directory of the Arts.

Winner of the Austrian Business League's International Management Club Award and recipient of the Outstanding Achievement Award of the International Society of Performing Arts Administrators for "exceptional service to the performing arts as innovator, author, publisher and educator," he's listed in Who's Who in America and Who's Who in the World.

## Synopsis of Scenes and Musical Numbers

### Act One

**Prologue:** Outside the Twin Hills Real Estate Office

*A Day Out in the Country*                      *sung by Sam and Mabel*

**Scene 1:** The Twin Hills Real Estate Office

*Real Estate*                                      *sung by Marian, Sam and Mabel*

**Scene 2:** The Twin Hills Activity Center

*Over the Hill*                                      *sung by Marian and Ensemble*

**Scene 3;** Near the River

*This River Is Gold*                              *sung by Sleazy*

**Scene 4:** The Twin Hills Activity Center

**Scene 5:** The Activity Center Game Room

*Games*    *sung by Natasha and Ensemble*

*The 49ers*    *sung by Richard and Ensemble*

**Scene 6:** Near the River

*I Am Sleazy*                                      *sung by Sleazy*

**Scene 7:** The Activity Center

*Years Have Passed*                              *sung by Marian and Steve*

### Act Two

**Scene 1:** The South Headquarters

*We're Beerish*                                      *sung by Sleazy and Bernie*

*When in Rome*                                      *sung by Richard and Ensemble*

**Scene 2:** The North Headquarters

*Sputnik and Love*                              *sung by Natasha*

*Off on a Trip*                                      *sung by Henry and Ensemble*

**Scene 3: Near the River**

*I Wanted to Write a Song for You*      sung by Bernie  
*We share a Dream*                              sung by Marian and Steve

**Scene 4: The Activity Center**

**Reprise**

*This River Is Gold*                              sung by Sleazy and Ensemble

**Reprise**

*Over the Hill*                                      sung by Ensemble

**Sets and Scenery:** Great flexibility. Settings include: real estate office; Activity Center; the river, North headquarters; South headquarters.

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# THIS RIVER IS GOLD

Book, Music and Lyrics

by

Alvin H. Reiss

## The Cast

All Over the Age of 55

**SAM:** A fun-loving, golf-loving big-city resident who moves to Twin Hills. Big and boisterous. (*sings two songs*)

**MABEL:** Sam's wife, a culture maven, who adores gossip almost as much as she adores the arts who moves reluctantly to Twin Hills but comes to love it. (*sings two songs*)

**MARIAN:** Manager of the Twin Hills real estate office who resides in the over 55 development and serves as secretary of the Association. Accomplished, attractive and smart. Widow. (*sings opening two songs and two love ballads*)

**HENRY (or BENRIETIA):** President of the Association, Competent and straight forward. (*sings part of one song or song could be assigned to another character*)

**ROBERT:** A penny-pinching resident. Quite vociferous, strong-willed. Aggressive. Inadvertently comic at times. (*sings two songs*)

**RICHARD:** A resident who speaks up at meetings. (*chorus only*)

**NATASHA:** An outspoken, gregarious and very romantic Russian immigrant. Funny lady. (*sings two songs*)

**SYLVIA:** Wife of Phil, Association treasurer. (*chorus only*)

**PHIL:** Sylvia's husband. Conscientious. Serious. (*chorus only*)

**I.M. SLEAZY:** A developer looking for ways to enrich himself. Loud and comic. (*sings three songs*)

**BERNIE:** Sleazy's sidekick. A second banana. (*sings parts of two songs*)

**STEVE:** Handsome romantic lead, an accomplished lawyer. Widowed. (*sings two love ballads*)

**CHORUS:** Residents of North Hill and South Hill. As many as needed. (*sing in chorus and can sing individual stanzas if needed.*)

## Act One

### Scene One

*Husband and wife, SAM and MABLE in front of curtain*

**SAM:** Mabel, it's gonna be great Just think, we can have our own condo in the country. I can play golf every day if I want to.

**MABEL:** Sam, Sam. I can't give up our six-room apartment in the city. Where will I put all the china and my silver? There'll be no room for anything. I won't see my friends anymore.

**SAM:** But there'll be room for my golf clubs. And country air. And leisure... (*singing*)

#### *A Day Out in the Country*

**MABEL:** *A day out in the country a day out in the country, it is really a bore  
A day out in the country, no opera, no zabars for sure  
A day out in the country, no culture no finding the muse  
Once you're out of the city, the roads are all gritty  
I pity if we are away  
Let's remain in the city where neighbors are witty,  
The city's the place where we will stay*

**SAM:** *A day out in the country with the girl I adore  
A day in the country the golfing is great, I'll keep score  
A day out in the country, it's fun to be out and away  
When the setting's bucolic, you really can frolic  
The country's symbolic of fun*

*Let's get out where it's rural and pleasures are plural  
And play golf each day in the sun  
On a day out in the country won't you give it a try?*

MABEL: *I'll go out in the country, I'll look but won't promise to buy*

SAM: *On a day out in the country, I know it will really be great  
Oh, we'll have our own haven, I know you'll be ravin'  
And cravin' to build our new nook,  
Let's get out in the country and pick out our one tree  
But first find a realtor and look*

*(The curtain parts showing the sales office of Twin Hills, a condominium development for over 55's. SAM and MABLE enter and are greeted by an exuberant salesperson)*

SAM: We're looking for a...

MARIAN: A home, a place to live, a place to love. Hi, I'm Marian, head of sales. And you are?

MABEL: I'm Mabel Brown. And this is my husband Sam. Now we're just exploring possibilities. You see, we're downsizing.

SAM: I wish you wouldn't discuss our sex life with a stranger. Look, we don't want to spend too much. We just want a small space and one that's not too expensive...

MARIAN: Well you've come to the right place. Twin Hills has everything you want. Tennis, golf, activities. And clubs for every interest.

SAM: Mabel. Maybe they have a gossip club. You could be president.

MARIAN: And above all we have friendly neighbors.

MABEL: I hope they're not too friendly, Sam has a roving eye.

**END OF FREEVIEW**

**You'll want to read and perform this show!**