

Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas

By Glenn Harlan Reynolds

While we muddle through somehow

I think it's my favorite Christmas song.

My reasons are kind of personal. As a kid the only Christmas album we owned was a giveaway Christmas record from the Pure Oil Company, my grandfather's employer. Frank Sinatra got the title cut, and there were other Christmas songs covered by Jo Stafford (O Little Town of Bethlehem) the Hi-Los (Deck the Halls) and so on. To me, the artists on this album seemed impossibly old at the time (they were recording before I was born!) and the Pure Oil connection made me feel like it was something special.

Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas is associated with Sinatra, but it comes from *Meet Me in St. Louis*, and it's not really a cheerful song as written. The version we had had the 1947 Sinatra version, with the line "until then we'll have to muddle through somehow," which in the later remake was [revised](#) by songwriter Hugh Martin to "hang a shining star upon the highest bough." Both are great lines, though these days I'm more in the muddling-through mood.

Well, the song was originally written in 1943, when there was a lot of muddling through to do. Even in 1947, with the World War just receding in the rear view mirror and with the Cold War beginning to loom in the windshield, there was plenty of muddling room. By the 1959 Hugh Martin revision, it was easier to be cheerful.

But, you know, we did muddle through somehow. So let your heart be light. Perhaps by next year, our troubles will be out

of sight.

Say a little prayer, and hang a shining star upon the highest bough. And have yourself a merry little Christmas, now.

I wrote the above a year ago, and it's wonderful how far we've come from those comparatively dark days. Muddling through sometimes gets you there. As I look back on the events of recent times, I keep reflecting on how many times things that seemed dark turned out to be for the best, and how often those whom I am tempted to regard as the forces of darkness are confounded – and how often they are the agents of their own confounding.

Well, as they say, God looks after fools, drunkards, and the United States of America. Thank God for that.

First published in [Glenn's Substack](#)