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Do You Remember Where You Were?

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THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Do you remember where you were?



We used to give it a couple of days before writing history

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I remember where I was when Sidney Crosby scored the big goal. It seems like just the other day, really. The whole family was gathered around the TV.

Now bear in mind: This was in the time before those PVR boxes that let you record everything and watch it later, that I installed on Tuesday.

Oh no, back then you saw things when they were on, or you didn't see them at all. (Unless you still had a VCR, or watched the video later online. And the highlight is sure to be shown forever. But anyway.)

No, we were all gathered around this little TV – 32 inches, if you can believe it – feeling that everybody else in the country was doing the same thing.

When the Americans scored a late goal – what was that guy's name? Ovechkin, maybe – everybody was pretty shocked, and my little daughter looked ready to cry.

But I turned to her and, as I recall, calmly called it: “Crosby from Iginla, give and go, 7:40. Five-hole. Ad for Rona.”

When it happened just like that, the whole room exploded and everybody was jumping up and down, but I distinctly recollect my daughter gazing up at me with a look of pure, all-consuming adoration, even awe. I miss that look.

And then we all poured out into the street. Cars were honking, Canadian flags were everywhere, ticker tape was fluttering down from the sky, and I have a distinct memory of walking up to this nurse or something, and bending her over backward to plant a big kiss on her, my sailor's hat threatening to fall off.

It's weird to think that that was considered okay, but everybody was caught up in the moment and we'd all had a drink or two. Still, you'd think my wife would be mad. She swears that none of that even happened; her memory is a funny thing.

You've got to remember: This was a simpler time in Canada. The ice caps hadn't melted quite as much. We knew a lot less about the Harper government's budget plans than we do today. The Americans owed China slightly less money. And our family hadn't received the letter in the mail, from MasterCard, that would change our lives forever.

When I look at myself in the mirror now, I don't see the chipper, clean-shaven young man from that magical Olympic Sunday. I see a guy with three day's growth, a little older, a little flabbier. But a little wiser, too, I hope.

And it's that wisdom I'd want to pass on to the kids today, in particular the ones just a few days too young to remember the Vancouver Olympics and Sidney Crosby's big goal.

You're probably feeling that you missed out in the defining moment in Canadian history, and that as a result you're somehow less of a Canadian.

And you're right, you did, you are. For a while, you'll undoubtedly be stuck lamely telling people, "Yeah, my older brother remembers watching that on TV." But buck up. There will be other moments, even other Olympics, other great Crosby goals. The one bit of advice I would give you: Don't force it. In our day, we didn't try to make something a moment of great historical and cultural significance even while it was happening. In our day, we gave it a couple of days.

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