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By: Michael Levin I took my twin ten-year-old sons to a couple of Angels games this week, and I was shocked—shocked!—to discover just how little they knew about baseball. I don't mean to criticize my sons. They know an awful lot about things that I'll never know. Juggling. Magic. Origami. And technology, of course. But the one thing I knew about when I was their age was baseball. I grew up in New York in the 1960s, and I came of age with Gil Hodges' Mets teams of that era. So a couple of trips to the ballpark with my sons this week—they each got their own game—brought me back to my own childhood and shed a light on just how different things are today from back then. For one thing, when my dad took me to the ballpark, the men had the tattoos and the women had the earrings. The fundamental difference between my childhood and my sons' is that there were far fewer entertainment options back in the sixties, and there were far fewer screens in each home. You might have had one color TV and then an old black-and-white somewhere in the house. No computer, no computer games, no consoles, no iPhones. The Internet? It was barely a gleam in the eye of Al Gore. We had Yoo-Hoo, not YouTube. With fewer options, baseball mattered more. We kept score of the games, both at home and at the stadium, in scorecards or in scoring books. I'd be hard-pressed to tell you exactly why we did so, but we did. The first purchase upon arrival at the stadium was always a program for a quarter, and a golf pencil for 10 cents. Learning the art of keeping a meticulous scorecard was a bonding experience between father and son. It also was a cause for conversation with one's neighbors in the seats around you. Was that double play 6-4-3 or 4-6-3? Baseball's greatest positive is its devotion to nuance and detail, two items that have little meaning in the slam-bang Internet era. The game—on any given night and over the

course of a season—rewards patience and deep knowledge of traditions and rules. The vicarious thrill of watching a rookie pitcher, newly elevated from Triple A, striking out the side. Seeing a player come back after a devastating injury, or an undesired trade, or a bout with the bottle. It's soap opera for men and boys. But all that detail is lost if all that matters is the long ball that makes SportsCenter. W. P. Kinsella, the author of Shoeless Joe, which became Field of Dreams, put it best. The action in an average three-hour baseball game could be compressed into five minutes, Kinsella wrote in Field of Dreams. The rest of the time is spent thinking about what might happen, what could happen, what should happen, what did happen, and what should have happened. So I said to one son, as his game began, "I'd like to point out some things about what's going on. Let me know when you want me to stop." To which he responded, "You can stop right now." And then there's the matter of when to leave. Back in the day, it was a point of honor never to leave a game until the last out, no matter how one-sided the contest might have been. This provoked ongoing family debates, because my father never wanted to stay until the end. He wanted to leave in the eighth, to beat the traffic. But my boys were more than content to pack it in after five innings. It didn't bother me any. Both of the games we attended, interleague affairs with the Giants, were incredibly slow-paced. That's another change from the sixties—just how long it takes to play nine innings. Pitchers seem to take forever to work now. Players are taught to be patient at the plate, to work the count. Just get up there and take your cuts, fellas. I've got to get to work in the morning. Leaving early, therefore, no longer indicates weak moral character. It just means you've seen enough. In the 1960s, kids my age were devoted to one team and knew not just the starting lineup of that team but the starting lineups of every team in both leagues. And had the baseball cards to back it up. Everybody knew how many games out, or in front, their team was. My sons' generation, by and large, doesn't read the standings. It's frustrating. I want my sons to notice the pace of a home run trot and the pitcher busying himself with the webbing of his glove after someone's gone yard on him, instead of watching the fireworks display. I want my sons to know when to hit and run, when to sacrifice, how to recognize a perfect bunt, and how to tell a wild pitch from a passed ball. But this is lore that may never matter to them the way it did, and does, to me. When I was in law school, I clerked for two law professors, and one of them, Marshall Shapo, a renowned torts professor, entered the office one day bearing an expression of rapture. He and his adolescent son had enjoyed an entire conversation in the car consisting solely of names of old ballplayers. Van Lingle Mungo. Dazzy Vance. Stan Musial. Pee Wee Reese. I always dreamt of having a similar shared moment with a son, but it would appear that that's not on the horizon. I'm sure we'll find something else to connect over. It doesn't look like it'll be Van Lingle Mungo anytime soon. But before I go, does anybody know what the Red Sox did last night. About: New York Times best -selling author Michael Levin runs BusinessGhost.com and blogs at http://deathofpublishing.blogspot.com. He has written with Baseball Hall of Famer Dave Winfield, football broadcasting legend Pat Summerall, FBI undercover agent Joaquin Garcia, and E-Myth creator Michael Gerber. He has written for the New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, CBS News, the Boston Globe, the Los Angeles Times, and many other top outlets. You can 'like' him on Facebook here…www.facebook.com/BusinessGhost