

## Baseball

When I was a boy, my father took my older brother and me to a baseball game at Candlestick Park. I don't recall specifically how old I was that day, or if the game was for a special occasion. I don't even recall who the Giants played. What I do remember is that moment when the players ran from the dugout in their white uniforms with orange and black names and numbers on the back, and my father stood, pointing to a stocky centerfielder. "There goes Willie Mays," he said with awe. With five brothers, sports were destined to become a religion in my house. Whatever the season, we played the sport in our front yard, and competitively. The wiffle ball games were fiercely contested. I could name the starting batting orders for every team in the league: the Cincinnati Red's 'Big Red Machine,' the Oakland A's 'Swinging A's' and Willie Stargell's 'We are Family' Pittsburgh Pirates. On any given day I could recite who was leading the league in hitting, RBI's, and home runs. I remember the day Roberto Clemente died, and I cried when the Giants traded Mays to the New York Mets. Several years ago, when my own son was old enough, I took him to a Seattle Mariner game. The tickets, compliments of a friend, were much better than the tickets my father had purchased so many years ago. We sat twelve rows behind home plate. When the Mariners ran onto the field to shouts of the public address announcer, "Your Seattle Mariners," I pointed to a stocky centerfielder jogging to his position. "There goes Ken Griffey Jr.," I said. My son, standing beside me with a Pepsi in hand, pointed as well. "Look," he said, his finger and attention directed to the stands, "Cotton Candy."