



SON OF A GUN

by Joe Lanier

The World Series is upon us. The Cubs didn't quite make it and one of the reasons is that they didn't score enough runs. . . It's basic information, but getting runs depends on hitting the baseball. Hitting a baseball is not all that easy. . . It is, according to a pamphlet I read, called "Have a Good Day," one of the single-most difficult acts in sports. The pitcher, who is standing on a ten-inch mound of dirt, hurls the ball 60 feet, 6 inches to home plate where the batter is standing. The ball is coming at a speed as high as 98 miles an hour! At that speed, it takes .42 of a second to reach the plate. Thus the batter has less than half-a-second to gauge the path of the ball and swing at it. With a bat speed of 60 miles an hour, the batter tries to make contact with a fast-approaching ball that is only 2.87 inches in diameter. From the time it leaves the pitcher's hand to the split second later when it arrives at home plate, a fast ball may revolve 40 times. This spinning affects the course it takes as it speeds toward the batter. It may curve inside, or outside, or even drop suddenly. Now get this — a successful hit is so unlikely that a professional ball player who fails seven out of ten times at bat is regarded as a star. One who has a batting average of .300 is regarded as outstanding. . . Batting a thousand only occurs in slow-pitch softball. . .

 Every once in a while, the promoters of I-40 complain of the political mess the super highway is in. Then the next day they try and use politics to extend the strip of pavement. . . Just last week Governor Hunt made a stop in Duplin at Carlton's Crossroads where I-40 is to cross Highway 117 to say an increase in federal funding allowed another \$16 million to be spent on the road. He told of its importance, but we all remember his refusal to put the necessary money there to complete the highway in the very near future. . . For political reasons he placed highway money in dabs here and there. . . Had I been in his place, I may have done the same thing, but I wouldn't have called this highway North Carolina's "most important" while doing it. . . To his credit, he did get the highway off and running. However, he failed to make adequate funding available so this part of North Carolina could develop as have the other areas with quick ways in and out. As for the promoters of I-40, Eugene Merritt, it is difficult to take Mr. Merritt seriously any more. . . The Republican candidate for governor, Jim Martin, has made the most favorable commitment on the completion of I-40 of any one running in this election. . . But Mr. Merritt, a Democrat, has not backed the plan. . . I suppose it is "the party above all else," and not I-40 above all else. . . Don't misinterpret this as a support for either candidate. . .

 Word came in from Bump, N.C. this past week. . . The State has removed the signs saying "Bump." Folks are all in a dither. . . They are in no-where land. . . They have no reason for being any more since their Bump is gone. . . There is talk of putting up a marker, marking the spot where the Bump was for historical purposes. At the same time, there is talk of renaming the crossroads to "No Bump" or even "Sewell Junction." Mr. Sewell is the State roads man out of Jacksonville who thought the bump was too much — too big-a-bump, and had it removed. The folks are to retain the town "Nut Sanctuary," if they do decide to rename the crossroads. . . Lum and Abner would have liked this place. . . Son-of-a-Gun. . .

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