

Banzai!!

The Newsletter of the Austin ASL Club

Issue #2.6

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Club Notes and Ladder Standings

Player	Points	Record
Smith	1407	32-10
Seningen	1398	20-8
Shostak	1252	36-12
Kirk Woller	1126	20-26
Lavan	1096	4-3
Purnell	1066	10-6
Swantek	1054	6-6
Phelps	1038	1-0
Tom Woller	1037	1-0
Hailey	1014	11-10
Barry	1014	2-2
Gerstenberg	987	9-17
Poole	985	0-1
Esparza	982	3-3
Hively	980	8-18
Dillard	980	1-3
Morgenthaler .	978	0-1
O'Quin	970	6-9
Bonham	966	0-1
Fritz	963	2-3
Toreki	942	2-9
Austin	905	0-3
Knatcher	887	0-5
Lester	879	0-5
Milder	798	2-15

Recent Results

Shostak (Amer) def K Woller (Ital) in Retribution
 K Woller (Germ) def Esparza (Brit) in Please Hurry
 Swantek (Brit) def Gerstenberg (Germ) in A Triangle of Buggers
 Smith (Brit) def Toreki (Germ) in He Who Hesitates
 Smith (Brit) def Shostak (Germ) in Faugh A'Ballagh
 O'Quin (Russ) def Hailey (Germ) in Brandenburger.Bridge
 Gerstenberg (Amer) def O'Quin (Jap) in Men of Stone
 Hailey (Germ) def Milder (Russ) in Wintergewitter
 Seningen (Germ) def Poole (Russ) in Turned Away
 Shostak (Russ) def Milder (Germ) in Directive Number Three
 Halley (Germ) def Shostak (Brit) in Taylor Made Defense
 Milder (Brit) def Halley (Germ) in Tiger Route
 Toreki (Germ) def Milder (Amer) in Surrender or Die
 Seningen (Germ) def Smith (Russ) in Acts of Defiance
 Toreki (Russ) def Shostak (Germ) in Pomeranian Tigers
 Swantek (Amer) def Knatcher (Germ) in Silence That Gun

K Woller (Germ) def Milder (Amer) in Tiger 222
 K Woller (Amer) def Purnell (Germ) in Auld Lang Syne
 Purnell (Germ) def K Woller (Can) in Going to Church

If you'd like information about our club, please call Matt at 280-8414 or Mike at 288-3778.

Tourney Recap

As promised, the 5th annual Austin ASL Tournament got underway Friday, June 20th, and continued through Sunday the 22nd at the Georgetown Recreation Center. Mike Seningen won the top individual prize by defeating Chas Smith in a close game of Acts of Defiance. The top team was David Hailey, Todd Hively, and Jeff Toreki, each of whom only lost one game on their way to an impressive team record.

Although the turnout was less than anticipated due to some last-minute bailouts, those who showed had a bunch of ASL fun packed into a single weekend. Three players from Oklahoma and one from Dallas made the trip and their presence was greatly appreciated. All told about 14 gamers took some time to slug it out with cardboard and dice during the weekend. Some new faces even showed up just to see what all the fuss was about, and a couple of those guys even played games. As usual, David Hailey did a fine job organizing and running the tournament. Todd Hively generously donated some books and games to be used as door prizes, which were generally given out on the basis of "first guy to generate a hero" or "first critical hit followed by a flaming wreck" or that sort of thing, which spiced up play a bit.

The Box Scores

- Z17 He Who Hesitates
Smith (British) def Toreki (German)
- A93 Faugh A'Ballagh
Smith (British) def Shostak (German)
- T Pavlov's House
Seningen (German) def Burleigh (Russian)
- JF3 Good Night, Sweet Prince
Hively (Danish) def Gray (German)
- ???
- Gray def Burleigh
<No PIS for either of these two.>
- Z5 Brandenburger Bridge
O'Quin (Russian) def Hailey (German)
- AP8 A Bloody Harvest
Smith (Polish) def Burleigh (German)
- A92 Highway 5
Hornbeck (Japanese) def Seningen (American)
- An Obligation Fulfilled
Hively (German) def Routh (British)
- Men of Stone
Gerstenberg (Japanese) def O'Quin (American)
- A70 Wintergewitter
Hailey (German) def Milder (Russian)
- CH6 Armored Probe
Shostak (American) def Gray (Japanese)
- The Lighthouse
Hornbeck (Japanese) def Burleigh (American ???)
- BdF3 The Volksgrenadiers Try Again
Smith (Germ) def Gray (American)

- RB6 Turned Away
 Seningen (German) def Poole (Russian)
- A32 Zon With the Wind
 Hively (German) def Simpson (American)
- 14 Silence That Gun
 Routh (American) def Burleigh (German)
- AP7 Directive Number 3
 Shostak (Russian) def Milder (German)
- CH25 Land of the Khan
 Hailey (Japanese) def Hornback (Chinese)
- T16 Strayer's Stray
 O'Quin (German) def Burleigh (American)
- pb2 RHA at Bay
 Toreki (German) def Routh (British)
- PB5 Taylor Made Defense
 Hailey (German) def Shostak (British)
- Last Fight
 Hively (French) def Hornbeck (German)
- BB10 Surrender or Die
 Toreki (German) def Milder (American)
- CH5 Acts of Defiance
 Seningen (German) def Smith (Russian)
- non-tournament ladder game:
 M4 Tiger Route
 Milder (British) def Hailey (German)

From the Weekender (I'm Out There on the Weak End)

Greg Swantek

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It's been an epic of ASL play (in weekender terms, anyway) since I last annoyed you all with this column. I managed to grind out four scenarios, and what is utterly astounding is that I managed to win three of them.

The first one, *Lost Opportunities*, has become *Lost Memories*, because over a month has passed since the redoubtable but unlucky Kirk Woller and I went at it on the outskirts of the flat paper town of Ste. Mere-Eglise. I have sweet gauzy memories of the two of us, capable and noble opponents, trading barbed witticisms and pithy *bon mots* whilst we brilliantly maneuvered our forces. Oh, wait a minute. I just found my notes from the game — somehow Kirk's colorful post-dice roll epithets have been transliterated by dim recall into barbed witticisms; by the notes of my own actions, then, I can only conclude that *bon mot* is French for *beer belch*. I helmed the Germans in this one, and a pathetic lot they were. Definitely the scrapings of the manpower barrel. Not the absolute dregs, but not far off. With an ELR of 2, my conscripts would disrupt if an American paratrooper six hexes away so much as farted. But not to worry; they were supported by a couple of captured French tanks that could only be knocked out by something heavier than a rude gesture. As it played out, my mortars and machine guns did their work.

The pathetic little German 50mm mortar is much like the German Navy in WWI; the key to its effectiveness is in the threat of its use rather than its actual use. Think of it as a "mortar in being." Just the threat of a critical hit drove Woller's MMGs off the second level of building 1F5, allowing my infantry to advance unmolested on my left flank. I was able to wrest the requisite four buildings on board 1 from the cocky Amis, but it was a near-run thing. At one

point, I was only a half squad away from sudden death (per SSR 2), but gutted it out to take the win. But what next? Seeing as how the Germans, contrary to actual events, had just retaken Ste. Mere-Eglise, the "key to defeating the airborne invasion," had not I then beaten the airborne invasion? And with it, any chance of the seaborne invasion's success? The awful implication is that 30 conscript krauts drove the AEF off the continent, even though their commander (me) was half drunk. Damn I'm good.

My next victim — er, pardon me, - opponent, was Jeff Toreki, hapless owner of a Dalmatian named Deacon, a.k.a. Hound of the Spazzkervilles. His favorite chew toy (the dog's, I mean, not Jeff's) is the stopper mechanism from the bathroom sink drain (I don't know what Jeff's favorite chew toy is). Suffice it to say, he's not too quick on the uptake. And the dog's kinda dense too (just kidding). We (Jeff and I) played *Back to School*, a scenario from one of the annuals. I played the Russian side, and had to prevent a bunch of Krauts from getting off the board. Luck seasawed in this one, with me doing well early, then Jeff coming on strong, then even Deacon the spazz-o-dog got the upper hand in his war with the drain stopper (every dog has his day, dontcha know). We both had made some mistakes, but it all came down to the desperate dash for the map edge on the last turn. The evil fascist stooges were forced to run the proletarian gauntlet of bullets from the motherland. Thanks to some effective PPF the 9-2 purveyor of Hitlerism was, along with many of his fascist cronies, forced to cower in defeat (or was it in de bushes?). But the death knell truly sounded when Jeff's final chance at victory was forced to trot out in the open next to two Russian squads, a lend-lease .50cal and a 9-1 leader. And while it was the Russians who manned the gun, you can imagine the fearful carnage dished out by the decadent weapon of the evil democracy, and to this the motherland owed her victory (don't tell Uncle Joe or we'll all end up in Gulag).

Concurrently with all these goings-on, Matt "ASL Machine" Shostak and I had *Action at Balberkamp* progressing at his house. And right nicely it was progressing, too, at least for our first sitting. *Balberkamp* is a rather largish scenario that many of you may remember from the slapdash progenitor of the current system. I chose to play the Norwegian/British forces, while Matt chose the dread minions of soon-to-be-rampaging fascism. For the first three turns, the noble sons of the Norsemen held the Hitlerite invaders at bay, even driving the Nazi halftrack from the field with a single well-placed bullet from the rifle of Olaf Snipersson, little-known folk hero of the fjords. Such bravery allowed the undaunted defenders of the North to form a tidy little defence line in front of the overconfident invaders. And then it happened. The one thing that all true commanders of men dread above all things. The dice left me. And they left me hard, never to return. Just to let you know how bad it actually was, by turn ten Mats had written those two particular dice into his will. Don't get me wrong here. I certainly didn't play flawlessly. Matt, of course, played his usual solid game. But when it ain't your day, it ain't your day. Three fourths of the way through the game I was still in denial, refusing to accept the fact that it was hopeless. "O, cruel mistress Fate," I cried, "throw me a bone!" And she did! One of my broken Brit squads battle-hardened and produced a hero. Matt then promptly, and with unsportsmanlike disregard for my Greek tragedy-like theatrics, made eight fire attacks and rolled no higher than a five on six of them. O woe was me.

Speaking of woe, my next opponent was Eric "Can I Bum a Beer" Gerstenberg. We played *A Triangle of Buggers*, a scenario found on the Internet. I played the Brits, who heavily outnumbered the Krauts, and had two Crocodiles to boot. They might as well have had two crocodile boots instead, for all the good they did me. They actually never fired a shot in anger, as it was my infantry that did the dirty work, all under significant time pressure. In my opinion,

Eric had made some mistakes with his infantry setup, and coupled with a bit of bad luck on key rolls, left him with his still-hidden AT gun and not much else to stop me from moving off the board unopposed on my last turn. He had, however, sited the gun well, and almost literally won the battle with his final shot after losing almost his entire force. Again some bad luck intervened as his 8-morale crew failed a +1 check, and there were no good order enemy left to watch me exit precisely the number of VP necessary for victory and not one point more. Eric himself was not in good order by this point, having succumbed to a Shostak-like fit of dice condemnation. At least he hadn't forgotten how to pour a black-and-tan, so there is still some hope for the boy.

The salient feature through all of this was that these scenarios seemed better balanced than a Lexus tire. I'm certain that subsequent playings against the same opponents would yield different results, but what is more important, would be equally thrilling. And that is why we play this game

(This space intentionally left blank so you can insert your own blathering platitudes about "the hobby".)

Well, I just polished off my last beer and my wrists are getting tired from typing this. Since I don't work in a computer cubicle at a large corporation, there's no one I legitimately can sue for carpal tunnel syndrome, so it's about time I wrapped this up. And speaking of up, that's exactly where I'm going on the Austin ladder, with all the rights and privileges appurtenant thereto (I can't resist chiding Matt for second-guessing my spelling). (*Sorry Greg, but my American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language spells it "appertaining" and the spell checker in Word doesn't recognize your spelling either. — ed.*) But not to worry; I'm currently in the process of getting my butt kicked by Jeff Toreki in an ongoing deluxe scenario (I haven't called him to arrange a final session in hopes that Deacon the Gonzodog will knock the pieces off the kitchen table and prevent my imminent defeat). See you in the trenches!



Tourney After Action Report

Todd Hively

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Round 1: Good Night, Sweet Prince. When we arrived in Georgetown, we were all given the local ASL newsletter with the scenario in it from Tim H. I liked the look of it, and since I was odd man out, I began to set it up to play solitaire! Better than doing nothing! The scenario is set in 1940 with the Germans invading Denmark. It seems a few Danes actually put up some fight! The Germans have an opening force of two Pz IIF tanks and 9 squads of mixed quality, most (6) being 467's and only LMGs for support weapons. On turn 4 out of a 6-turn game, the Germans get two PSW 221 armored car reinforcements.

The Danes had an unusual OB. Two new game pieces were required, and they came with the scenario [I had to do a cut and paste job, but for homemade stuff they didn't look too bad]. The Danes got a 37L AT gun with no ROF and HE9. They also got two very unusual weapons. They were motorcycles/side cars with a 20LL mounted on the sidecar, with a 3 ROF. The thing had a move mode, where it was a motorcycle, and a firing mode on the back where it was able to fire the 20LL with an inherent 127 crew. So, it was sort of a very mobile AT gun!

Of the regular counters, the Danes got 4 457's and 2 437's, a HMG, a MMG and a LMG, so there were quite a few weapons that could hurt those thin-skinned German AFVs. The 37L had to set up unconcealed/unemplaced. I set the motorcycle/guns up onboard as I didn't think they really were HIPable, although they were in gun mode. Not sure on that. The VC were for the Germans to cross a stream (two half boards, 22 and 16, with a stream overlay on 16) with 23 VP. The Danes also got a roadblock that could have blocked one of the three bridges that were the only way to cross the stream (it was flooded).

I had just finished a set up for the Danes, when a player from Dallas, Glen Grey, came in ready to play! I showed him what I had out, and he said he would play it. He tried to send forces toward all three bridges. I didn't set up the roadblock in a position to close a bridge (I thought a roadblock had to have woods/building on both sides of the road to be placed) so he split his force. That was a big mistake. He armored assaulted in a three-squad stack toward my 37 gun and HMG. I couldn't believe it. He sent another armored assault stack toward the middle bridge, and sent an infantry force through some cover toward the third bridge.

Glen is normally a very good player, but he seemed to be a bit reckless. He didn't have that far to move, and he did have some cover to use, so I was very surprised at his attack. On the first turn I broke up the all infantry stack on a LOS check on his concealment, it was clear, and so I shot with -2drm, ouch. Leader, two squads break, other squad pins. I let his armored assaults come closer, then fired with the 37L. Missed. I kept my concealment on the other weapons to see what turn two would bring. On my turn one I tried the 37L at his tank again, and missed. No ROF hurt.

On his turn two, he kept coming, now he was completely in the open and I shot my HMG at his arm/assault stack. Broke up the infantry except for a squad pinning. He kept on going with the tank and got on the bridge. I hit him again with the 37L and just about couldn't miss. Tank gone. His other assault was similar. I had the two 20LL's covering the second and third bridges and didn't need them. I forgot, he did manage to break the crew of one of them.

His assaults had been completely broken up, and he gave up on turn two. He should, of course, have sent just about everything towards one of the bridges. He could have avoided my 37L altogether. I am not sure what he was thinking, he just played a bad game. I think the scenario is interesting, the weird new items see to that, and the record for it was 4-3 in favor of the Germans (it was used in a tournament in Colorado before we got it, I think) so I don't think the game as played indicated the balance so much against the Germans. Clearly, a well-conceived attack plan is needed, and the Danes do have a lot to shoot with, but I would play it either side. My tourney record: 1-0

Round 2: An Obligation Fulfilled. This is set on board 9 during the German invasion of Greece. The Brits are defending with an 88 art, one A10 tank, 7 squads 3 leaders, ATR, 51MTR, HMG, 2 LMG, 3 trenches, 4 foxholes. Germans have 2 Pz IVD (smoke

tanks) 4 Pz IIIH 9 468's, 9-2, 8-1, 8-0, 2MMG, 4LMG, one 8-1 armor leader. By SSR no 4th level exists.

The opponent was named Brian Routh. A fairly new player, but he knew the rules well, and had a great sense for the game. I didn't know where his gun was, but I saw a large stack on the highest point in the rear, so I smoked it and got the smoke to fall. By his groans, I knew something bad had happened, and realized that he must have put his gun in that same spot! It was one of the only woods areas on the higher level, and later I found that his gun was indeed there. Lucky for me the smoke landed. It was the only smoke shot I would get in the whole game! On my turn one Prep, I had the usual kill stack 9-2, 2MMG, 3 squads 16fp at long range for the squads. I shot at a squad and a leader in a foxhole. 16 Odrm. I kept rate and got a 2mc. Leader passed, squad rolled 1,1 and generated a hero! I fire again, 8fp Odrm. Again an MC, leader broke, hero ok, squad rolled another 1,1 and generated ANOTHER hero! Of course, I was dying, and my plans to waltz up and go past that position were up in smoke. I had two of the PzIIIH shoot at his squad with the ATR and didn't hurt him. The other PzIVD had missed its smoke, and missed its HE shot. So, I had done nothing to hurt him, and had generated two heroes for him. I moved very cautiously forward and the game went on.

To condense this a bit, I later finally broke up his hero position, they both died, his ATR squad was broken and taken prisoner, my tanks tried to rush past his A10 before my only smoke went away from his 88. The A10 killed two PzIII, a PzIII killed the A10 in bounding fire, his 88 got another tank, the PzIVD, and I was down to 3 tanks and must exit 15 VP to win. I managed to get one PzIII past his 88. But the main fear for me was his HMG position. I risked everything and put my PzIII in his HMG hex, couldn't overrun due to the move cost. He missed his reaction fire shot. I managed to move my surviving infantry forward. His gun broke some of my squads, but some others ran up next to the gun out of CA. I broke the crew and another squad. I got into the gun hex, the PzIII became immobilized in CC. But it later broke the HMG squad through firing its MGs. I ended up breaking all his guys except for a leader and HS. He desperately tried to get back to the gun, but it was hopeless and I broke the HS with ease. I had one more turn to move off and had plenty of exit VP. It was a nail biter with many more swings of fortune than I mentioned above. It was a great scenario. I couldn't criticize much in Brian's play. He might have been quicker to shift his squads covering the other board edge to the top of the hill where the gun was when my attack was committed. He used the trenches to block the roads (tanks have to take bog check to cross trenches) and so I was limited in using the road. 2-0

Round 3: *Zon with the Wind.* Next I played a guy named Johathan. He was clearly a newbie, and I let him pick the scenario and his choice of side. This was more of a learning experience for him, and to let you know how this one went, I will just say that on turn one, he sent most of his US into the valley on the far side of the woods into the gully on board 24. He could see nothing. One of the 88s and my squads broke his other squads; one might have been pinned. He had no unit to stop me from moving as much as I could up to the map edge where his next turn reinforcements were coming in. Two of the stacks I moved were dummies, but he didn't know that. I had the 8-1, LMG 467 two hexes away to cover the dummies and let him know I had real units there. I also had two 447s up on level one of the buildings to cover the open ground. He really had no choice but to enter near his first turn entry area, and that was essentially the game. I just shifted over toward them, and he made some progress (they are after all US paras) but the issue was never in doubt. 3-0

Round 4: *Nel Nome Di Roma.* Next, a late-nighter on Saturday. I played Mike Seningen (last year's winner) in this Tacticsques scenario. 12 Russian squads against 23 Italian squads - some set up on board some entering from 3 sides as the game progressed. I set up two 447/MMG/8-1 in a position that could lay a fire lane down the road on board 10. I had to set up one squad to cover his reinforcements on the north side, and I put my miserable radio (1941 6 to contact) and 4 squads covering his larger reinforcements on the south side. By the time I had set up, it was a pretty thin line, and I hate defending row houses, which is where I had to set up in. The Italians had to control 15 buildings on board 10 past hexrow Q. They had an ace in the hole: smoke/HE OBA with offboard observer and automatic good draw on the turn it came in on (2). On turn one he was able to break a Russian, but he didn't get very far. I had placed my dummies forward to slow him down, and they did. He had a few squads break, they are Italians after all, and didn't get too far on the first turn. I shot my big stack at his 81 MTR (it has smoke and 3 ROF!) and amazingly broke, and later killed, the crew.

Highlights of the rest of the game. His 81 MTR was picked up by a 346, and he fired it at my kill stack and got a critical hit, killing a 447 and destroying a MMG. His smoke OBA was devastating, and he had to have it. All his error rolls put the SR or FFE in exactly the right place to be effective. He once corrected an SR 10 hexes and it landed accurately! My south force was doing a good job holding back his reinforcements. My OBA came down and didn't do a thing, and then I lost radio contact for about 4 phases. That was crucial. He was suffering lots of breaks, but few losses, and began to enter the village. I had to get out of the smoke. I could have risked CC, but he would have had me at 2-1 or greater. He changed his OBA to HE and I rolled gusts, which blew away the dispersed smoke, clearing much of the smoke off. We got into firefights, and he had a particularly bad turn of getting broken, and breaking his weapons. Right about here it was turn 6 and for the first time I began to feel confident that the game had really swung my way. He had about 7 buildings, but he had lost a lot of firepower (his HMG had broken and lost in repair) my OBA finally came back and I did harassing fire and it was stopping his south force. I had a line, thin as it was, stopping all his paths of movement.

Then IT happened. He corrected his OBA, it was right on target once again. It hit two squads and a leader. He rolled 1,1 and 1,2 on the OBA shots. One squad killed outright, a LMG destroyed, the leader and other squad broken and the squad reduced, ELR'ed into uselessness. My whole flank was wide open. I had only a 447 leader and MMG at a first level to cover the far side to keep him from moving toward all the buildings. I felt I had to try and get some squads back into the buildings from my up till then successful south force. He got a 1fp shot on one of the 447s that were moving back and broke him. Another squad successfully advanced behind some trees, and I kept one squad to hold him off. I lost my OBA, he moved his south force into the trees, broke the other 447, and my whole situation had turned into disaster in the south. In the north, surprisingly, I held him off with a HS and squad, and the MMG/447 on the other side of board 10. So, I could have left more in the south to keep him from having any chance at the buildings.

The last turn, he ran up two south squads into position to advance into two buildings. He had smoked up the MMG/447 position, so they could no longer cover the open ground, and he ran into other buildings. We counted it up and he had 15 buildings and it was over. It was a great game, great scenario. I felt I could have won it, but the OBA was clearly the difference. The smoke always coming down where he needed it, that HE OBA killing (in effect) two squads, and my ill-advised decision to try and reinforce the

buildings all hurt. He might have won anyway had I left the squads covering the south, but he would have had to win some CC to do it, and that is never a sure thing. 3-1

Round 5: Last Fight. I played Paul Hornbeck from Oklahoma City in this one. I took the French. The VC are to make the area within 4 hexes of R4 on board 17 free of unbroken German MMC. The French have 16 squads entering from two different sides and 3 British armored cars. The 11 German squads all 468, but only an ATR and 50 MTR and 3 MG as anti tank weapons.

I thought the game was going to be over after turn one. He broke about 3 squads of one French entry group, shocked an armored car, and broke my 9-1, reduced a 458 to a HS, and broke two more 458 in the other group. He told me later he almost suggested we start another scenario. In the next Rph, I rolled 1,1 on the 9-1 self rally, he battle hardened to a 9-2. The 457 force was getting broken and reduced, the armored car that was shocked went to UK, and I was in despair.

I got desperate on turn 2 and decided the game would be over if my moves did not work. I send two squads into some woods next to two of his squads. One 457 broke, the other amazingly survived a couple of MCs. I moved two armored cars right next to his ATR, hoping to blow him away with MGs. Neither shot had any effect, but his ATR shots didn't damage the ACs. My brave 9-2, leading a 458 rolled a 10 on his first MC. 458 with him broke also. I did run some 248s around past the hedge and these had an effect later. So, my situation was still hopeless, my 458 force was just having no effect on him, one AC was UK, and my only success was the 457 in the woods.

I moved the 457 into CC and survived. I survived the UK and all ACs were functional. He continued to CR and break up the 457 group till I had just 5 squads left. In the CC, I CRed his squad and he did nothing. In his turn he advanced the other 468 into the melee. That was a mistake on his part, as it allowed me to move up 2 457s to join the melee on my turn. He shocked another AC, and the 9-2 broke again. He kept rallying only to break on every MC! By turn 5, I had won the melee, he lost 2 squads in that for nothing in return. Bad luck on his part. He still had an 8-1, LMG/468, 468 holding the line and the mass of his force was untouched. On my turn the AC came back, so all 3 were working again. I really was amazingly lucky with the ACs. He had many hits on them, with no permanent results up till about turn 5. I decided I would only have a chance if the ACs could tie up his main stacks by bypass/entry. My first AC was hit and flamed. My second AC overran a squad and leader and stayed in Motion and tied them up. The other AC went into bypass on his main 2 squad stack. The 2 248s that I had moved behind his area were joined by a 458. I had visions of encircling fire. I finally got the stupid 9-2 moving and he and about 4 squads were next to the 2 468s. I moved others near his 8-1, LMG, 468 on the other side. By the last turn, I had to clear 3 squads from the victory area. The ACs had been vital, I had no chance without them. The 9-2 and two squads were in position to take out one of his squads. I had about 4.5 other squads left that could get into CC with his other two squads and the farthest squad away had a hero and the 8-1, with a very poor chance to kill them.

I once more used the ACs to tie up his squads so they could not fire at my moving squads, the AC that went into the 8-1/hero/468 hex overran them and got a MC result. It pinned the 8-1, and broke the 468 (I think this squad was fanatic) - that was the break I needed. I advanced into CC with a 3-1 on one squad and killed it. The 9-2/squads had a 2-1 and killed the other squad. Victory. 4-1

This was a great game. Admittedly, the luck factor on the ACs saved me. I could not have won without them, not even close. He made some mistakes, he entered CC against my 457 when he probably would have been wiser to use the 468 to keep holding my advance up, and he went into CC against an AC that tied up his ATR and a squad for several turns, I was afraid to move the AC out of the hex so I just kept shooting him with the MG till the squad finally broke. The force I sent around the rear was instrumental in forcing about 4 of his squads to surrender. He had much good fortune throughout the game, so I don't think he was unlucky, except on the AC stuff.

This game was a prime example of not giving up when it appears hopeless. I was just about ready to throw in the towel, and the only reason I didn't was the survival of the 457 that moved into the woods, and the AC's survival. Both Paul and I thought it was a great game. So, I was 4-1 and still in the running for the championship. The other two contenders, Mike, who beat me earlier, and Chas, were playing Acts of Defiance. If Chas won, I would play him for the title. Unfortunately, Mike won, and though we were all at 4-1, Mike won due to the head-to-head victories. He won a beautiful trophy of a US Paratrooper (modern helmet style, unfortunately) about 11 inches tall in pewter [or bronze].

But, I still had a chance to win a trophy. There is a team competition in the tournament, and the team with the best win/loss advantage will also win a trophy. It came down to the last game being played in the tournament, and my team member was winning in Surrender or Die. He finally won the game, and I got a trophy after all. Our team was me at 4-1, David Hailey at 3-1, and Jeff Toreki at 2-1. So, it was a successful tournament, my best showing ever.

The State of the Club

Matt Shostak

Last year at this time I wrote a column entitled *The State of ASL in Central Texas*. So now is a good time to look at our club once again to see where we are relative to last year, and where we should be headed.

Last June we had 13 players on our ladder, one or two of whom were essentially inactive. Today we have 25 players listed on our ladder. Of those, I would say 11 are solidly active, 7 are inactive, and the others lie somewhere in between, including one guy who has moved out of town but still plays ladder games via email. There are still two other players who have just recently touched base with us, for whom I have high hopes that they will be active gamers in our club. Last year we had four teams of three competing at our tournament, plus a couple of other drop-ins who watched or played a game or two. This year we were about the same. The newsletter has improved, in my opinion, thanks to some adjustments to the format suggested by Mike Austin, the switch to a different computer program, and some really fine articles. We now even have a regular column (I hope), *The Weekender*. So are we better off than last year? I would say we are, marginally. The total number of players on the ladder is quite deceptive, since the number of solidly active players is not much different from a year ago. The tournament continues to get just enough players to keep it going.

It is easier to think about what we should be doing if we have a clear statement of our mission. The way I see it, the club's mission is to promote the play of ASL in the central Texas area. The play's the thing, bubba. Given the number of inactive and semi-active

players in our club, we have to ask ourselves if we are doing a good enough job. Overall, I think the answer is yes. We have a 5-year-old tournament that, though small, is fun and shows no signs of going away. The club newsletter and ladder are firmly established. We have members playing nearly every weekend.

There are, however, a few things we need to do to take the step to the next level. Not necessarily in order of importance, they are:

- **Establishing a regular meeting time and place.**
- **Increasing the turnout at our own tournament.**
- **Continuing the newsletter and ladder.**

Although we are able to often meet as a group at a member's house, this practice makes our meeting times erratic, and it makes it more difficult for members to keep track of when and where a particular club meeting will be. Although I wouldn't want to stop such gatherings, imagine how nice it would be to have a club meeting on the nth Saturday of every month in the same location every time? It would make it easier for semi-active players especially to plan ahead to play the game. The turnout at our local tournament has been less than it could be for the last couple of years. We need to communicate better with area players and choose the date and location early. It is you, the club members, however, that make or break this event. Nobody can drag you in kicking and screaming, but it is hard to believe that would be necessary. Even if you are one of those fringe players who can hardly ever play, the club tournament is the one time in the year that is ideal for you. You can get in a year's worth of ASL in one weekend. If you are one of the club grognards, how could you not go? Remember, this is not just about satisfying your ASL fix, it's also about supporting the club and your buddies who are trying hard to make something happen. Keep that in mind for next year. Lastly, a regular newsletter and club ladder standings give us a certain amount of credibility as a club. We should continue this effort, but it has been strong for the last year and a half. If we achieve those three goals, especially the regular meeting time and place, I think we will have improved significantly.

There are a number of other smaller things that can be done to increase the enthusiasm in our club, and if you want to help out with any of them, please let me know. For example, an idea for club T-shirts has been kicked around, and you may be seeing them soon. So, if you have any ideas about things that we could be doing, please speak up. Let's make it happen.

Of course, what it all really boils down to is playing ASL. As long as you're doing that, we'll be fine. The rest is just a bunch of attempts to improve. Try to play as many different opponents as you can. Especially try to hook up with the semi-active and inactive players. The more we can get them into the fold, the better.

The *Banzai* Staff

Editor: Matt Shostak

Technical Writing Advisors: Mike Austin, Paula Shostak

Contributing Authors: Matt Shostak, Mike Seningen, Kirk Woller, David Halley, Jim Knatcher, Tom Repetti, Tim Hundsdorfer, Tom Huntington, Dade Cariaga, Chas Smith, Rodney Kinney, JR Tracy, Greg Swantek

Sounding Boards: Tom Repetti, Tim Hundsdorfer, Tim Wilson, Dade Cariaga

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