

academic scholarship.

Cotner is a John Carroll Catholic High School senior and is a member of Mu Alpha Theta.

She is the daughter of Paul and Sherry Romano.

## Scholastic honors journalists

The Alabama Scholastic Press Association's annual convention at the University of Alabama honored a number of high school journalists.

Awards were presented in individual, overall and on-site competitions.

Schools receiving All Alabama honors in the literary magazine competition are, Briarwood Christian School, Jefferson County International Baccalaureate School, Clay-Chalkville High School and Hoover High School.

The All Alabama broadcast award went to Hoover's WBUC News team.

## EVENTS

**Spain Park Academic Council's Senior Night** will be Monday in the school's auditorium at 7 p.m.

Juniors and seniors and their parents are invited to attend to learn about college entrance, course selection and scholarship opportunities. Paulette Pearson, Hoover High School's and Spain Park's college admission counselor is the guest speaker.

**The Salvation Army of Bessemer's annual banquet** will be April 3 at the Bessemer Civic Center.

Bob Terry, president and editor of The Alabama Baptist, will be the guest speaker. Tickets are \$25 and may be purchased by calling Barbara Wilson at 424-3400.

**Have news?** — Send recent honors and achievements to Christie Kelley, *The Birmingham News*, P.O. Box 2553, Birmingham, AL 35202. Photos may be submitted, but we are unable to guarantee their return.

Army veteran and Medal of Honor winner Michael J. Novosel, center, is among medal winners honored during a patriotic parade in Leeds. The parade Saturday was a memorial to Henry "Red" Erwin and William Lawley Jr., who were awarded the Medal of Honor in

World War II, and Alford McLaughlin, who was honored in the Korean War. The three, all deceased, were from Leeds. Joining Novosel on the float were, left, Dave Hamel from Maxwell Air Force Base, and family members of other medal winners.

# Shelby students may be fined, ticketed for tobacco possession

By GIGI DOUBAN  
*News staff writer*

Students caught with tobacco at Shelby County schools may be ticketed and fined as much as \$50 under a new provision in the schools' code of conduct.

Meanwhile, the revised code relaxes the punishment for athletes who violate the schools' substance abuse policy.

Beginning with the 2003-2004 school year, students found with tobacco on school grounds, even in their cars, will be issued a ticket from police in addition to the in-school penalties imposed in previous years. The move brings the penalties in line with state law, which states that it's illegal for anyone younger than 19 to buy, use or possess tobacco. The tickets come with a fine of \$10 to \$50.

"During car searches, the most popular thing we find is cigarettes on the dashboard," said Ken Mobley, county schools coordinator of student services.

Student Services Supervisor Donna

Dickson said that, under this year's code, students caught with tobacco on campus are punished by detention or Saturday school. She said county schools have random drug searches, sometimes monthly and sometimes more often, in which tobacco is one of the substances detected. Drug-sniffing dogs search lockers, backpacks and cars.

Connie Williams, assistant superintendent of Hoover city schools, said Hoover has a policy against possession and use of tobacco on school grounds, but administrators don't go looking for it.

"If we are looking for something else and find tobacco, the student will be punished," she said. Depending on how many times the student has been caught with tobacco, punishment can range from in-school suspension to the intervention of school resource officers, which could include a ticket, Williams said.

Another change to the Shelby conduct code reduces the suspension time for student athletes using illegal substances.

The previous code prohibits athletes who violate the drug policy from participating in athletics for a full calendar year from the date of suspension. The updated code shortens the suspension period to a minimum of seven weeks and the end of the current sport season.

Suspension could be extended if a student's mandatory drug treatment takes longer, though the average treatment program lasts seven to eight weeks, Mobley said.

He said schools have been imposing the shorter punishment for at least a year, but the changes were not reflected in the code until last week. It came about when principals noted that in some instances, student athletes were being forced to stay out of sports for two years, Mobley said. A student trying out for softball who tested positive for drugs, for example, would miss the entire year and the next year's tryouts.

*News staff writer Marie Leech contributed to this story.*

back the mayor's authority. May said he hopes the meetings will ease tensions. "I know I'm not perfect," May said. "Sometimes I can be hard-headed, but I've got to realize that sometimes people are going to differ with me."

At a recent council meeting, council member Jesse Matthews said blame for the infighting could be cast at both sides, but it is now time for everyone to stand down.

"The citizens elected us to lead the city," Matthews said. "We need to find common ground. When we argue among ourselves, we lose focus and we are not serving the city."

Matthews said he thinks May's idea to meet individually with council members is a good thing.

"Communication is always important," Matthews said.

Council member Betty Woods, a vocal critic of May, was not as enthused about the meetings.

"I don't mind talking with him," she said. When asked if the meetings were a good idea, Woods said, "Perhaps."

May has also directed all city department heads to provide any information requested by a council member.

May had directed department heads not to communicate with the council.

"I realize that sometimes I'm stubborn," May said. "I hope and pray everyone will now make a sincere effort to work together. With this country at war, we don't need to dissent here at home."

THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF TOBACCO AND SOCIETY