



## NBA's tanking crisis has gone too far

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# The News Leader

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## 'Unlike anything you've seen before'



Joseph Pincock stars as Jack Kelly in Wilson Memorial High School's production of "Newsies: The Musical" Feb. 12-15. PATRICK HITE/THE NEWS LEADER

## Wilson Memorial's spring musical, 'Newsies,' hits the stage Feb. 12-15

**Patrick Hite**  
Staunton News Leader  
USA TODAY NETWORK

FISHERSVILLE — Miley Thomas laughed when asked if she was familiar with "Newsies" before she was cast in the Wilson Memorial High School production.

"Oh yeah, oh yeah," said the Wilson senior. "I went through a 'Newsies' phase in seventh grade. I memorized the show."

So, when Wilson Memorial choir director Austin Gilbert announced that it would be the spring musical this year, Thomas cried.

"I didn't expect it and I knew there was only one girl female lead," Thomas

said. "It's my senior year and I wanted to get that. It kind of stressed me out."

Thomas auditioned. Then got a callback. Then waited. When the cast list was eventually emailed out, Thomas said she squealed when she saw that she was cast as Katherine Plumber, a journalist who helps with the Newsie strike.

The cast has been rehearsing since September. The recent snow and ice storm pushed the playback a week, but it will now be performed at the school Feb. 12-15. The Thursday through Saturday productions are 7 p.m. and the Sunday afternoon performance is 3 p.m.

Tickets are available online at our.show/wmhs-newsies or at the door. The musical is inspired by the real-life

1899 Newsboys Strike. The show follows newsboy Jack Kelly as he leads a strike against unfair publishing prices. It premiered at the Paper Mill Playhouse in 2011 and had a successful Broadway run from 2012-2014, winning Tony Awards for Best Original Score and Choreography.

Joseph Pincock stars as Kelly. "This a very stacked cast," Pincock said. "The overall community here, what we have to share with everyone in the audience is going to unlike anything they've seen before."

Penelope Puffenbarger, who plays Finch and is Thomas' understudy for Katherine, is a Wilson Memorial freshman, so this is her first high school musical.

"It's been amazing" Puffenbarger said. "Our director puts so much effort

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## 3 plead not guilty to theft of \$426K

**Brad Zinn**  
Staunton News Leader  
USA TODAY NETWORK

STAUNTON — Three former executives with Nexus Services Inc., including two of its former owners, one of whom is already serving a seven-year prison sentence for federal tax crimes, all pleaded not guilty on Feb. 9 during an arraignment in Augusta County on felony charges related to the alleged theft of more than \$400,000.

Michael Donovan, 48, the former majority owner of Nexus Services, and his spouse, Richard Moore, 48, a one-time minority owner of the company, are charged with two counts of obtaining money by false pretenses and two counts of financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult. Timothy Shipe, 39, a former vice president at Nexus Services, is charged with single counts of financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult and obtaining money by false pretenses.

Initially charged in 2022, the trial for the three defendants has been delayed six times.

They're accused of scheming to take \$426,000 from Zachary Cruz, who acquired the money through a death benefit following the passing of his mother. Cruz is the younger brother of Nikolas Cruz, who shot and killed 17 people in 2018 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. The couple befriended the younger Cruz following the mass shooting and moved him to Virginia, where he lived with Moore and Donovan in their Fishersville home.

Last year, Donovan was charged with misdemeanor assault and battery against Cruz following a March 9 incident at their former home on South Windsong Court in Fishersville. Court records show they were in a verbal argument about a dog before the incident allegedly turned physical. Months later, the Augusta County Commonwealth's Attorney's Office declined to pursue the assault charge against Donovan.

Cruz moved and is now being assisted by Adult Protective Services.

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## Student, mother, linked to \$50k in stolen coins

**Brad Zinn**  
Staunton News Leader  
USA TODAY NETWORK

A Riverheads High School student and his mother are facing charges in connection with the theft of more than \$50,000 in silver coins and other property.

An investigation began after the student reported to a school resource officer in January that he had some silver coins stolen off a bus, according to an affidavit for a search warrant filed in Augusta County Circuit Court. But the school principal told authorities the student also had thousands of dollars in cash on

him, raising suspicion and prompting further investigation.

It turns out the student was allegedly involved in a Middlebrook break-in where guns, cash, jewelry and silver coins were stolen from a home last summer, the affidavit said.

### Student reports theft of coins, suspicions raised

On Jan. 21, the school's resource officer took a larceny report from a 16-year-old student who claimed he intentionally left his silver coins on the school bus "for safe keeping" in an effort to avoid the school's weapons detectors, the affidavit

said. But when he showed the principal an estimated \$4,000 he had in his wallet, school officials began scouring camera footage for more information.

According to the affidavit, video footage showed two other students taking silver coins from the school bus "and they were reprimanded by the school."

This prompted further investigation into how the student who reported the theft came to possess the silver coins and cash. Authorities said the student initially attempted to deceive the school resource officer but ultimately confessed that sometime in June or July that he and another juvenile went into what they thought was an abandoned Middlebrook

home, stealing the coins and a shotgun, according to the affidavit.

On Jan. 19, the affidavit said the student reportedly went to B & J Coins in Verona and sold \$1,508 in silver coins. The following day, the boy went with his mother to the shop, where another \$9,548 worth of coins were sold. The affidavit said his mother allegedly signed the paperwork.

The teen also admitted to having the stolen shotgun at his home. During the probe, the school resource officer recovered nearly 40 coins and more than \$3,000 in cash. "The silver coins sold for

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