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NORTHAMPTON

City Council bans facial recognition software

Ordinance prohibits government use of the technology

By GRETA JOCHEM
Staff Writer

NORTHAMPTON — In the last City Council meeting of the year on Thursday night, councilors unanimously approved an ordinance that would ban government use of facial recognition software in the city.

"While it could in some instances prove to be a valuable tool, the potential harm that's available, in my mind, trumps that," Councilor William Dwight said, offering his

opinion on the technology.

It isn't being used in Northampton today, officials say. "There is no facial recognition software currently being employed by the city — notwithstanding the fact that there is possibly desire at some point to use it," Dwight said.

Northampton Police Chief Jody Kasper could not be reached for comment on Friday, though councilors said that they had discussed the proposed ordinance with her.

Councilor Gina-Louise Sciarra said the technology is inaccurate. "The error rate for this kind of software is too high, and it's discriminatorily so," she said. "There isn't a

"This is a movement to protect fundamental rights and privacy — the precious constitutional right to be left alone."

BILL NEWMAN

ACLU western Massachusetts director

margin of error that's applied equally across the entire population."

A report released on Thursday by the National Institute of Standards

and Technology, which is affiliated with the U.S. Department of Commerce, tested 189 different face recognition algorithms and found racial bias. In confirming a photo matches another photo of the same person, the study found there were more false positives for Asian and African-American faces compared to white ones. The difference in error rate could range from a factor of 10 to a factor of 100 across the different algorithms studied. In deciding if a photo matches any in a database, algorithms produced higher rates of error for the faces of African-American women, according to the report.

The ordinance — recommended

by Dwight, Sciarra, and Councilor Alisa Klein — has a clause that requires that City Council review the ordinance in three years.

Councilor Dennis Bidwell was supportive of the inclusion of a review clause.

"I would hope that in three years there would be an open-mindedness to again take a fresh look at the benefits of the use of the technology and the potential harm of the technology," he said. "The calculus could be very different then. But right now, it's clearly on the side of not permitting this technology for use in our city."

SEE FACIAL A7

NORTHAMPTON

A basketball mystery

Former YMCA teammates reunited with long-lost trophy

By MICHAEL CONNORS
Staff Writer

NORTHAMPTON — It's easy to imagine freshman George Symborski's devastation when he noticed his name scratched off the Northampton High School varsity basketball roster only a day after he was picked in 1951.

But Symborski, now 83, wasn't defeated. Instead, he and his childhood friends chose to play for the YMCA on a squad Symborski said was so talented that it won a YMCA championship against West Springfield in 1954. To immortalize the win, the team took a basketball, painted it silver and wrote each of their names in red.

For a while, the ball was on display at Joe's Cafe on Market Street where it disappeared and reappeared over a span of 65 years. Symborski and others thought the athletic artifact was again lost to the ages until it was found again in a dingy storage space a few weeks ago. Today, the ball takes on more of a golden hue.

"We used to take that ball ... and everyone would dribble it down the court and take one shot with it. Then we'd put it back in the bag because we didn't want to scratch it anymore," Symborski said. They would take it to games as a good luck charm, he added, but rarely used it.

As Joe's Cafe owner Meaghan Sullivan was cleaning out a storage space in the basement of a building adjacent to the restaurant, she found the ball tucked away in a box behind a sheet pan. Sullivan immediately knew what it was.

"He's been asking me to find this for quite a few years," Sullivan said of Symborski. "I had it hiding behind the bar and found the right time to give it to him, while he was with all of his buddies."

Joe Usaforest, also 83, played

SEE TEAMMATES A7



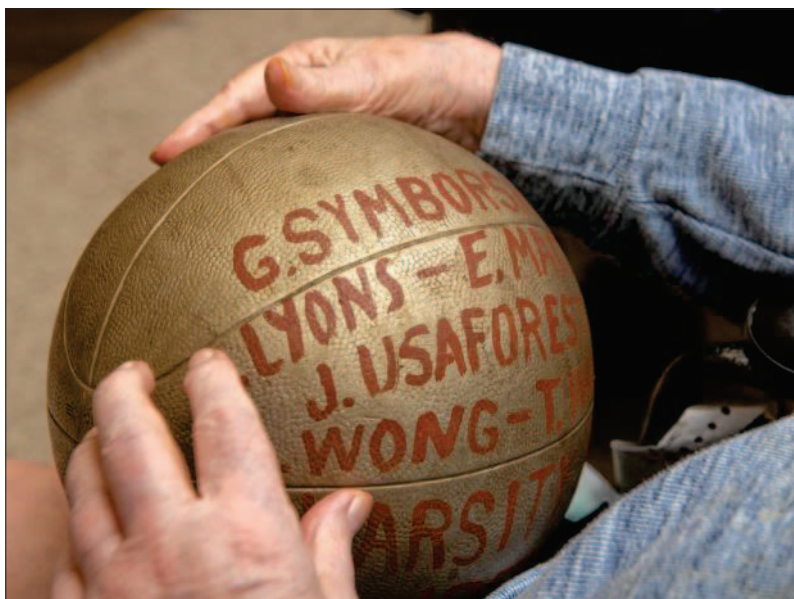
George Symborski looks on as Joe Usaforest points out a picture that hangs on his wall with the two of them and their teammates who won a YMCA championship game in 1954.

STAFF PHOTO/CAROL LOLLIS



Joe Usaforest holds the ball with his and his teammates' names painted on it after they won the YMCA championship game in 1954.

COURTESY GEORGE SYMBORSKI



Joe Usaforest holds the ball with his and his teammates' names painted on it after they won the YMCA championship game in 1954.

STAFF PHOTO/CAROL LOLLIS

Trump off to Fla. with trial at impasse

By ANDREW TAYLOR
and LISA MASCARO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump was heading south to sunny Florida on Friday after his historic impeachment, while plans for his speedy trial back in Washington remained clouded. Senate leaders jockeying for leverage failed to agree on procedures and perhaps new witnesses for the trial.

Trump is still expected to be acquitted of both charges in the Senate, where Republicans have the majority, in what will be only the third presidential impeachment trial in U.S. history. Proceedings are expected to begin in January.

But the impasse between Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Democratic leader Chuck Schumer over whether there will be new witnesses and testimony — along with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's refusal so far to send the articles of impeachment to the Senate — have left the situation unresolved.

"Nancy Pelosi is looking for a Quid Pro Quo with the Senate. Why aren't we impeaching her?" Trump tweeted, mocking one of the accusations against him before heading out for a two-week stay at his Mar-a-Lago resort for the holidays.

McConnell, Trump's most powerful GOP ally in the Senate, welcomed the president's emerging defense team Friday for a walk-through of the Senate chamber. White House counsel Pat Cipollone and legislative affairs director Eric Ueland, came to Capitol Hill to assess logistics.

A six-term veteran of the Senate, McConnell is acting very much though he has the votes to ensure a trial uncluttered by witnesses — despite the protests of top Democrats

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WEATHER SATURDAY

Good day for snow play.
High 30, milder Sunday.

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Drawing by Ishika Patel,
Ryan Road School, Florence

Students raise money on pajama day

Empathy through giving a lesson for students in Williamsburg

SIDNEY F. SMITH

By GRETA JOCHEM
Staff Writer

NORTHAMPTON — Many students walked into R.K. Finn Ryan Road Elementary School on Friday wearing the outfits that many had likely begged their parents to wear on previous school days to no avail. It was, finally, pajama day.



Toy Fund

Students wore pink onesies, Santa Claus shirts, basketball print flannel pants, and fuzzy, animal-themed jumpsuits.

"I've been really excited," said Kayla Wihle, holding up her stuffed animal, Stitch, in the school library. "This is the most exciting day of my life."

Inside the school doors, students collected a total of \$145 in donations for the Gazette's Sidney F. Smith Toy Fund. Students were not required to donate to participate in pajama day.

Named after a former business manager at the Gazette, the Toy Fund began in 1933 to help families in need during the Depression. Today,

SEE TOY FUND A7

RI community mourns victim of housing complex shooting

WESTERLY, R.I. (AP) — A Rhode Island community was remembering on Friday a woman gunned down in a shooting that wounded two others as a loving mother and active member of her seaside town.

Christ Church in Westerly is hosting a candlelight service for Julie Cardinal and the other victims of the shooting in the evening. Rev. Sunil

Chandy said Cardinal had been a member of the church.

"She was a hard-working woman, a mother — a devoted mother — and a devoted member of this community that did a lot of work for the community," Chandy told WJAR-TV.

The 47-year-old was killed Thursday in a shooting at the Babcock Village housing complex in Westerly near the Con-

necticut state line, according to Westerly Police. They said Friday that Joseph Giachello, 66, shot her and two other women before killing himself.

Police identified Cardinal, of Westerly, as a manager at Babcock Village. The two other women who were wounded are Robin Moss, 38, of Cranston, also a manager; and Donna Thornley, 66, a resident, police said. Moss was in

critical condition, and Thornley was stable on Friday.

Police said Giachello lived at Babcock Village but didn't disclose a possible motive, saying the shooting remains under investigation.

Caswell Cooke Jr., executive director of the Misquamicut Business Association, told The Providence Journal that Cardinal had been among those who volunteered to help restore the town after Superstorm Sandy devastated it in 2012. She later served as the association's membership director.

Gene Arganese, owner of the Sandy Shore Hotel, where Cardinal had worked part time, said she began working the daytime shift at Babcock Village about two months ago and had been training to become a manager.

"She was just the wrong person," he told the Journal. "I'm just sick about it. It should have never happened to her. She's a sweetheart, there's no words to say. She's got a big heart. A hard worker. And honest. All she'd talk about were her kids."

Cardinal was also a vocal

critic of the Westerly Yacht Club after its members voted in 2016 to uphold its men-only policy.

And she co-hosted two local Radio Shows in recent years, The Westerly Sun reported. Cardinal's friends launched a campaign on social media to help pay for her funeral expenses.

Rhode Island Gov. Gina Raimondo went to Westerly on Thursday to speak with first responders and offer support for the victims' families. She told them: "Rhode Island is with you."

Impeachment standoff lingers

FROM A1

Pelosi and Schumer.

"We have this fascinating situation where, following House Democrats' rush to impeachment, following weeks of pronouncements about the urgency of this situation, the prosecutors have now developed cold feet," McConnell, R-Ky., said late Thursday as senators left town for the year.

"We'll continue to see how this develops, and whether the House Democrats ever work up the courage to take their accusations to trial."

McConnell has all but promised an easy acquittal of the president. He appears to have united Republicans behind an approach that would begin the trial with presentations and arguments, lasting perhaps two weeks, before he tries drawing the proceedings to a close. The Senate will reconvene Jan. 3.

That's sparked a fight with Pelosi and Schumer, who are demanding trial witnesses who refused to appear during House committee hearings, including acting White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney and former national security adviser John Bolton.

"They should have witnesses and documentation,"

Pelosi told The Associated Press. "This could be something very beneficial to the country, if the facts are there."

Schumer's leverage is limited, though his party can force votes on witnesses once a trial begins. He appears to be counting on public opinion, and political pressure on vulnerable Republican incumbents like Susan Collins of Maine, to give Democrats the 51 votes they need.

"You wouldn't get them to say, 'I'm going to vote to kick President Trump out of office,'" Schumer said in an interview. "But you might get them to vote for witnesses, you might get them to vote for documents, and we'll see where it falls from there."

McConnell isn't budging. After a 20-minute meeting with Schumer on Thursday, he declared the talks at an impasse and instructed senators to return on Jan. 6 ready to vote.

McConnell appears ready to impose a framework drawn from the 1999 trial of Bill Clinton, who was acquitted of two articles of impeachment. That trial featured a 100-0 vote on arrangements that established two weeks of presentations and argument before a partisan tally in which Republicans called a limited number

of witnesses, including Monica Lewinsky for a videotaped deposition.

McConnell said Thursday. "I continue to believe that the unanimous bipartisan precedent that was good enough for President Clinton ought to be good enough for this president, too. Fair is fair."

There's a risk that Schumer's protests — which started Sunday with a letter to McConnell requesting four witnesses — could cement GOP unity. Endangered Republican senators including Cory Gardner of Colorado and Martha McSally of Arizona need strong turnout by the GOP base to win, and will be hard-pressed to take Schumer's side.

Trump, meanwhile, has been hoping the trial will serve as an opportunity for vindication. He continues to talk about parading his own witnesses to the chamber, including former Vice President and 2020 Democratic candidate Joe Biden and House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., who led the fact-finding phase of the impeachment investigation.

There is little appetite for witnesses among McConnell and other key Senate GOP allies, however.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Students in Rita Luce's first grade class at the Anne T. Dunphy School in Williamsburg with their class jar of Sidney F. Smith Toy Fund donations.

Toy Fund

FROM A1

the fund distributes vouchers worth \$40 to families for each child from age 1 to 14. Eligible families must live in any Hampshire County community except Ware, in the southern Franklin County towns of Deerfield, Sunderland, Whately, Shutesbury, and Leverett, and in Holyoke in Hampden County.

18 Degrees Family Services for Western Massachusetts at 59 Interstate Drive in West Springfield verifies families' eligibility and the Gazette covers costs associated with the drive, freeing all donations to fund the vouchers.

On Friday, Ryan Road staff, including principal Sarah Madden, walked the hallways in their pajamas. The school has traditionally raised money for the fund through a pajama day. "I guess this would be our seventh year," Madden said.

A team of student leaders made posters to put around the school to promote the event, and fifth graders collected donations. Students were, unsurprisingly, quite happy.

"Pajama day is amazing," said Emma Casella. "You're always uncomfortable in regular clothes."

"I kind of feel like it's my day off ... because I'm in my pajamas," said Talia Garretson.

At the Anne T. Dunphy School in Williamsburg, Rita Luce's first-grade class is collecting money for the fund. Students are learning about empathy in school, "so it ties in nicely with that," Luce said.

"They can help these other



STAFF PHOTO/GRETA JOCHEM

Fifth graders Anna Oravec, Riley Sylvester and Makayla Fydenkevez collect money for the Sidney F. Smith Toy Fund at the R.K. Finn Ryan Road Elementary School in Northampton.

kids if they can do some extra chores at home. I call it coins for kids. I ask the parents if they do something extra — make their bed, feed the dog — they send a little envelope with coins, although we have some bills as well."

She added, "I think it's a lesson in being empathic toward others."

Last year, her class donated about \$100 to the Toy Fund, she said. The coins haven't been counted this year but, "It's a pretty heavy jar," she said.

"They can count by fives,

they can count by 10s and ones," but more than that is difficult, Luce said. She said students will sort the coins into their respective categories, and the teachers will count the money.

This year, the following stores are participating in the Toy Fund: A2Z Science and Learning Store, 57 King St., Northampton; Deals & Steals, 1 Pearl St., Northampton;

JCPenney, 367 Russell St., Hadley (store only); The Toy Box, 201 N. Pleasant St., Amherst; Target, 367 Russell St. Hadley (store only); Sam's Outdoor Outfitters, 227 Russell St., Hadley; Odyssey Bookshop, 9 College St., Village Commons, South Hadley; Wilson's Department Store, 258 Main St., Greenfield; World Eye Bookshop & Magical Child, 134 Main St., Greenfield; Holyoke Sporting Goods Co. 1584 Dwight St. #1, Holyoke; Children's Museum at Holyoke, 444 Dwight St., Holyoke.

Donations to the Toy Fund may be dropped off at or mailed to the Daily Hampshire Gazette, P.O. Box 299, Northampton, MA, 01061, or made through Gazettenet at www.gazettenet.com.

Checks should be made payable to the Sidney F. Smith Toy Fund.

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STAFF PHOTO/CAROL LOLLIS

A photo of some of the Northampton team members who won the championship YMCA basketball game in 1954. The photo was taken at Joe's Cafe in the 1980s after their old basketball had been found. From left, Tom Walsh, Don Cadette, Ziggy Lyons, Joe Usaforest and George Symborski.

Teammates get trophy back

FROM A1

guard on the team and was almost brought to tears when the ball was brought to his home in East Longmeadow on Wednesday afternoon. Neither Usaforest nor Symborski, who played center, can remember the score of their championship game; however, both agree their team was legendary.

"Our group was so good that kids were quitting high school teams to come play with us at the Y," Symborski said.

Usaforest said he remembers the ball first made its way to Joe's Cafe when a team member brought it to the restaurant for display around a year and a half after it was signed.

"Everybody wanted to go there to get a pizza and look at this ball, touch this ball," Usaforest said. "So that spread around."

Lost and found

The silvery basketball stayed behind the store's bar until the late 1950s when it mysteriously disappeared. At the time, Usaforest believed someone may have stolen it.

It wasn't until around 1986

when the ball resurfaced. A bartender found it behind crates in the restaurant's basement, Usaforest said. On Usaforest's wall hangs a photo of former teammates Thomas Walsh, Donald Cadette, Ziggy Lyons, and Usaforest and Symborski with the ball from its first resurfacing.

Sullivan thinks that the basketball was once again placed into storage around 20 years ago when the restaurant underwent renovations. She said she was "psyched" to have found it, as Symborski wasn't the only former team member wondering about its whereabouts.

Symborski, who grew up on Isabella Street, remembers growing up with Usaforest and other kids in the neighborhood where they would play football, basketball and hockey year-round. Though he remembers how upset he was after being denied a varsity spot, Symborski said there was a silver lining.

"It turned out I was with my friends," he said. "We got along together."

After the former YMCA building in Northampton was razed in the 1950s, the team became sponsored by former Mayor Wally Puchalski, owner

of Wally's Soda Bar, where the team would meet before every game. It was then that they continued their dynasty as "the Wally's."

One of the most memorable games for Symborski was against Dunbar CC sometime after 1954, when players on the opposing team made fun of the Wally's for dribbling around their silver-plated basketball before a game.

"They started laughing and pointing at us," Symborski said. "We beat that team."

With its 65-year history, the ball has transcended into almost mythical status among the former members of the championship-winning YMCA basketball team. As Usaforest put it: "That's going to go to the hall of fame, that basketball."

Symborski said he hopes the basketball can be put on display at Joe's Cafe where it can remain for posterity. He doesn't want to see the ball go missing again, but if it does, he would see it as just another chapter in the basketball's peculiar saga.

"The mystery continues," Symborski said.

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Facial recognition software banned

FROM A1

Thursday was the first time the City Council voted on the policy, but after taking a first vote, councilors voted to suspend the rules and take a second and final vote. Under city rules, many matters require two votes that typically take place on different days, unless the council votes with a two-thirds majority to waive the rules.

The passage of the Northampton ordinance follows similar initiatives enacted around the country this year, including in Somerville, Brookline and San Francisco.

Nearby communities in western Massachusetts have discussed it, too. Some members of the Springfield City

Council have talked about a potential ban on the use of facial recognition software by the government, including the police. Although Springfield police said it does not plan to use facial recognition systems, some city councilors are nevertheless against it, citing concerns about racial discrimination and studies that show facial recognition software makes more mistakes identifying women and people with darker skin tones.

There are no state or federal laws that regulate this technology, said Bill Newman, director of the American Civil Liberties Union western Massachusetts office.

"So far this is a completely

unregulated area," Newman told the Gazette. "It's important for municipalities to protect the fundamental rights and privacy interests of their residents."

Newman, who spoke in favor of the ordinance during the City Council meeting, said that as state and federal government lags behind in making policies on this technology, municipalities are stepping up. "This is a movement to protect fundamental rights and privacy — the precious constitutional right to be left alone," he said.

Northampton Mayor David Narkewicz said he plans to sign the ordinance.

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