

San Francisco Chronicle

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State's crabbing industry enjoys rebound

Season's catch above average, despite delays

By Tara Duggan

Crabbers, seafood processors and state biologists agree that the most recent Dungeness crab season, which ended June 30 south of Mendocino County and will wrap up next week to the north, is above average.

Considering the disastrous previous season of 2015-16, which featured historic, months-long closures in the Dungeness crab fishery due to the presence of a neurotoxin in the animals, that's more than above-average news.

"We made some money," said Shane Lucas, who fishes for crab out of Bodega Bay, where he also owns the Fisherman Fish Market.

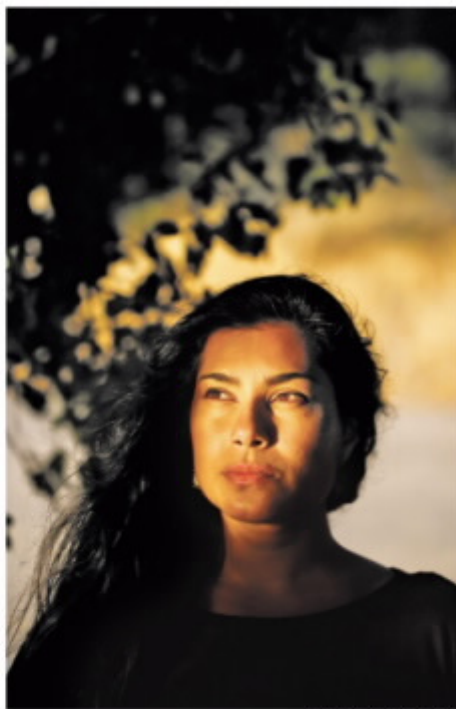
Based on preliminary data, the 2016-17 season has brought in more than 21 million pounds of Dungeness crab to California ports, worth \$66.7 million.

That represents the largest quantity and dollar value since the 2012-13 season, according to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. During the 2015-16 season, crab boats caught only 12.3 million pounds, a 41 percent drop from the previous five-year average, at a value of about \$39 million.

But this year's crab season has not been without **Crab continues on A9**

"Once you leave your childhood, there's no going back to it."

Sara Tansoon, who was forced into marriage by her father



Photos by Leah Mills / The Chronicle

When she was 15, Sara Tansoon's father ordered her to marry a 28-year-old man. She says the legislation has been watered down too much.

Child marriage fiercely debated

Lawmaker pushes for minimum age of 18; proposal hit by array of opposing voices

By Jill Tucker

A Bay Area legislator was shocked when he learned from a young constituent that while California cannot legally consent to sex until they are 18, they can — with the permission of a parent and a judge's order — get married at any age, even if their spouse is many years older.

"I thought, that can't be true in California," said state Sen. Jerry Hill, a Democrat from San Mateo. "We found that it is true in California and true in many states throughout the country."

But Hill's resulting proposal to bar juveniles from getting hitched has been watered down after it prompted strong objections from civil rights groups, including the American Civil Liberties Union.

As the emotional fight unfolds in Sacramento, there's no agreement even about a basic piece of information — how many minors get married each year in California. People **Marriage continues on A9**



Tansoon holds a headscarf she often wears around the time her father, who belonged to a cult, forced her to marry a man 13 years her senior. She was eventually divorced.

BART hit again by teen robbers

Agency defends change in its way of reporting crimes on the system

By Michael Bodley

For the second time in three months, a large group of teenagers committed a violent robbery at BART's Coliseum Station in Oakland, snatching a phone from a woman and then punching and kicking a 63-year-old passenger who chased them and demanded the return of the device, police and witnesses said.

The latest attack — which occurred during the evening commute Friday — had a more positive ending than the first one. The rider who took action wasn't badly hurt and managed to retrieve the iPhone 7 for the victim, while at least 10 fleeing juveniles were intercepted by a special BART team dedicated to fighting robberies on the transit system.

"The whole thing could not have worked out better, right?" the victim, a San Francisco tech worker who asked that her name be withheld for safety reasons, said Wednesday.

The hero, off-duty security guard Leonard Brown, brushed off praise from the woman, saying, "This is not my first rodeo."

The incident again highlighted BART's challenge in responding to a surge in robberies, which were up 45 percent in the first quarter of the year compared with the same period in 2016. It also raised questions about why BART didn't publicize the crime to alert riders and seek additional witnesses. **BART continues on A8**

Key features cut in new design of Salesforce plaza

By John King

As Salesforce Tower nears completion, the plaza that will accompany it has been shorn of two eye-catching features: a grove of redwood trees and a 40-foot-tall sculpture made from chunks of recycled concrete.

Instead, the half-acre space at Mission and Fremont streets will be handsomely paved but almost entirely open — a change instigated by Salesforce but agreed to by public officials. They welcome the idea of an uncluttered path to the new Transbay Transit Center, which should open next spring on the plaza's south edge. **Geneva Car Barn: Long-dormant plan to revitalize historic structure slowly coming to fruition. D1**

"In retrospect, 20 redwood trees are probably not the best thing to have" between Mission Street and what will be the transit center's main entrance, said John Rahaim, San Francisco's planning director. "This leaves a clear passage and sight lines at both ends."

But it weakens the design links between the plaza, dubbed Mission Square, and the 5.4-acre rooftop park that in some ways is the transit center's most anticipated feature. The park is supposed to debut simultaneously with the center's bus service, though no opening date has been set.

One distinct connection will remain: the **Plaza continues on A8**

INSIDE Nation



U.S. Forest Service

Wildlife: Wolf with three pups is discovered in Northern California forest. **A12**

Sporting Green

Raiders: Guard Gabe Jackson's new deal reaffirms Oakland's commitment to its offensive line. **B1**

Business

Robotics: Self-moving furniture could aid those living in tiny spaces. **C1**

Datebook

Music: Rapper P-Lo, a huge fan of the Bay Area, tries to keep things local. **E1**

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Index table with categories: Bridge, Chess, Comics, Crosswords, Editorials, Horoscope, Legal Notices, Lottery, Market Report, Movies, Obituaries, Television.

Weather: Decreasing clouds, patchy fog. Highs: 63-69, Lows: 47-63. Includes a color calibration chart and barcode.

San Francisco Chronicle

Effort to bar child marriage in California runs into opposition

By [Jill Tucker](#) | July 6, 2017 Update | July 6, 2017 6:15am

A Bay Area legislator was shocked when he learned from a young constituent that while Californians cannot legally consent to sex until they are 18, they can — with the permission of a parent and a judge's order — get married at any age, even if their spouse is many years older.

"I thought, that can't be true in California," said state Sen. Jerry Hill, a Democrat from San Mateo. "We found that it is true in California and true in many states throughout the country."

But Hill's resulting proposal to bar juveniles from getting hitched has been watered down after it prompted strong objections from civil rights groups, including the American Civil Liberties Union.

As the emotional fight unfolds in Sacramento, there's no agreement even about a basic piece of information — how many minors get married each year in California. People who want to limit such marriages say the total is in the thousands, while those who oppose the bill say that's vastly inflated.

The state doesn't keep such numbers, and even efforts to change that are running into resistance.

Within the past year, elected officials in several states have pushed to restrict juvenile marriage, with a law passed last month limiting matrimony by minors in New York to 16- and 17-year-olds who have become legal adults emancipated from their parents, and one in Texas holding the line at age 17 — with a judge's permission.

Hill wanted California to set a strict line at age 18, but the effort encountered swift opposition from fellow legislators, as well as groups that include the ACLU and Planned Parenthood.

While SB273 is still alive and moving through legislative committees, amendments have removed any age restriction. The measure in its current form increases family court oversight to ensure that a minor's marriage isn't coerced, including a requirement that judges interview individuals privately.

It's a compromise, Hill said, but still a positive step. "It's our responsibility to protect those kids," he said.

Among those disappointed by the result of the compromise is Sara Tasneem of El Sobrante, who said the amended bill won't help children and will only make elected officials feel like they did something.

Tasneem was 15 when her father, who belonged to a cult in Southern California, introduced her to a man 13 years her senior. She was forced to

marry the 28-year-old in a religious ceremony that evening. Six months later, at 16, she was pregnant and legally married in a civil ceremony in Reno.

“A person who marries a 15-year-old, there’s obviously something wrong,” said Tasneem, now 36. “Putting that label of husband and wife makes something disgusting and not OK seem normal and OK.”

As a teenager, Tasneem dreamed of becoming a lawyer. Instead, she became a mother, with two children by age 19. She would ultimately defy her husband and return to school, and later file for divorce.

“Once you leave your childhood, there’s no going back to it,” said Tasneem, now a business student at Golden Gate University in San Francisco. “All those opportunities and freedom of being a child are gone.”

Activists aiming to stop such marriages say they occur across demographic groups, spurred by religious reasons, cultural norms, pregnancy, financial incentives or, in some cases, to protect someone from statutory-rape accusations because marriage circumvents the age-of-consent requirement.

Nationally, about 5 of every 1,000 children ages 15 to 17 were married as of 2014, according to U.S. census data analyzed by the Pew Research Center — figures that don’t specify where the marriages occurred. Activists for age restrictions estimate that California sees about 3,000 marriages per year that include a minor.

The ACLU and other opponents say that estimate is inflated, noting that just 44 petitions for juvenile marriage were filed in Los Angeles County — which has a population just above 10 million — over the past five years.

The focus of efforts should be on abusive and coerced relationships, regardless of marital status, said Phyllida Burlingame of the ACLU’s Northern California chapter.

Referring to current regulations, including the requirement of a court order allowing a juvenile to marry, she said California had “a strong package of both programs and laws that prevent coerced marriage among youth, and a lack of data showing this is a widespread problem.” Hill’s original proposal, she said, “was a solution that wasn’t necessarily going to have the impact on improving young people’s health and relationships that we want.”

Other opponents said marriage is a fundamental right, and that some juveniles not only marry willingly but benefit from the choice.

“Any legislation to eliminate this core right,” said the National Center for Youth Law in a statement opposing Hill’s initial legislation, “must be based on concrete data and information that demonstrates this drastic step is the most effective and appropriate strategy to address the harms being alleged, and that there are not other less extreme options available.”

An early amendment to the bill required the state to collect data on juvenile nuptials, but it was eliminated in committee because of cost concerns. Hill said he is trying to restore that requirement.

Those who backed the initial bill haven’t given up trying to persuade lawmakers to pivot and reconsider an age limit like Texas and New York.

“Initially it was a nice, simple, bright line — either you’re 18 or not. Like a tanning bed or voting, you can’t get a waiver from your parents,” said Sarah

Bradshaw of the Feminist Majority, which promotes equality for women. “We’re hoping that people in the Assembly will put teeth back in it.”

The debate has energized people like Nicole, a 29-year-old resident of Stanislaus County who at age 16 married a 24-year-old man with the blessing of a judge.

Nicole, who requested her last name be withheld for safety reasons, said she had been dating the man but was still in high school — and wasn’t ready to settle down. But her grandmother, who was raising her, was extremely religious and pushed the two to get married.

With her guardian sanctioning what became an abusive relationship, Nicole said she felt helpless.

“My grandparents were willing to ignore every bruise,” she said. As for her husband,

“I think that for him he thought it was a way to protect himself from statutory-rape charges.”

Her husband was killed two years later in a car accident, when she was pregnant with their first child.

“I was widowed at 18,” she said. “When most kids were applying for college, I was applying for death benefits.”

Nicole, who now studies computer science at a community college, said a law limiting marriage to 18 and older might have impacted her life profoundly.

“I had no control; I had no say,” she said. “I can’t believe how much I’ve missed while I’ve tried to cope with life as a child bride.”

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