



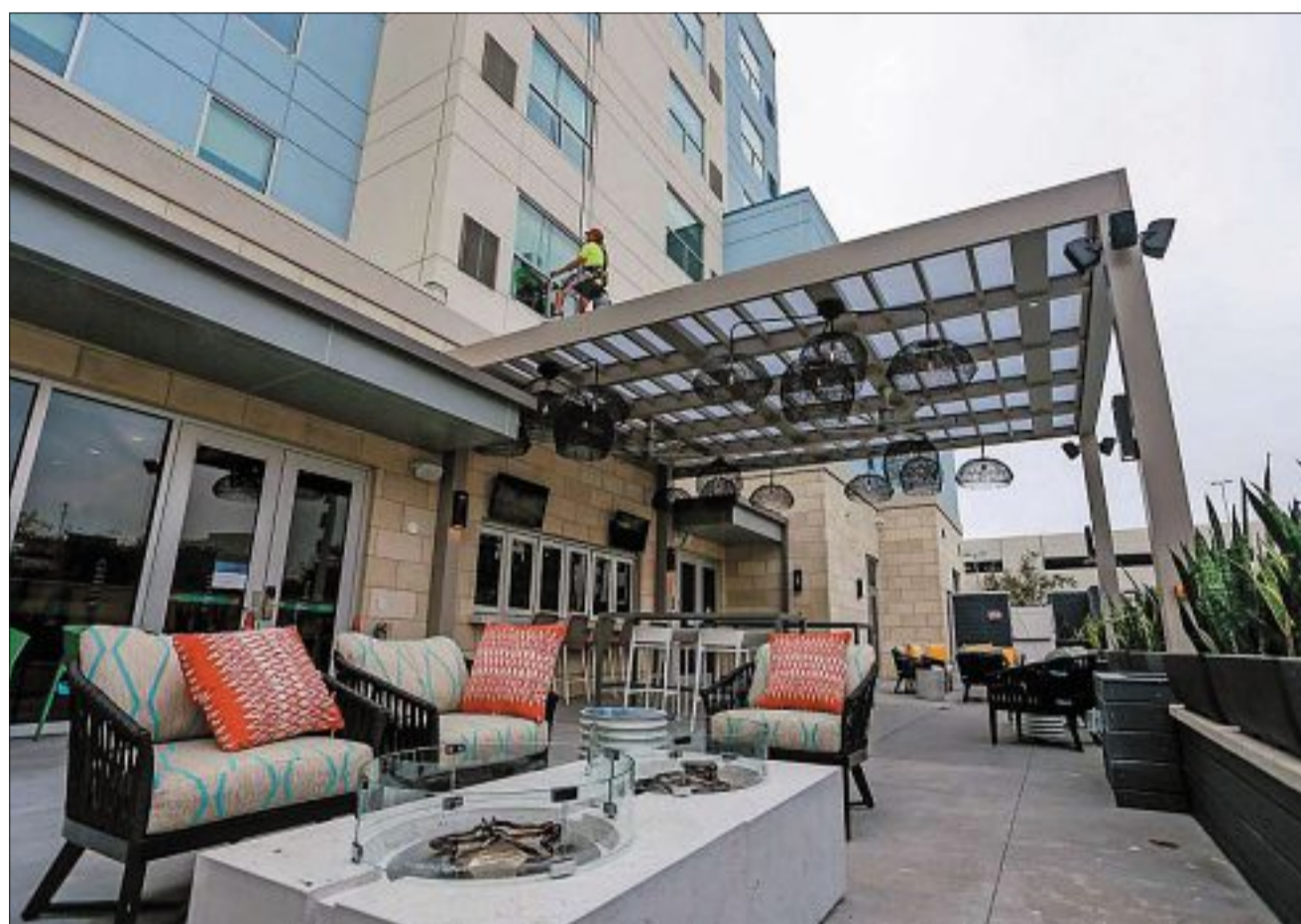
TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS VS. KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

SUPER BOWL 55

WHEN: 6:30 p.m., Sunday | WHERE: Raymond James Stadium | TV: CBS



Hotels hope for Super Bowl boost



Photos by IVY CEBALLO | Times

A worker cleans the windows of the newly opened Hyatt House Tampa Airport/Westshore on Wednesday.

Operators hope the game heralds a return of guests, but with the home team playing, travel numbers are hard to predict.

BY SARA DINATALE
Times Staff Writer

TAMPA — As a Western New York native, Todd Kinney was always going to root for his hometown Buffalo Bills in their playoff against the Kansas City Chiefs. But it was the other championship game at made things more emotionally complicated for the Tampa hotelier.

Kinney, the general manager of the newly opened Hyatt House Tampa Airport/Westshore hotel, was on the phone Sunday with representatives of the Green Bay Packers. If the Wisconsin team had beaten the hometown Bucs, Kinney would have had a sold-out hotel during and leading up to the Super Bowl.

“We had the contracts in hand, ready to go,” he said.

Green Bay wanted Kinney’s just-opened, 145-room hotel — all of it — to house the team’s family and friends had they made it to the Super Bowl at Raymond James Stadium.

When Tampa Bay clinched the National Football Conference title, Kinney was proud of the city he’s called home for the last several years. But it also meant no Packers contract, no guaranteed sold-out hotel, no reprieve from the COVID-19 pandemic that has ravaged the hotel industry.

Just a week out from the big game, tourism



ism experts are still not entirely sure what to expect for hotel bookings. There has never been a Super Bowl during a pandemic, and the host city’s team has never been part of the matchup.

Typically, the Super Bowl draws fans from afar, even if they don’t have game tickets, just to revel in the experience. This one features not only the local team, but an opponent that won it last year.

See **HOTELS, 8A**

Alden Jones, the construction general contractor for the Hyatt Place Tampa Airport/Westshore, works from the lobby of the hotel on Wednesday. Its recent opening was timed to coincide with Super Bowl 55.

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

GOP senators offer smaller relief package

Their plan challenges Biden’s campaign promises of bipartisan compromise.

BY ERICA WERNER, JEFF STEIN AND SEUNG MIN KIM
Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Ten Republican senators announced plans Sunday to release an approximately \$600 billion coronavirus relief package as a counter-proposal to President Joe Biden’s \$1.9 trillion plan, posing a test for the new president, who campaigned as a bipartisan deal-maker.

The senators, led by Susan Collins, R-Maine, said they would formally unveil the package today. In a letter to Biden, they requested to meet with him and said they were offering their proposal in recognition of his “calls for unity.”

“We want to work in good faith with you and your administration to meet the health, economic and societal challenges of the covid crisis,” they wrote.

Their move comes as Democrats prepare to move forward today to set up a partisan path forward for Biden’s relief bill, which Republicans have dismissed as overly costly given some \$4 trillion Congress has

already committed to fighting the pandemic, including \$900 billion in December.

The GOP proposal jettisons certain elements that have drawn Republican opposition, such as increasing the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour.

It would also reduce the size of a new round of checks Biden wants to send to Americans, from \$1,400 per individual to \$1,000 — while significantly reducing the income limits that determine eligibility for the stimulus payments.

A \$600 billion plan that is a fraction of the size of Biden’s proposal is unlikely to draw much if any Democratic support. However, the GOP offer presents a challenge for Biden, who campaigned on promises to unify Congress and the country and must decide whether to ignore the GOP overture or make a genuine effort to find common ground across the aisle.

Top Biden economic adviser Brian Deese said on CNN’s *State of the Union* that the White House had received the

See **RELIEF, 10A**

Should we all start wearing two masks?

With new, more contagious coronavirus variants out there, some experts say yes.

BY KRISTEN JORDAN SHAMUS
Detroit Free Press (TNS)

It might be time to double up.

Three new, highly contagious mutations of coronavirus with origins in the United Kingdom, Brazil and South Africa are circulating in the U.S. — upping the stakes in the battle to stanch a pandemic that has already claimed the lives of more than 430,000 Americans.

It has led some public health experts, including Dr. Anthony Fauci, chief medical adviser to President Joe Biden on COVID-19, to recommend layering up on masks or opting for a more protective N95 mask when going out in public.

Masks cover the mouth and nose to limit respiratory droplets and virus particles from getting in or out, Fauci, who also is the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, explained on NBC’s *Today* show.

“So if you have a physical covering with one layer, you put

another layer on, it just makes common sense that it likely would be more effective and that’s the reason why you see people either double masking or doing a version of an N95,” he said.

Dr. Matthew Sims, an infectious disease specialist at Beaumont Health, said it’s a strategy people should consider, especially given the rate at which these newer, more transmissible variants appear to spread.

“The idea with double masking ... is that if the three layers in your surgical mask are good, put on three more layers, it holds it tighter to your face, and that’s better,” Sims said. “And it probably is because it’s just more filtration.”

Research published in the journal *Matters* supports the theory, finding that when a nylon layer is worn over a surgical-style mask, it improves the fit and effectiveness of filtration of virus particles from a range

See **MASKS, 19A**

For class of 2021, ‘Not going to lie. It hurts.’

When their senior year coincides with a pandemic, students learn unexpected lessons about loss, resilience and hope.

BY JEFFREY S. SOLOCHER
Times Staff Writer

After watching prom, grad bash and large-scale graduations get canceled for last year’s senior class, Rohey Barrow felt bad for the students one grade ahead of her.

Senior year is as much about dressing up, partying and celebrating the end of a 13-year adventure with friends as it is about earning a diploma, getting into college or a job, and moving on.

Barrow figured her Class of 2021 would get to have it all. The coronavirus might have abated, and schools would get back to normal.

“I thought we would all be good,” the Lakewood High senior

said. “I didn’t think it would affect me.”

The senior class only wishes.

Instead of losing a quarter, this group in many ways lost the entire year. Schools opened for classes, but with masks, social distancing and other rules in effect, the experience has proved a pale imitation of what many had hoped for.

It hit some teens hard.

“I’m not going to lie. It hurts,” said Jenessis Montero, a senior at Blake High School’s fine arts magnet program, who saw so many of her performances and competitions canceled. “I didn’t think they would take everything away. We have nothing. We have literally nothing.”

“I can’t even think of all the

things I’m missing out on,” added Sabrina Feldman, a senior in Hillsborough High’s International Baccalaureate program. “It doesn’t even feel like a senior year.”

Through the rough times, though, she and others still found reasons for optimism and a sense of appreciation for the moments of joy they could take from this milestone year — singing around a piano, watching a football game, making new friends.

“I go to school every day, and I try to appreciate it, because last year when I didn’t have it, I was bored out of my mind,” said Gavyn Dorsey, a senior at Zephyrhills High. “I treat every day like it’s the best day.”

See **SENIORS, 11A**



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Rohey Barrow,
Lakewood High senior



“I can’t even think of all the things I’m missing out on.”

Sabrina Feldman,
Hillsborough High International Baccalaureate program senior

THESE ARE NOT THE SAME TEAMS

The key to winning Super Bowl 55 on Sunday at Raymond James Stadium may be in how the Bucs and the Chiefs adjust to what they learned at their first meeting earlier this season. **Sports, 1C**

PALM HARBOR MAN ACCUSED IN RIOT

A federal complaint alleges the leader of a Messianic synagogue entered the Capitol during the Jan. 6 insurrection in Washington, D.C. **3A**

Windy and chilly

8 a.m. Noon 4 p.m. 8 p.m.



59° 60° 55° 51°

10% chance of rain

More, 6C